

**AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT AND
EXTENSION
AGG 3811- RURAL SOCIOLOGY**

INTRODUCTORY NOTES: PART II

Background

The beginning of all creation is richly entrenched in the bible. It includes a full account of creation and subsequent disobedience of God`s ways by human beings. In the garden of Eden we are told, human beings enjoyed complete sovereignty of all of God`s creation i.e. animals, birds and plants – things of life. Once outside the beautiful garden, human beings continued to make ends meet sometimes under very difficult conditions. This did not only affect how human beings utilize their resources but also the way they began to visualize, explain and understand the world they live in. The key preoccupation of human beings` existence has been the search for various forms of truth. Some of these truths as we know them to date include: intuition, common sense, tradition and authority.

Intuition (i.e., thinking oneself): This is any “flash of insight”, true or false, whose source the receiver cannot fully identify or explain. Intuition tends to be highly subjective and some historians have used this technique to get into the past so as to get the feel of a period in history. Often this technique is use where there is a shortage of documentation.

Common sense: This consists of groups` accumulation of collective guesses, hunches and haphazard ‘trial and error’ learning`s. For instance, thousands of years ago people`s common sense told them that the earth was flat, that big objects fell faster than smaller ones, that stone and iron were perfectly solid materials and that a person`s character was betrayed by their facial features. Man`s common sense conclusions are of course based on ignoring prejudice and mistaken interpretation for example, objective investigation of earth have demonstrated that the earth is round as opposed to a FLAT earth.

Tradition (accumulated wisdom or conventional wisdom): These are patterns of behavior and ways of doing things that have been handed down from one generation to another. A great deal of this so – called “truth” is inaccurate and has overtones of superstition. For example, a tradition says colds, is caused by chills and wet feet. Yet viruses cause colds as is now known, although exposure may lower resistance. Men are intellectually superior to women and yet fresh findings particularly in medical fields revel neither sex is superior in inherited intellectual abilities etc.

Authority: is in two main types of authority sacred and secular authority. There is: **Sacred and secular authority.** Sacred authority rests on the faith that a certain tradition or document e.g., the Bible is of supernatural origin and that what is contained in it is ‘absolute’ and ‘right’ and that anything conflicting with it is wrong. For some people,

sacred authority may be the faith that a certain group or institution e.g. medicine men, priests or the church is constantly receiving supernatural guidance. Secular Authority is subdivided into two: *Secular Humanistic and Secular Scientific Authority*

i) **Secular Humanistic Authority:**

The belief that certain 'great men' had remarkable insight into human behavior and the nature of the Universe. Some fields' notable psychology, journalist, pop-stars, psychiatry, society and economics and so on, attract may self-styled authorities who are without any kind of professional training in these fields, and

ii) **Secular Scientific Authority**

This form of 'truth' rests on empirical investigation i.e. knowledge based on observation, experiment and reasoning. Empirical investigation is the basic ingredient of all modern sciences including sociology.

1.3 Sociology “the Mother of Rural Sociology”

1.3. 1 Origin and Development of Sociology - Historical foundation

The term “sociology” was coined by August Comte in the nineteenth century (in 1820) from the Latin word “**socios**” (companion with others) and the Greek word “**logos**” (reason) to describe the new science of social life.

The major historical reasons for the rise of present-day sociology as a science are attributed to:

1) **The emerging need to gather systematic knowledge in the study of human society.**

This brought about the long period in which people tried to gather systematic knowledge and as long as they had thought along scientific lines. In the west, a long succession of social thinkers can be cited, from Plato and Aristotle; but it was not until the 19th century that sociology could be spoken of as a science. Prior, to that, the study of human society was carried on simply as a branch of other subjects, such as social philosophy, ethics, theology, law and politics.

2) **The industrial revolution and the resulting confusion in western society.**

This brought sociology into being as a science apart. At this time, society was growing very rapidly with social change evolving radically. Most social sciences inclusive sociology is said to have developed in response to social changes which included European exploration; occurring technical, economic, and social changes in Western Europe; the industrial revolution in Britain; growing capitalism and worldwide population growth as illustrated below:



<http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/introsociology/Documents/Field%20of%20sociology033108.htm>- Accessed 13/03/2018

As a consequence, many problems were revealed that could not be solved, nor overlooked, as they had been, and everyday knowledge was no longer sufficient to account for what was occurring. For the first time, human society was seen as a phenomenon; a subject that could, and should be studied and possibly regulated, in much the same way that it had been proved that man could control natural phenomena with the help of natural sciences.

Table 1: Social Changes Attributed to Origin of Sociology

European Exploration: In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Europeans were exploring the world and voyagers returned from Asia, the Americas, Africa, and the South Seas with amazing stories of other societies and civilizations. Widely different social practices challenged the view that European life reflected the natural order of God.

Occurring technical, economic, and social changes in Western Europe: In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Western Europe was rocked by technical, economic, and social changes that forever changed the social order. Science and technology were developing rapidly. James Watt invented the steam engine in 1769, and in 1865 Joseph Lister discovered that an antiseptic barrier could be placed between a wound and germs in the atmosphere to inhibit infection. These and other scientific developments spurred social changes and offered hope that scientific methods might help explain the social as well as the natural world. This trend was part of a more general growth in rationalism.

The industrial revolution in Britain: The industrial revolution began in Britain in the late eighteenth century. By the late nineteenth century, the old order was collapsing “under the twin blows of industrialism and revolutionary democracy” (Nisbet, 1966: 21). Mechanical industry was growing, and thousands of people were migrating to cities to work in the new factories. People once rooted in the land and social communities where they farmed found themselves crowded into cities. The traditional authority of the church, the village, and the family were being undermined by impersonal factory and city life.

Growing Capitalism: Capitalism also grew in Western Europe in the nineteenth century. This meant that relatively few people owned the means of production—such as factories—while many others had to sell their labor to those owners. At the same time, relatively impersonal financial markets began to expand. The modern period was also marked by the development of administrative state power, which involved increasing concentrations of information and armed power (Giddens, 1987: 27);

Worldwide Population Growth: Finally, there was enormous population growth worldwide in this period, due to longer life expectancy and major decreases in child death rates. These massive social changes gave new urgency to the development of the social sciences, as early sociological thinkers

struggled with the vast implications of economic, social and political revolutions. All the major figures in the early years of sociology thought about the “great transformation” from simple, preliterate societies to massive, complex, industrial societies.

3) A prevailing conducive environment to the development of sociological theory. The inception of sociology as a science is to be found in the works of Saint Simon (1760 – 1825), and it was his secretary, Auguste Comte (1798 – 1857), the founder of positivistic philosophy, who used the term sociology for the first time. Although in Simon’s works, sociology was not yet identified as a separate science but as an element in a system of sciences, his discovery marked the beginning of a very prolific and significant period in the development of sociology theory upon which sociologists draw their analysis. (Constandse and Hofstee, 1964).

1.3.2 Definitions of Sociology

Sociology is a very broad discipline; it may be difficult to give a brief and comprehensive definition of what it means. The following are some of the definitions propounded by different scholars:

- 1) “The science of society which seeks to acquaint us with social regulations, customs, trends and future possibilities” Wright Mills (The sociological imagination: 1962.
- 2) ‘The scientific study of human society through the study of the social behaviour of man” August Comte: 1800`s. Also, in L.A. Coser Ed: 1971.
- 3) “is a science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social act in order to arrive at a causal explanation of its cause and effect” Marx Weber, 1800`s
- 4) “is the description and explanation of social behavior, social structures, and social interaction in terms of the social environment (structures) an/or in terms of people`s perceptions of the social environment” Robert Hagedorn: 1983

Although the definitions of sociology vary in their focus, the common idea underlying them is that sociology is concerned with **human relationships**. Its subject matter is *society* rather than the individual, though the individual cannot be left out. Since human life became complex, there was need for an in-depth study of each aspect of human life. Thus, sociology has been further divided into different applied branches, namely; Rural sociology, urban sociology, political sociology, educational sociology etc.

1.3.3: The Major characteristics in the Definitions of Sociology

The four key characteristics in any definition of sociology are that it is a study; it concerns human social behaviour; it is scientific; and all about society.

i) It is a study

Meaning that sociologists look at and try to understand societies. They do not, at least in their capacity as sociologist, try to change i.e. they are not social workers. What they discover may be used to plan changes, to solve problems and so on. But that is not the sociologist's job. The sociologist is a disinterested seeker after knowledge.

Sociology is the study of society and not society itself. This means that it is only a limited number of people who are aware of the conclusions and insights provided by sociology and not the whole population of the society at large. So, it is quite incorrect to say that, for example, people get on better with one another because of sociology. However, those who have studied sociology may be better able to understand the situation of themselves and others and to manipulate situations to increase their chances of achieving their objectives but, they are few compared to the number of people involved in society.

ii) It concerns human social behavior

That is, sociology concerns human beings in their relations with others, in the groups they form, and in the power these groups and the form of relations over human lives. In other words, sociologists are more likely to be interested in predicting how the majority of people will respond to a particular social situation than in predicting the response of a given individual to that situation.

Similarly, sociology is concerned with the influence on people's behaviour of the groups and societies to which they belong. For example, suicide because of being jilted by your girlfriend, is a social act in that she has done something which has affected your action and also in that you have a certain feeling about the correct emotional response to that action because of the things you have learned from other people about the relationship between a man and his girlfriend and so on.

iii) It is scientific

That is to say sociology tries to follow the example and the methods of the natural sciences as far as possible. Sociology asks the same kinds of questions and expects the same kinds of answers as in all sciences. For **precision**, sociology, asks the questions "why?" implying it is interested in the reasons for things and in the mechanics of them. In addition, sociology looks for answers that are natural rather than supernatural. **Objectivity**, sociology looks for answers that exist in this world not the next. Like All other scientists, a sociologist may be a Christian and believe that the ultimate answer to the question why is that "God made it that way, but he like the scientist, will still look for a more concrete answer, ultimately understandable in terms of our world.

Sociology looks for rational answers, answers that can be understood, with logical connections between the elements, and build theories to explain the perceived connections. The conclusions drawn should be demonstrable, therefore, sociologists look at the clear and simple experimental procedures of scientists and try to be as experimental as possible.

Experimentation in sociology is however not always easy since the material wished to be experimented on is people. People are conscious of what happens to them, and sometimes, in fact most of the time, they would change some aspect of what is to be tested simply by introducing an experimental situation that the participants are aware of. Some of the things that could be done to people in order to find out whether derived conclusions are correct would be considered morally indefensible in that they might hurt the people themselves or change their lives. Experiments are done on a very small scale when it is possible to overcome these objectives.

iv) **Focuses on Society**

Society is composed of unique individuals and these individuals in turn interact with society. In their interaction with others, people weave patterns of relationships that give a rather stable structure, and these characteristics of mutual relationships give rise to, and distinguish, social groups. Such groups which are often interrelated and overlap each other, since one person usually belongs to many groups together, constitutes the complicated structure known as society.

Man is a social being and consequently, each individual, even the most typical interacts with other people. This interaction is not merely a series of incidents with unpredictable results; usually it takes typical forms in repetitive situations and induces a patterned behaviour. In their interaction with others, people weave patterns of relationships that give a rather stable structure, and these characteristics of mutual relationships give rise to, and distinguish, social groups. Such groups which are often interrelated and overlap each other, since one person usually belongs to many groups together, constitutes the complicated structure known as society.

The process of becoming a social being involves: a) establishing one`s social position; b) receiving goods and services, and c) becoming a root of a social network through which contracts are made and maintained with the rest of the society.

1.3.4 Founding fathers of sociology

Sociology as we know it in today, draws upon the firm foundation developed by Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Marx. Also referred to as the pioneering thinkers.

*Below are the profiles, works and achievements of each one of the major contributors to Sociology.

1) Auguste Comte (1798-1854) (French)

a) Profile

Sociology as we know it was first developed in the early nineteenth century. A man called Auguste Comte coined the word 'Sociology'. Comte was a most influential 1800`s philosopher. Auguste Comte in the year 1839 coined the term sociology by combining a Latin



word '*socius*' meaning 'companion' and the Greek word '*logos*' meaning study, reasoning or speech.'. He was concerned with France's stability that had been permanently impaired by the excesses of the French Revolution. He hoped the study of social behaviour in a systematic way would eventually, lead to a more rational human interaction. Sociology thus coined was to apply to the science of human behaviour and stressed the need for scientific investigation of behaviour. The implication being that sociology is the 'science of society

b) The works of Auguste Comte included the following:

- Methods of inquiry;
- Law of human progress;
- Hierarchy of the sciences;
- Social static and dynamics; and
- The normative doctrine.

c) Achievements

- i. He gave sociology its name and presented a rather ambitious challenge to the fledgling discipline. He defined sociology as; **the scientific study of human society through the study of the social behaviour of man"**.
- ii. Comte regarded sociology as the last science to develop, but the most significant and complex of all sciences.
- iii. Auguste Comte, a philosopher is generally referred to as the father of sociology

2) Karl Marx (1818-1883)

a) Profile

Born in Germany, with academic training in law, Marx was critical of existing institutions that a conventional academic career was impossible. His life was a difficult struggle and one of extreme poverty. Together with his lifelong friend Friedrich Engels (1820 -1895) they prepared a platform called "**The Communist Manifesto**" in which they argued that factory workers (whom they referred to as the proletariat) should unite to fight for the overthrow of capitalist societies.

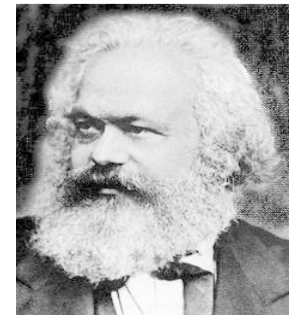
His thinking was strongly influenced by the work of a German philosopher, George Hegel who saw history as a **dialectical process** i.e., a series of clashes between conflicting ideas and forces. At the end of each clash, a new and improved set of ideas was expected to emerge. In Hegel's view conflict was an essential element in progress. Conflict led to progress; progress came only through conflict. According to Karl Marx, society consisted of a moving balance of antithetical forces created by their social tension and struggle. Struggle rather than peaceful growth, was the prime mover of progress; strife the father of all things, and social conflict the core of historical process.

Under Marx's analysis society was fundamentally divided between classes who clash in pursuit of their own class interests. He argued that history could be understood in dialectical terms as a record of the inevitable conflicts between economic groups. He stated that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle" (Marx, 1961).

Marx didn't view himself as a sociologist nevertheless, he made a critical contribution to the development of sociology and other social sciences. This reflected Marx's emphasis on carefully researching the actual, measurable conditions of people's lives, which foreshadowed the scientific nature of today's sciences. Marx placed great value on the group identifications and associations that influenced an individual's place in society.

b) The works of Karl Marx's included the following:

- The overall doctrine;
- Class Theory;
- Alienation;
- The sociology of knowledge; and
- Dynamics of social change.



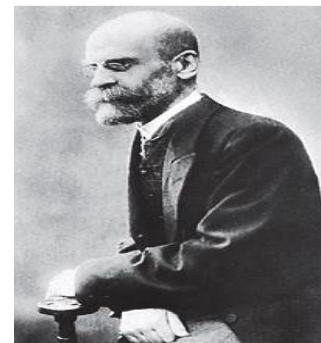
c) Achievements

- i. Marx, wanted a science of society as well as to change society.
- ii. He observed that everything occurring in society is caused by economic relationships and therefore, revolution is necessary for social change.
- iii. He wrote many books, articles, scientist and revolutionary. For example, The Communist Manifesto (1848) and Das Kapital (1867).

3) EMILE DURKHEIM (1858 – 1917)

a) Profile

Born in a French rabbinical family, with academic training in Philosophy, he insisted that behaviour cannot be fully understood in individualistic terms, it must be understood within a larger social context. He devoted his life's works to making sociology a separate and unique science. With Durkheim, social facts are the subject matter of sociology. They have distinctive social characteristics and determinants which cannot be explained at the biological and psychological levels. His main interests were in studying the consequences of work in modern societies (ANOMIE). He shared Comte's belief that sociology should provide direction for social change. He defined sociology as; "**the scientific study of social facts, factors that are external to, but coercive upon individuals**". For example, occupation is a social fact since it influences how you behave.



Durkheim was preoccupied with understanding how social order is produced and sustained and with those factors since it influences how you behave. He was preoccupied with understanding how social order is produced and sustained and with those factors that contribute to the unity and strength of a group rather than to its disunity and weakness. He wanted to establish sociology as a distinct subject matter that can be explained by other disciplines, especially psychology and as a science, because social facts could be explained “scientifically”.

Durkheim’s crucial suggestion was that social structure i.e., social facts external to the individual can offer an explanation for social behaviours’ and other facts. He isolated what he saw as unique to sociology, a science that studies social facts independently of individuals. These social facts according to him further coerce or constrain upon any individual who is elected to the position. He however, believed that social facts could be studied and explained in the same way that we study physical and biological world – i.e., scientifically. As long as both ‘causal’ and ‘functional’ explanations studied.

b) The works of Durkheim included the following:

- General approach;
- Individual and society;
- The sociology of religion;
- The sociology of knowledge;
- Functional explanation; and
- Division of Labour.

c) Achievements

- i. Durkheim managed to convince the world sociology is a distinct subject matter. He adequately demonstrated its importance by studying suicide within a depressed economy or relationships.
- ii. He proved that social facts could be studied scientifically and that, social facts can offer an explanation for social behavior. He was concerned with social order issues and emphasized sociology must study social facts.
- iii. He is renowned for writing “The Division of labor in society” and “Suicide: A Study in Sociology”.

4) MAX WEBER (1864 – 1920) (German)

a) Profile

Born in Germany, with an academic training in law, economics, history and philosophy, Weber was one of the most brilliant social scientists. He told his students that they should imply “**VERSTEHEN**” (i.e., literally understanding or **INSIGHT**) in their intellectual work. He pointed out that much of our social behaviour cannot be analyzed by the kinds of criteria we use to measure weight or temperature. To



fully comprehend behaviour, we must learn the subjective meanings people attach to their actions. – How they themselves view and explain their behaviour.

Max Weber's focus was on the subjective meaning which human actors attach to their actions in their mutual orientations within specific social historical contexts. Behaviour, which has no such meaning, is outside the area of sociology.

His purpose of sociology was to achieve an objective understanding of how people evaluate, use, create and destroy their social relationships. Weber's interests were very broad. He was first and foremost interested in religion, he wrote influential works on economic history, on politics, government and bureaucratic organization and on the methodology of social sciences. His idea was that sociology must take into account the subjective meaning of individual actions. He also thought that social scientist can and should gather information that was not affected by their values, it must be **VALUE FREE**.

We also owe to Weber the key conceptual tool of the Ideal Type i.e., "is a construct, a model that serves as a measuring rod against which actual cases can be evaluated". He defined sociology as; **a science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social actions in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects."**

Action refers to all human behaviour to which an actor attaches subjective meaning. Is social in so far as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the individual (or individuals), take account of the behaviour of others and is thereby articulated in its course. **Social Action** occurs between two individuals when each person takes into account the actions of the other. Individual is a basic unity of analysis.

b) The works of Max Weber included the following:

- Natural Science, Social Science and Value of Relevance;
- The Ideal Type;
- Causality and probability;
- Types of authority
- The functions of ideas, class, status and power;
- Bureaucracy; and
- Rationalization and disenchantment.

c) Achievements

- i. Weber introduced the notion of science as a value free.
- ii. He demonstrated a new method of studying social action which he called VERSTEHEN, and his whole theory opened up advantages of access to understanding subjective aspects of behavior, meanings and motives of the individual.
- iii. He wrote on "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1904 – 1905)"; and "Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft (1922)".

1.3.5 Fields Covered by Sociology

Very wide factual areas of social life are studied by Sociologists. (Please refer to scope of rural sociology).

1.3.5.1 Sociology's Levels of Analysis

Sociology could be represented by one as a science and as humanistic discipline. As a science, it tries to discover and explain patterns of group life and as a humanistic discipline it examines the values people have and their effort to find satisfaction and fulfillment. Generally, sociology examines aspects of social life that might otherwise be overlooked or taken for granted. It's large and challenging agenda includes:

- Efforts to deliver the basic structure of human society.
- To identify the forces that strengthen or weaken groups.
- To search out the condition that lead to social change.
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Sociology attempts to analyze social life at three levels namely; interpersonal, group and societal levels.

At interpersonal level – Sociology studies the social connections between 2 or more persons. Such as friend – friend, leader – follower or neighbour – neighbour relationship. These relationships may be friendly or hostile, close or distant, deep or superficial.

At group level – sociological considerations focus on group and group relations e.g., person – centered groups or impersonal organizations. People who have similar incomes or alike in other ways such as age, occupation or reading habits do not necessarily form a social group, instead they are called statistical aggregates or social categories.

At societal level – Sociology deals with whole communities or societies. A society that is characterized by persistent and distinct patterns of social organization is a social order e.g., slave – based society, kin – based society.

In social life, three basic aspects can be observed and these are **structure, function** and **culture**. Where **structure** is the word used to define the way in which a group is built up; the nature of the ties which knit people together as a social group; the way in which a group is organized; the type of leadership found in a group and how leadership comes into being. All these factors must be studied to determine the structure of a group. **Function** means the effect of the activities of the group as a whole, on its individual members, and on society as a whole. Usually a group has several, possibly many functions, which may have little to do with the original, primary purposes for which it was created, yet they are of the greatest importance in examining the behaviour of the members of the group.

Culture is used in a broad sense, to signify the total material and non-material inheritance of a certain group. Its` beliefs, ideas traditions, science, customs, folklore, mores, techniques; and all that bears the stamp of human mind. The behaviour of each individual is strongly influenced by the culture of the group to which she/he belongs. Culture regulates function and structure; it must therefore be studied.

1.4 Sociology and other Social Sciences

Sociology belongs to the social science family that includes anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science and social psychology. Sociology which during the 19th century, was seen by Comte as the “pinnacle of the system of sciences” dominated for a long time as a behavioural science to which all others in this family were adjuncts (Constandse A.K and Hofstee E.W., 1964). Further removed from its philosophical origin, sociology nowadays is regarded as one among several approaches to the study of human behaviour. It is acknowledged that close co-ordination between the various sciences is essential for the complete understanding of human behavior.

The closest relative to sociology is **anthropology** which is partly a biological and partly a social science. *Physical anthropology* deals with the biological origins of humanity and with variations in the human species, including race. Others specialize in studying great apes throwing light on human development and human behavior. *Social and cultural* anthropologists study the ways of life of preliterate communities (Leonard Broom et al, 1981).

Other behavioural sciences are cultural and social anthropology. Social anthropology, a science, especially well developed in the United Kingdom, emphasizes the structure and functions of groups in primitive societies and is closely related to sociology. Here, particularly, confusion arises in respect of terminology. Ethnology is the study of the culture of “primitive” people, and it was especially well developed in Europe in the period of colonialism. In the United States, the term cultural anthropology was used to describe the same discipline that, in the course of time, was not restricted to the study of primitive cultures.

Originally, the essential difference between cultural anthropology and sociology was that the former embraced total cultures, including economics, technology, law, religion, etc., while the latter restricted itself to the study of groups and group-phenomena in a culture. The rapid disappearance of primitive cultures and the growing complexity of societies in the developing countries have tended to draw cultural anthropology and sociology closer together, and both disciplines are often taught in the same university department. Nevertheless, there remains a difference in approach that is conducive to the development of sociological theory; the cultural anthropologists, with his broader view, contributing a better understanding of cultural entities to the more practical sociologist, who is principally interested in certain cultural elements.

Economics is one of the “neighbours” of sociology, and it is important to understand the relationship of sociology to it and hence of rural sociology to agricultural

economics. Economists have developed an adequate system of analysis regarding the manner in which people produce and consume how they establish their income and how they spend it. Such analysis can indicate the way to improve an economic situation and points out the strong weak factors in a production system. It also enables economists to predict what will happen when certain changes take place in a particular system. However, for these predictions to have any value the basic assumption must be correct; namely, that the people in question are behaving rationally, in the economic sense, and are above all willing to improve their economic situation.

It is known that the homo economics is a myth. In reality there are traditions, taboos, certain preferences, etc. which prevents people from behaving rationally, so to speak; and all the social aspects of group life must be known in order to understand economic behaviour and its relevant changes. This fact will be dealt with in detail subsequently. It is mentioned here merely to indicate the place of sociology in the study of sociology-economic problems. Sociology is the essential complement to economics where people do not respond to economic laws. This does not mean that sociology need always explain why a group of people is incapable of understanding what is so manifestly for its benefit. Sometimes the situation may be reversed, and the sociologist is required to explain that certain undoubted economic improvements are not at all furthering the wellbeing of the people.

Psychology is another behavioural science closely related to sociology. Sociology began with the study of mankind; in other words, society. But sociologists soon discovered that this was an unmanageable, abstract generalization and turned to the study of smaller groups: nations, ethnic groups, village communities, kinship groups and, finally families. Psychology is primarily the study of the individual, but here again, finding that it is not possible to understand the individual without taking into consideration his environment, and in particular his relations to other people, psychologists were invariably drawn to the study of groups. The science that is known as social psychology arises at the point where sociology and psychology meet.

It is difficult to draw the line where sociology ends and psychology begins. In the United States, where contact between these two sciences was established at an early stage, sociology often covers fields that European scientists would classify under social psychology. However, borderlines are of little importance in practical research, and the main distinction to bear in mind is that sociology is primarily interested in group life as such, whereas social psychology is the study of the individual through his reactions to group life.

Geography, like anthropology, covers the natural and social sciences. It relates to the concerns of sociology on such topics as population distribution, urban ecology and the use of natural resources. Political science is primarily concerned with the study of government, and traditionally has had a strong legal and administrative emphasis. Its interest in exploring social influences on administrative decisions in many social life spheres has led to emerging interest in political sociology, this being the relation between the political science and sociology.

Finally, history that is both one of social sciences and one of the humanities. Historically and simply put, documents are valuable in sociological research and sociological analyses are of interest to historians. Social historians have studied slavery and family life and while doing so have tended to apply sociological research techniques to earlier periods for example in studying topics such as occupational change and inheritance.

Sociology, which includes rural sociology, however takes its place among the other behavioural sciences as the discipline of social group life in modern and developing societies.

What is Sociology?

In some study conducted a few years ago, selected audiences were asked what they thought sociology is. The following statements were expressed:

- Sociology is the most exciting stuff on earth
- Sociology is a fresh, lively, coherent and valuable way of understanding people and the world
- Sociology is being urban, civilized and high-class social life
- Sociology is compelling that some people invest their entire professional careers in learning it, teaching it, and doing it.
- **Sociology is an important subject because it deals with the stuff of everyday life, but in a new way.**

1.4.1 Is Sociology a Science or Not?

The discipline of Sociology is accompanied with some controversy, one of which is, is Sociology subject a science? Science as is understood is: *“a branch of knowledge or study dealing with a body of facts or truths systematically arranged and showing operation of general laws. Science gathers facts and links them together in their causal sequence with a view to draw valid references.”*

As a body of organized and verified knowledge, science is secured through scientific methods whose chief characteristics include: i) The possibility of a concise consistent and concrete formulation of issues; ii) The capacity to form generalization and predictions and iii) The possibility of verification of the data as well as of the generalization following the various steps used in the scientific method such as observations, recording, classification of hypothesis, recording, classification of hypothesis, verification of evidence, prediction, reasoning and experimenting.

Lundberg (1990`s) defined science as: “a procedure for discovering the conditions under which events occur”

Science has often been classified into three types based on the nature of the subject matter. These are physical, biological and social sciences. *Physical science* is a branch of science that deals with inorganic matter i.e., the matter and energy having no reference to life. Examples are physics, Chemistry, Geology, Astronomy, etc. *Biological science* is

a branch of science which studies organic matter i.e., matter and energy having reference to life. Examples are Botany, Zoology, Entomology, Pathology, etc; and *Social science* is a branch of science which deals with social phenomena/social life. Examples are Economics, Political Science, Psychology, History, Ethics, Anthropology, Sociology, etc.

1.4.1.1. The Debate: Differing views on Sociology

The discussion of sociology everywhere in the world is often characterized with the two arguments. One states that sociology is not a science and the other states sociology is a science. Both arguments are presented and important aspects of the issues at hand stated here.

1) Sociology is Not a Science

Lack of experiment; lack of objectivity; lack of exactivity and terminology inefficiency are major reasons by those who argue that Sociology is not a Science.

i) Lack of experiment:

The argument here is that the objects used to study sociology are not the same as those used in physical science. While, the twin use of experimentation and prediction appear to be missing in sociology as its subject matter, the human relationships cannot either be touched or seen or weighed or analyzed in a test tube of a laboratory. It does not possess the instruments like the microscope and the thermometer to measure human behaviour.

“if you cannot experiment, if you cannot measure, if you cannot establish broad unifying hypothesis and if you cannot be confident in social engineering you cannot be said to be engaged in scientific study at all.”

Undeniable, sociology cannot experiment and predict in the same way in which physical science do. Since the materials with which society deals i.e., human behaviour and relationships are **peculiar** and **uncertain**. For example, sentiments can neither be questioned nor studied without taking sides. For example, subjects like sex and religion induce great controversies such that an investigator dealing with a controversial subject becomes a focal figure of censure by those who hold different views.

Furthermore, society is so complex and variable that it is not possible to separate and analyze its different element as can be done in physical science. While the composition of water as two (2) parts of hydrogen and part of oxygen can be analysed and illustrated by means of experiments in any laboratory of the World, such experiments are difficult and impossible to be carried out in the sociology sense.

ii) Lack of objectivity

It is impossible for Sociologists to maintain complete objectivity with the objects being experimented as physicists do. For man has his own prejudices and bias. These makes it practically difficult for Sociologists to observe their subjects with complete detachment. It is also not easy to dissociate themselves from the assumptions, wrapped up from

childhood with regard to any objects. Our valuations are often consequently bound to be prejudicial. Moreover, if a person tries to maintain objectivity in the study of human behaviour, he/she is quickly branded as an *egoist*, *traitor* or worse.

Instead of gaining public support for work being done, we may be faced with public hostility. To protect oneself then, one maintains existing social values. In so doing, one eliminates from the study the phenomenon that forms a sociological point of view and the most fundamental basis for social existence. Also social relationships cannot be studied through physical lenses. What we see in social relationship is only an outward expression of our inner life.

A sociologist has therefore to concern him/herself also with the working of the inner mind of their subject in order to understand their external actions properly while, a physicist need not be confronted with such a complex phenomenon.

iii) Lack of Exactness

One of the characteristics of science is that it should be able to frame certain laws on the basis of observation and hypothesis, and such laws should also enable us to predict accurately and control events i.e., they should form a basis of a reliable social technology. From this point of view sociology cannot be called a real science because it's;

- a) laws and conclusions cannot be expressed in precise terms.
- b) predictions might not come true.
- c) findings are often limited in time and space.

Owing to the fact that sociological phenomenon is too vast, human motivations are complex;

It is difficult to make predictions about human behaviour. For example, the socialization of children so that, they grow up non-aggressive, non-violent, co-operative and effective members of society are a goal to which even parents who themselves are in fact jailbirds are likely to subscribe.

iv) Terminology Inefficiency

It has been urged that sociology suffers from unclear terminology e.g. the terms like class, religion, groups have not yet acquired exact meaning even though such words are essential tools of scientific thought or otherwise. Sociology has not yet developed an adequate set of scientific terms. For many of the terms like religion, class, groups are words found in everyday use. Until sociology ceases to employ terms with vague meanings their technological inefficiency will remain an obstacle in the way of sociology developing into a science.

2) Sociology Is A Science

While there is an element of truth in what the critics say. A scientific study of sociological phenomena is not free from difficulties. By nature, social studies cannot perhaps be as exactly or neutral as physical sciences. Common knowledge tells us that science never remains static forever. Thus, denying that sociology has no chance of becoming scientific is overlooking the evident possibility of the dynamism of any theory be it physical science or human science. Theories are known to progress through time and space.

To assume that only precise, exact conclusions and predications alone make a study scientific, portrays a rather inadequate comparison of the nature of science. There are occasion when meteorology-a physical science fails to make accurate predictions about rainy day the following day and it does not rain. Should meteorology be denied it's designation as a science? By no means as universal validity of conclusions and a complete occurrence of predication are not the only criteria of science.

The scientific character of a discipline is in all honesty determined by its methodology. If its methods of study are scientific, the subject deserves to be ranked as a science.

Sociologists argue that sociology makes use of scientific method in the study of its subject matter and it is therefore, entitled to be called a science for the following reasons;

- a) **Though sociology cannot experiment, with human beings directly in a laboratory, social behaviour is amenable to scientific investigations** as any other natural phenomena. Sociology conducts many experiments indirectly with concert in certain specific methods as scales of questions, intervention and case history which apply quantitative measures to social phenomena and which are therefore comparable to the method of experimentation. For example, if we want to know the impact of economic policies on valuable groups.
- b) **The basic methods of scientific investigation, observation and comparison** are readily available to sociological uses all the time.
- c) **All the physical sciences do not employ laboratory experimentation e.g. astronomy cannot experiment with its materials.** As the heavenly bodies cannot be induced – to put in an apparatus in the laboratory. If, in spite of astronomy's inability to experiment with its material in the laboratory could be termed as a science. There is no justification to deny the title of science to sociology. In any case, Newton did not invent his law in the laboratory.
- d) **Sociology delineates cause-effect relationships** for example; in its study of family it has traced the relationship between family disorganization and divorce, rural-urban migration and poor agricultural performance in Zambia. Sociology tries to find an answer to how as well as to why of social processes and relationships.

- e) If we accept science in the sense in which it has been defined by philosophers like Pearson, Giddings, Curvier and others it will invalidate the objections to sociology being regarded as a science. Some citation worthy recalling is that by Giddings which states “*science is nothing more or less than the getting at facts and trying to understand them*”, and what science does for us is nothing more or less than getting at facts and trying to understand them.

Synthesizing all citations on science, one sees science as being methods of discovery of information, ideals in the universe through observation and re-observation processes whose results eventually comes to be stated in principle and arranged and organized in the fields of knowledge. Therefore, **sociology is a scientific discipline that obeys the demand of validity implied by the word science, it studies its subject matter scientifically.** It tries to classify types and forms of social relationships, especially of institutions and associations. It tries to determine the relationships between different parts or factors of social life. It tries to deduce general laws from a systematic study of sociology principle. Its material and the conclusions drawn from the study are then applied to the solution of social problems. It has of course not reached perfection, but the sociologist is constantly searching for the instruments which will add to minuteness of the study and exactness of its principles.

In addition, **sociology also impresses upon us the necessity of overcoming narrow personal prejudices, egoistic ambitions and class hatred.** In short, its findings stimulate every person to render a full measure of service to every person and to the common good for associations, communities, societies and the wider World.

1.4.2 Fields covered by Sociology

The fields of interest of sociology are extensive. Sociology investigates the behavior patterns associated with society; groups within the society; the effect of society on groups; the effect of the groups on society; the individual (as formed by social influences), society and smaller groups; and groups and societies as they can be affected by individuals. Sociology is subdivided into many specialized fields of which some of are:

- Rural sociology
- Applied sociology
- Collective behaviour
- Community
- Comparative sociology

Table 1: Other fields Covered by Sociology

Include:

Crime and delinquency; Cultural sociology; Demography; Deviant behaviour; Formal and complex organizations; Human ecology; Industrial sociology; Law and society; Marriage and Family; Medical

sociology; Military sociology; Political sociology; Sociology of Religion; Urban sociology; Social psychology; Social control; Sociological theory; and Sociology of Education

Sociologists analyze social phenomena at different levels and from different perspectives. From concrete interpretations to sweeping generalizations of society and social behavior, sociologists' study everything from specific events (the **micro** level of analysis of small social patterns) to the "big picture" (the **macro** level of analysis of large social patterns).

Three main theoretical perspectives are commonly employed in explaining how society influences people, and vice versa.

1.4.3 The Three Major Sociological Perspective

To date, Sociologists employ three primary **theoretical** perspectives: the **symbolic interactionist perspective**, the **functionalist perspective**, and the **conflict perspective**. These perspectives offer sociologists **theoretical paradigms** for explaining how society influences people, and vice versa. Each perspective uniquely conceptualizes society, social forces, and human behavior (see Table 1).

Three Major Perspectives in Sociology

<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides/sociology/the-sociological-perspective/three-major-perspectives-in-sociology-> Accessed 13/03/2018

TABLE 1 Sociological Perspectives

<i>Sociological Perspective</i>	<i>Level of Analysis</i>	<i>Focus</i>
1. Symbolic Interactionism	Micro	Use of symbols; Face-to-face interactions
2. Functionalism	Macro	Relationship between the parts of society; How aspects of society are functional (adaptive)
3. Conflict Theory	Macro	Competition for scarce resources; How the elite control the poor and weak

Source: Three Major Perspectives in Sociology

<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides/sociology/the-sociological-perspective/three-major-perspectives-in-sociology-> Accessed 13/03/2018

Sociologists today employ three primary theoretical perspectives: the symbolic interactionist perspective, the functionalist perspective, and the conflict perspective.

i) The symbolic interactionist perspective

The **symbolic interactionist perspective**, also known as **symbolic interactionism**, directs sociologists to consider the symbols and details of everyday life, what these symbols mean, and how people interact with each other. Although symbolic interactionism traces its origins to Max Weber's assertion that individuals act according to their interpretation of the meaning of their world, the American philosopher **George H. Mead** (1863–1931) introduced this perspective to American sociology in the 1920s.

According to the symbolic interactionist perspective, people attach meanings to symbols, and then they act according to their subjective interpretation of these symbols. Verbal conversations, in which spoken words serve as the predominant symbols, make this subjective interpretation especially evident. The words have a certain meaning for the “sender,” and, during effective communication, they hopefully have the same meaning for the “receiver.” In other terms, words are not static “things”; they require intention and interpretation. Conversation is an interaction of symbols between individuals who constantly interpret the world around them. Of course, anything can serve as a symbol as long as it refers to something beyond itself. Written music serves as an example. The black dots and lines become more than mere marks on the page; they refer to notes organized in such a way as to make musical sense. Thus, symbolic interactionists give serious thought to how people act, and then seek to determine what meanings individuals assign to their own actions and symbols, as well as to those of others.

Consider applying symbolic interactionism to a modern time (as copied from the Western American) institution of marriage. Symbols may include wedding bands, vows of life-long commitment, a white bridal dress, a wedding cake, a Church ceremony, and flowers and music. American society attaches general meanings to these symbols, but individuals also maintain their own perceptions of what these and other symbols mean. For example, one of the spouses may see their circular wedding rings as symbolizing “never ending love,” while the other may see them as a mere financial expense. Much faulty communication can result from differences in the perception of the same events and symbols.

Critics claim that symbolic interactionism neglects the macro level of social interpretation—the “big picture.” In other words, symbolic interactionists may miss the larger issues of society by focusing too closely on the “trees” (for example, the size of the diamond in the wedding ring) rather than the “forest” (for example, the quality of the marriage). The perspective also receives criticism for slighting the influence of social forces and institutions on individual interactions.

ii) The Structural functionalist perspective

According to the **functionalist perspective**, also called **structural functionalism**, each aspect of society is interdependent and contributes to society's functioning as a whole. The government, or state, provides education for the children of the family, which in turn pays taxes on which the state depends to keep itself running. That is, the family is dependent upon the school to help children grow up to have good jobs so that they can raise and support their own families. In the process, the children become law-abiding, taxpaying citizens, who in turn support the state. If all goes well, the parts of society produce order, stability, and productivity. If all does not go well, the parts of society then must adapt to recapture a new order, stability, and productivity. For example, during a financial recession with its high rates of unemployment and inflation, social programs are trimmed or cut. Schools offer fewer programs. Families tighten their budgets. And a new social order, stability, and productivity occur.

Functionalists believe that society is held together by **social consensus**, or cohesion, in which members of the society agree upon, and work together to achieve, what is best for society as a whole. Emile Durkheim suggested that social consensus takes one of two forms:

- **Mechanical solidarity** is a form of social cohesion that arises when people in a society maintain similar values and beliefs and engage in similar types of work. Mechanical solidarity most commonly occurs in traditional, simple societies such as those in which everyone herds cattle or farms. Amish society exemplifies mechanical solidarity.
- In contrast, **organic solidarity** is a form of social cohesion that arises when the people in a society are interdependent, but hold to varying values and beliefs and engage in varying types of work. Organic solidarity most commonly occurs in industrialized, complex societies such those in large American cities like New York in the 2000s.

The functionalist perspective achieved its greatest popularity among American sociologists in the 1940s and 1950s. While European functionalists originally focused on explaining the inner workings of social order, American functionalists focused on discovering the functions of human behavior. Among these American functionalist sociologists is **Robert Merton** (b. 1910), who divides human functions into two types: **manifest functions** are intentional and obvious, while **latent functions** are unintentional and not obvious. The manifest function of attending a church or synagogue, for instance, is to worship as part of a religious community, but its latent function may be to help members learn to discern personal from institutional values. With common sense, manifest functions become easily apparent. Yet this is not necessarily the case for latent functions, which often demand a sociological approach to be revealed. A sociological approach in functionalism is the consideration of the relationship between the functions of smaller parts and the functions of the whole.

Functionalism has received criticism for neglecting the negative functions of an event such as divorce. Critics also claim that the perspective justifies the status quo and complacency on the part of society's members. Functionalism does not encourage people

to take an active role in changing their social environment, even when such change may benefit them. Instead, functionalism sees active social change as undesirable because the various parts of society will compensate naturally for any problems that may arise.

iii) The conflict perspective

The conflict perspective, which originated primarily out of Karl Marx's writings on class struggles, presents society in a different light than do the functionalist and symbolic interactionist perspectives. While these latter perspectives focus on the positive aspects of society that contribute to its stability, the **conflict perspective** focuses on the negative, conflicted, and ever-changing nature of society. Unlike functionalists who defend the status quo, avoid social change, and believe people cooperate to effect social order, conflict theorists challenge the status quo, encourage social change (even when this means social revolution), and believe rich and powerful people force social order on the poor and the weak. Conflict theorists, for example, may interpret an "elite" board of regents raising tuition to pay for esoteric new programs that raise the prestige of a local college as self-serving rather than as beneficial for students.

Whereas American sociologists in the 1940s and 1950s generally ignored the conflict perspective in favor of the functionalist, the tumultuous 1960s saw American sociologists gain considerable interest in conflict theory. They also expanded Marx's idea that the key conflict in society was strictly economic. Today, conflict theorists find social conflict between any groups in which the potential for inequality exists: racial, gender, religious, political, economic, and so on. Conflict theorists note that unequal groups usually have conflicting values and agendas, causing them to compete against one another. This constant competition between groups forms the basis for the ever-changing nature of society.

Critics of the conflict perspective point to its overly negative view of society. The theory ultimately attributes humanitarian efforts, altruism, democracy, civil rights, and other positive aspects of society to capitalistic designs to control the masses, not to inherent interests in preserving society and social order.

While sociology has changed a lot since Comte's day, it is still an important discipline that helps us understand the world we live and how we live in it. Four of this importance of sociology and why sociologists are interested in them are briefly discuss here.

1.4.4 Importance of Sociology

Scientists such as Pareto dissent that;

“Sociology is hardly of any value because it does not deal with realistic life situations and it is concerned with ideas devoid of scientific discoveries. The subject is one of little importance in social life.”

This is not a correct view of sociology. For a study of the important concepts of sociology will convince us that this science is of universal value.

1. Sociology makes a scientific study of society.

Prior to the emergence of sociology, the study of society was carried on in an unscientific manner and society had never been the central concern of any since. It is through the study of sociology that the truly scientific analysis of society has been possible. Because of its bearing upon many of the problems in present world, sociology has assumed such a great importance that it is considered to be the best approach to all social sciences and is the key study for the present situations. Scientific knowledge about society is a pre-requisite to any ranked improvement in the state of human affairs.

2. Sociology studies the role of the institutions in the development of the individual.

Again, it is through sociology that scientific study of the great institutions and the relation of the individuals to each is being made. The home and family; the school and education; the church and religion; the state and Government; industry and work, community and association. These are the great institutions through which society functions. Furthermore, they are conditioners of the individual. As sociology studies such institutions and the role they play in the development of the individual and suggest suitable measures for strengthening them – with a view to enabling them serve individuals better.

3. The study of sociology is indispensable for understanding and planning of societal activities.

By virtue of society being complex, it wouldn't be possible to understand it and solve its various problems without drawing much from sociology study and indeed from other related subjects e.g., psychology, economics, anthropology, etc. For, it is rightly argued that we cannot understand and mend society, without any knowledge of its mechanism and constructions. Just as no man in his right sense could dream of mending a motorcar without knowing anything about its machinery make up and the way different parts fit in with one another. Sociology bears the same relations to the solution of social problems as say biology and bacteriology bear to medicine or matter and physics to engineering. Sociology contributes to the solution of the problems we find in our society e.g., through research and recommendations made. By forecasting trends in-group behaviour, society may help Government officials plan for the future.

4. Sociology has made great contribution to enrich human culture.

It has helped remove so many cobwebs from our minds and social phenomenon is now understood in the light of scientific knowledge and inquiry. Most of us harbour the delusion that our way of doing things is the only sensible if not the only possible one. Sociology has given us training to have rational approval to questions concerning oneself, one's religion, morals and institutions. It has further taught us, to be critical and be dispassionate in dealing with social issues. It enables man to have a better understanding both of him/her and of others, think objectively and particularly by making use of comparative studies. By comparative study of society and groups other than one's mere existence, his/her life becomes richer and fuller than it would have been otherwise.

1.5 The practical significance of sociology

The following explained factors are the extent to which sociology and its results has meaningful applications in real-world settings:

1 Understanding Social Situations

Sociology has many practical implications for our lives. Sociological thinking and research contribute to practical policy-making and social reform in several obvious ways. The most direct is simply through providing clearer or more adequate understanding of a social situation than existed before. This can be either on the level of factual knowledge, or through gaining an improved grasp of why something is happening (in other words, by means of theoretical understanding). For instance, research may disclose that a far greater proportion of the population is living in poverty than was previously believed. Any attempt to foster improved living standards would obviously stand more chance of success if based on accurate rather than faulty factual information. The more we understand about why poverty remains widespread, the more likely it is that successful policies can be implemented to counter it.

2 Awareness of cultural differences

A second way in which sociology aids in practical policy-making is through helping to foster greater cultural awareness on the part of different groups in society. Sociology research provides a means of seeing the social world from a diversity of cultural perspectives, thereby helping to dispel prejudices that groups hold towards one another. No one can be an enlightened policy-maker who does not have a cultivated awareness of varying cultural values. Practical policies, which are not based on an informed awareness of the ways of life of those they affect, have little chances of success. Thus a white social worker operating in a West Indian community in a British city will not gain the confidence of its members without developing sensitivity to the cultural differences which often separate white and black in Britain.

3 Assessment of the effects of policies.

Third, sociology research has practical implications in terms of assessing the results of policy initiative. A programme of practical reform may simply fail to achieve what its designers sought, or may bring in its train a series of unintended consequences of an unpalatable kind. For instance, in the years following the Second World War, large public housing blocks were built in city centres in many countries. These were planned to provide high standards of accommodation for low-income groups from slum areas, and offered shopping amenities and other civic services close at hand. However, research showed that many of those moved from their previous dwellings to large apartment blocks felt isolated and unhappy. High-rise buildings and shopping malls often rapidly became dilapidated, and provide breeding grounds for mugging and other violent crimes.

4 The increase of self- knowledge

Fourth, and in some ways most important of all, sociology can provide self-enlightenment-increased self-understanding-to groups in society. The more people know about the conditions of their own action and about the overall working of their society, the more they are likely to be able to influence the circumstances of their own lives. We must not picture the practical role of sociology only as assisting policy makers-that is powerful groups-to take informed decisions. Those in power cannot be assumed always to have in mind the interest of the less powerful or underprivileged in the policies they pursue. Self-enlightened groups can respond in an effective way to policies pursued by government officials or other authorities and can also form policy initiatives of their own. Self-help groups (like alcoholics anonymous) and social movements (like women`s movements) are examples of social associations that directly seek to bring about practical reforms.

5 The sociologist role in society

Should sociologists themselves actively advocate, and agitate for, practical programmes of reform or social change? Some argue that sociology can preserve its objectivity only if practitioners of the subject are studiously neutral in moral and political controversies, but there is no reason to think that scholars who remain aloof from current debates are necessarily more impartial in their assessment of sociological issues than others. There is bound to be a connection between studying sociology and the promoting of social conscience. No sociologically sophisticated person can be unaware of the inequalities that exist in the world today, the lack of social justice in many social situations or the deprivations suffered by millions of people. It would be strange if sociologists did not take sides on practical issues, and it would be illogical as well as impractical to try to ban them from drawing on their sociology expertise in so doing.

Field experience has shown that sociologists can be employed in various sectors. Based on a baseline survey conducted a few years ago it was for instance shown that:

31%	-	Social Services
22%	-	Business, Commerce
19%	-	Educational/Academic
10%	-	Other
8%	-	Professions, Professional Assistance
5%	-	Research, Data Processing & Communications
5%	-	Government

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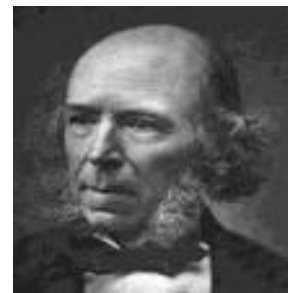
Appendix 1: Other Prominent Contributors to Sociology

There are also many other contributors to sociology. Some of these include:

Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) (English)

Spencer's works included the following:

- Growth structure and differentiation;
- Social types;
- Militant and industrial societies;
- Evolution or multilinear functionalism;
- Individualism versus organizes;
- Non-intervention and the survival of the fittest; and
- Obstacles to objectivity.



Spencer was mainly concerned with evolutionary changes in social structures and social institutions rather than with the attendant state. A change from a state of relatively indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a state of relatively heterogeneity was a universal process which explains both the earliest changes which the universe at large is supposed to have undergone and those latest changes which we traced in society and the products of social life.

Inkeles (1964) outlines the topics of the field of sociology:

Units are produced, reared and fitted for cooperation. The development of the family thus stands first in order. Sociology has next to describe the rise and development of that political organization which in several ways regulates affairs... which combines the actions of individuals ...and which restrains them in certain way of dealing with one another...there has to be similarly describe the evolution of ecclesiastical structures and functions....The systems of restraint whereby the minor factions of citizens are regulated, has also to be dealt with.... The stages through the industrial part passes...have to be studied... (as well as) the growth of those regulative structures which the part develops within itself....

According to Spencer, Sociology encompasses the analysis of the society and its institutions, their interdependence and development, interactions of the individual with the society and institution and the systems of controlling their interactions.

George Simmel (1858 – 1919) (German)

According to George Simmel, society consists of a web of personal interactions, and that the task of sociology is to study the form of these interactions as they occur and reoccur in diverse historical periods and cultural settings.



George Simmel's works included the following:

- Formal sociology;
- Social types;
- The dialectical method in Simmel's Sociology;
- The significance of numbers for social life;
- Simmel's ambivalent view of modern culture; and
- A note on the philosophy of money.



Charles Horton Cooley (1864 – 1929) (American)

According to Cooley, Self and Society are twinborn. This stress on the organic link and indissoluble connection between self and society is the theme of most of Cooley's writings. He argued that a person's self grows out of a person's contact with others. The "social origin of his life comes by the pathway of intercourse with other persons". The self is not first individual and then social, it arises directly through communication. One's consciousness of himself is a reflection of the ideas about himself that he attributes to other minds, thus there can be no isolated selves. There is no sense of "I"...without its correlative sense of you, or him, or them.

His works included:

- The Looking – Glass Self;
- The organic view of society;
- The primary group;
- Sociological method;
- Social process; and
- Institutional analysis.

Robert Ezra Park, 1863-1931 (American)

According to Park, Sociology is "the science of collective behavior".

This definition supposes that while he was mindful of the need for analysis of social structures, he was mainly concerned with the study with more fluid social processes. In his view, society is best conceived as a product of interactions between components of individuals that are controlled by a body of traditions and norms that arise in the process of interaction.

Social control is “the central fact and the central problem of society”. Society is everywhere, where there is a controlled organization. Its function is to organize, integrate, and direct the energies resident in the individuals which compose it. Sociology is therefore, “a point of view and method of investigating the processes by which individuals are inducted into and induced to cooperate in some sort of corporate existence we call society”.

Social control refers to the variety of mechanisms by which collective behavior is organized, contained and channeled. The social process involves forms of antagonism, of conflict and competition, and social control serves to order these processes.

His works included the following:

- Collective Behavior and Social Control;
- Four Major Social Processes;
- Social Distance;
- Social Change;
- The Biotic Order and Social Order; and
- The Self and the Social Role.

Karl Mannheim, 1893 – 1947 (Hungarian)

The sociological point of view of Mannheim “seeks from the very beginning to interpret individual activity in all spheres within the context of group experience”. Thinking is never a privileged activity free from the effects of the group life; therefore, it must be understood and interpreted within its context. No given individual “confronts the world and, in striving for the truth, constructs a world view out of data of his experience. It is much more correct that knowledge is from the very beginning a cooperative process of group life, in which everyone unfolds knowledge within a framework of a common fate, a common activity, and the overcoming of common difficulties.



His works included the following:

- The Sociology of Knowledge; and
- The Sociology of planned Reconstruction.

Pitirim A. Sorokin, 1889 – 1968 (Russian)



Sorokin sociological theory is based on the distinction between the social static's (Structural sociological as he calls it) and social dynamic. To Sorokin, the process of human interaction involves three essential elements:

- (i) Human actors as subject of interaction
- (ii) Meanings, values, and norms that guide human conduct, and
- (iii) Material phenomena that are vehicles and conductors for meanings and values to be objectified and incorporated into a sequence of actions.

The emphasis is on the importance of cultural factors that is of super-organic elements, as determinants of social conduct. To understand personalities as subjects of interaction, and society as the totality of interaction personalities, one must bear in mind that they rest on a foundation of culture – a culture that comprises the totality of meanings, norms, and values possessed by interacting persons and carried by material vehicles such as ritual objectives or works of art, which objectify and convey these meaning.

Sorokin's work included the following:

- The overall doctrine;
- A saranomic of Society and culture;
- Sociology of knowledge;
- Social stratification and social mobility; and
- The social philosophy.

Compiled and adapted by DJB/2020/09