

Lecture notes on:

# **Social Institutions I: Sociology of Family, Religion, and Education**

# Social Institutions I

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## Preface

### What is Sociology?

Through out our discussion of the different and major social institutions within a society, I need you to have at least a basic definition of what sociology is all about and what it studies. So let's define what sociology is.

Basically, sociology is the study of modern human *societies*.

The term *society* refers to the largest conceivable *group*, a definite and distinct entity, characterized by:

- A definite territory (geographic location)
- Sexual reproduction (relatively self-sustaining and independent)
- Comprehensive and common culture, and
- Interdependence between its different parts (organized relationship among the parts)

*Group* is two or more people who form an interactional system, who share a feeling of unity, and those who are bound together in a relatively stable pattern of interaction.

A society can be defined broadly or narrowly with respect of the context of speaking.

With an interestingly enough similarity with a living organism, a society has got its own demands and needs to meet and problems to solve on order to survive and perpetuate, that could be referred to as the four functional problems.

The four functional problems of any social system:

1. The problem of making a living from the environment for the system- this problem is referred as the problem of adaptation. The basic needs or necessities of life must be met, they need to be produced and distributed.
2. The problem of achieving the goals of a social system- this problem is referred to as the problem of goal attainment. Peace and order should be kept.
3. The problem of holding the different parts of the system- this problem is referred to as the problem of integration. For people to be part of society, their membership should give them meaning.
4. The problem of replacing the worn out parts of a system and the problem of socializing to the norms and values and etc, of the society- this problem is referred to as the problem of latent pattern maintenance.

The relevance of talking about the four functional problems in relation to the course that we are dealing now with is the social institutions that we are going to discuss about try to meet these functional problems. We've said that society can't exist and persists, unless these four functional problems are solved. Therefore, social institutions exist to meet these functional problems.

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## PART ONE

### Chapter One

#### Introduction

AN INSTITUTION in an ordinary day-to-day language refers to an organization or an institution with definite system of interaction or bureaucracies and social and physical boundaries and with definite and specific goals at hand.

Social institutions are of vital significance to the fabric of any society's culture and to the daily experiences of individuals. They are usually conceived of as the *basic focuses of social organization, common to all societies and dealing with the basic universal problems of ordered social life.*

But *social institutions*, on the other hand, are *an organized system of social relationships, which embodies certain common values and procedures, and meets certain basic needs of the society.*

It can be defined as *a system of norms<sup>1</sup>, values<sup>2</sup>, statuses<sup>3</sup>, and roles<sup>4</sup>, which are developed around a major social function.*

Social institutions are composed of and concerned with two elements, which could be examined separately:

- a. With persons who are engaged in interaction with one another. It refers to the study of how persons interact to create, sustain or transform social relationships (a micro-sociology); and
- b. With the patterns of interactions that will develop when the interaction has become routinized or regularized or habitualized. It refers to the study of patterns of social relationships and how they fit together to create a society (a macro-sociology).

As it has been indicated at the outset, there are certain universal and basic tasks that social institutions perform if human societies are to exist and carry on. These minimum tasks or needs of human societies are all *universal and vital.*

What are the vital needs or tasks that need to be performed if societies are to perpetuate?

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<sup>1</sup> Social norm: a shared expectation of behavior that connotes what is considered culturally desirable and appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> Social value: an idea held by people about ethical behavior or appropriate behavior, what is right or wrong, desirable or undesirable.

<sup>3</sup> Social status: a position, which a person occupies in the social structure. "The position of a person in a group"

<sup>4</sup> Social roles: the social expectations attached to a particular social status. "The behavior expected of one who occupies a certain status"

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1. New members should be born and socialized to the norms, values, rules and regulations of their society. The *family* is the institution responsible for producing new members and to give them preliminary acquaintanceship with the basic norms and values of their society. The *educational institutions* will further teach and socialize these new members of the society to the standards.
2. The basic necessities of life must be produced and distributed. The *economic institutions* are responsible for the production, distribution, and exchange of the necessities of life.
3. Peace and order should be kept stable. People should feel secured and their integrity intact if they are to undertake their everyday life activities with good spirits. To this end, every society needs *political institutions* that are responsible for maintaining peace and order, and provide some kind of leadership.
4. People should feel that their life is purposeful and worthwhile to live. The *religious institutions* are responsible for providing purpose for life and making it meaningful and worthwhile.

The major social institutions are of five types: the *family*, the *religion*, the *education*, the *polity*, and the *economy*; and in addition to these major social institutions there are such minor items as *recreation, art, health, sport, science, etc.*

## I.1. Origin and Universality of Social Institutions

T. Hobbes and J. Lock's philosophy states that human kind had lived in the *state of nature* without social institutions, and organization and with total individual freedom. People used to live without the help of others-they used to live on their own.

According to this view, man eventually discovered the need for organizations and the advantages they can provide. Then, a social contract was made. Subsequently, co-operations, organizations, and institutions emerged.

But, on the other hand, sociologists argue that *social institutions have emerged with the emergence of man as a distinctive species*. The isolated individual in the state of nature could have never existed, as man can't live without the help of others. They argued that when human kind emerged from the evolution of species, *society* appeared as the immediate context for his existence.

Although there is a difference in the type and functions they perform, social institutions exist in every known culture. They are universal. Any social revolution altering the forms of social institutions and removing the positions that make up the establishments, will in turn establish new positions in the new forms *of the same basic social institutions*. They only change the norms that govern the behavior of the participants. But, the institutions usually exist; they persist.

## II.2. Functions of Social Institutions

The fact that social institutions and the functions they perform are universal entails that man can't exist without them, in one way or the other.

Social institutions have primary and secondary functions.

### **Primary Functions: *An Area of Paramount Function of the Social Institutions***

#### ***The Family Institution:***

The family institution performs essentially two major functions for the general society; one is the reproduction of mankind (producing new members) in a regulated and socially acceptable way, and the other the caring of the newborn babies during their infancy and early age and satisfy the human emotional needs and drives.

#### ***The Educational Institutions:***

The perpetuation of the cultural heritage of a society by passing it on to each new generation and socializing<sup>5</sup> of new members of the society are the two major functions of the educational institutions.

#### ***The Religious Institutions:***

Religion is the most dynamic means of social control, even more than social and public legislations by offering people a sense of order, purpose, and direction and by influencing and supporting the dominant values of the society.

#### ***The Economic Institutions:***

Economic institutions supply the basic human needs. Every society organizes economic institutions for the purpose of coordination of production, distribution, exchange and consumption of goods and services.

#### ***The Political Institutions:***

In order for a society to exist and perpetuate, there must be rules and regulations to keep peace and order. In all society there must be some sort of a *power holder- the government*, whose responsibility will be the maintaining of peace and order among individuals with in the society and with the outsiders. Primitive societies also have had traditional forms of government which, however, may not be as sophisticated as the modern ones could be.

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<sup>5</sup> Socialization by educational institutions refers teaching the young about the culture of their society or the various patterns of living they need to know to live in their social environment. It is a long due process that begins at birth and ends at death.

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## **Secondary Functions**

Institutions usually support each other's. Those functions that one institution performs in support of other institutions are known as *secondary functions*.

### **An Example**

For example, we can take the family and see what secondary functions can it perform fro other institutions in a society.

#### ***Secondary functions of the family in relation to the educational institutions:***

There are numbers of functions that the family performs in support of the educational institutions:

1. The family lays the basis for the formal education (children learn the fundamental skills, rules in the society from their family-their parents).
2. Starting at an early age, infants are socialized with in the family. Therefore, children receive their first education from the family (the socialization that we receive from our families are more influential than any other socialization in our later life).

It plays an important part in training and socializing the young into acceptable patterns of behavior in the society and therefore transmits the social culture of the society from one generation to the next.

#### ***Secondary functions of the family in relation to the religious institutions:***

1. The family gives the infant his first contact with religious ideals and beliefs.
2. The family through examples reinforces various moral issues, although it's the major concern of the religious institutions.

#### ***Secondary function of the family in relation to the political institutions:***

The political institutions depend up on the family for developing with in the children a respect for authority and demonstrate the qualities of good citizenship, peace and order. It is a useful agency of social control.

#### ***Secondary function of the family in relation of the economic institutions:***

The family assists the economic institutions by acting as a basic unit of production and consumption.

In addition, it provides a bridge between the individual and the wider society that he'll encounter when he enters the world of work as an independent adult. It is an informal agency of education.

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The million functions of a society are organized in to these five social institutions. These social institutions work together to make the society an efficient and a well organized one. They exit in a constant mutual interaction. There is interdependence between these social institutions. We can't study one institution separately unless we try to understand how it works with other institutions--by seeing a network in which a change in one institution brings changes in other institutions.

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## Chapter Two The Sociology of the Family

THE FAMILY is one of the major social systems of any society and that the family life is expected to meet certain needs of the individual and the society. The sociology of the family is the sub-field of sociology that tries to explain the nature of the family, the orders and the disorders in the family. The three major areas of concern of the sociology of family are the following.

- a. The sociology of the family is interested in the organization, the structures and functions of the family.
- b. The sociology of the family is interested in how the family as a social system is sustained and modified. The family had undergone significant changes in its past life span; and that is the subject matter of the sociology of the family-how it changes, what changes and what is its fate in the future.
- c. The sociology of the family is concerned with how the components of the family are interrelated and how the family as a unit is interdependent with other social institutions and how family relationships are formed and changed.

### II.1. Definitions of the Family

It is really difficult to give a universally applicable definition of the family.

In his book of the “Social Structure” which was published in 1949 G. Murdock defined *the family* as ‘*a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation, and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children of own or adopted of the sexually cohabitating adults.*

The family is the smallest group of the society.

The definition of *the family* in some societies may refer to *a set of people related by blood, marriage (or some other agreed up on relationship), or by adoption, who share the primary responsibility for reproduction and caring for member of society.*

However, many social scientists contend that *a family is a socially approved, heterosexually arranged group made up of a female and male and their children through which procreation and socialization takes place and the life long bonds or kin relations is initiated.*

### II.2. Forms of the Family: Institutionalized Structures

There are different arguments regarding the understanding of the family through the view of its varied forms. But the widely accepted and the most formal one in the classification of the types of the family include the following:



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## 1. The Nuclear Family

The nuclear family is the family structure composed of two adults of the opposite sexes living together in socially approved sexual relations together with children owed or adopted.

Mostly, during his lifetime, a person is a member of two different and overlapping nuclear families: the *family of orientation* and the *family of procreation*.

### a. The Family of Orientation

It is the family that one is born in to and from which he or she receives basic and initial socialization. It usually consists of the self, siblings and the parents. For the children, a nuclear family is the family of orientation with which they identify themselves as members, even while they are far gone.

### b. The Family of Procreation

It is the family that adults form while leaving their family of orientation and it is composed of the self, spouse, and the children. It is a family that an individual lives by himself independent of the parents.

A nuclear family is alternatively referred to as *conjugal family*. But there is a slight difference in the use of these two terms. For a family to be referred as conjugal, it must necessarily include the husband and the wife. But a nuclear family may or may not include a marrying couple; it may consist of any of the two or more persons that are related by marriage, kinship, or blood relationship.

Generally speaking, a nuclear family is the characteristic feature of the industrialized societies. It is a transitory and a two-generational (the parents and the children) family.

## 2. The Polygamous Family

The polygamous family consists of the two or more nuclear families that are affiliated by having one married parent in common, with the marriage pattern being either polygynous or polyandrous. For example in the case of the polygynous family one man acts as husband and father and thus unites them in to a larger familial group.

## 3. The Extended Family

An extended family consists of two or more nuclear families affiliated through an extension of the *parent-child relationship* rather than of the *husband-wife relationship*, i.e., by joining the nuclear family of a married adult of his parents.

It is usually a patriarchal group dominated by the senior male members. This type of family system is found most often in pre-industrial agrarian communities, where it represents the traditional values and beliefs of the society (such as male dominance, female subservience, and

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family unity) and maintains the traditional functions of the family unit. It is responsible for the education, training and welfare of the family members.

In the extended family arrangement, one could find two or more generations living in one house, or in houses close to one another forming one cooperative unit. The head of the family unit is the *eldest* one. The extended families are mostly created to meet the need for cooperation for undertaking some tedious agricultural activities in horticultural societies

Basic differences between the **nuclear** and the **extended** families include the following:

- a. In nuclear families the size of members is much fewer than for the extended families.
- b. The extended families usually persist over generations; the death of a parent may not affect the existence of the family, which is not the case for nuclear families.
- c. In the case of the extended families *blood* is more emphasized criterion of membership, and, as a result, it is called a *consanguineal kin*. But for nuclear families the emphasis is on *marriage* – which is called an *affineal kin*.
- d. The organizational principles of the extended families are more complex than that of the nuclear families.

## The Modified Extended Family

The modified extended family exists where the nuclear families, although they may be living far apart geographically, maintain regular contacts and mutual support through visits, phone calls, and letters.

### *Advantages of the Extended Family*

- a. Continuity of Generations:** It ensures continuity of families over generations by linking parental families with new families of procreation.
- b. Maintenance and Transmission of Family Holdings and Traditions:** It is a more effective structure for maintaining family traditions and for the transmission of family holdings from one generation to the next.
- c. Large Kin Network:** It exposes children to the large networks of kin relations.
- d. Provide Comfort and Companionship:** It reduces strains for family members at times of such crises as death of a member of a family, divorce, or illnesses, since there are more people who can provide assistance and emotional support.

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**e. Large Economic Unit:** The extended family constitutes a larger economic unit than the nuclear family, which enables its members to undertake various tasks taking advantages of the economies of scale.

Murdock found the nuclear family to be a universal human social grouping, whether it was the only type of family system or was joined together with other nuclear families to form a polygamous or extended family. This prevalence of the nuclear family may be in part explained by two of its basic functions:

1. Its role in providing both social cohesion and a reciprocally beneficial exchange (*reciprocity*).
2. Its reproductive and socialization activities with regard to new members of the society (*legitimation*).

## Other Types of Family Arrangement

In addition of these conventional classifications, sociologists and anthropologists have another classification of the family types:

### The Reconstructed Family

It is a family where one or both partners had been previously married, and where they brought with them children of the previous marriage. Such family is common in the western world because of the increasing rate divorce and remarriage.

**A Single Parent Family:** it is a family in which there is only one parent present to care for the children. This is a family type that arises from the death of one of the parents, or from a divorce, or from lack of desire to get married.

**A Symmetrical (Dual-Career) Family:** this is one where the roles of the husband and the wife or cohabitating partners have become alike, or symmetrical and equal. In this type of a family (usually in the most developed countries) both partners are most likely to be wage earners.

Still there is another classification of family types for those intellectuals whose main concern is *how power is distributed* among the members of a family:

- ✓ **Patriarchal:** where by the male members of the family make the major decisions, and the authority resides in the father and his kinsmen.
- ✓ **Matriarchal:** here the major decision making power in the family resides on the mother and her close relatives.
- ✓ **Equalitarian:** where by authority in the family resides both on the father and the mother, more or less, equally.

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For those whose concern rest on the system of decent that exists with in the family or lineage, the classification include:

- ✓ **Patrilineal:** here names, obligations, duties, etc. are only transferred through the father's line.
- ✓ **Matrilineal:** where by names, obligations, duties, etc. are only transferred through the mother's line.
- ✓ **Bilinal:** in which case names, obligations, duties, etc. are transferred through both the father's and the mother's lines.

And for those whose concern is residence, the classification of family types include:

- ✓ **Patrilocal (Virilocal):** newly married couples reside with in the premises of the husband's parent's residence.
- ✓ **Matrilocal (Uxorilocal):** newly married couples reside with in the premises of the wife's parent's residence.
- ✓ **Neolocal:** newly marries couples reside on their own house independent of their parents.

## II.3. Marriage: An Institutionalized Arrangement

Norms that arrange for an institutionalized marriage differ from one culture to another. Traditional social norms viewed marriage as a sacred phenomenon; considered it as a divine institution, created and maintained by God. In many societies however, marriage is considered as a mechanism that provides for the legitimation of children. As a result, children born with in marriage are considered to be *legitimate*<sup>6</sup>, while children born out of parents without marital engagement are considered *illegitimate*.

Similarly, *Ira Reiss*'s defines *marriage* as *a socially accepted union of individuals in husband and wife roles, with the key function of legitimation of parent-hood.*

*E.R. Leach* defines *marriage* as 'a **bundle of rights**' (a bundle- *marriage* as a collection that includes legal father hood, legal mother hood, and the monopoly of sexual access between marriage partners, rights to domestic services, rights over property, recognized relationship of affinity, and etc.).

These definitions of marriage demonstrate to us that marriage involves several common criteria that cross-cuts its historically and culturally variable nature:

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<sup>6</sup> A legitimate child is a child who is born from a socially approved marriage. If refers to a parent-child relationship.

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1. It is a heterosexual union.
2. It legitimizes sexual relationships and child bearing.
3. It is a binding relationship that assumes permanence.
4. It is a public affair rather than a private personal matter.
5. It involves reciprocal and mutual rights and obligations between the spouses.
6. It is a highly patterned and institutionalized arrangement<sup>7</sup>.

Marriage can also be defined by the social functions it performs for the society:

*Marriage is an institutional means of providing for the performance of tasks concerned with procreation, rearing of future generation, and the transmission of material and cultural possessions, when the means concerned involves a reordering of relationships of kin groups and/or of the persons to be, already or potentially, the genetic parents of children.*

Marriage is concerned with the transference of rights between groups, which determine the patterns of inheritance and group membership of the children of the union thereby.

Marriage marks the re-ordering of domestic relationships as well as establishing those of descent and, if the domestic unit is an economic unit, of economic relationship as well. It also involves the transfer of rights in the persons of the spouses. And this takes *two* forms: the domestic and the sexual.

a. **Domestic Rights** is usually determined by patterns of residence, i.e., whether the couples are residing in their own or they are residing in the husband's or the wife's parent's. For example, in the patrilocal arrangements, the right of the domestic services is transferred from the wife to the relatives of her husband. In the case of matrilocal patterns the rights to domestic services are transferred from the husband to the relatives of his wife. But if the couples decided to live on their own by setting up a new domestic group, their domestic service is shared. In the case of a natolocal pattern<sup>8</sup>, their own relatives maintain the domestic services of each couple.

b. **Sexual Rights**; marriage is primarily a transference of rights between the groups. Here marriage transfers rights in the wife's sexuality not exclusively to the husband but to the males of the husband's sibling group, or rights in the females of a sibling group to a husband of one of them. Since the rights in the child born of a woman to whom her husband's brothers have had *privileged access* will, in a patrilineal society, be regarded as belonging to her husband on the principle that the social father is the rightful husband of its mother, whoever the genetic father may be. This is not the case of *plural marriage* but one of *privileged mating*.

## II.4. Forms of Marriage

### 1. Monogamy

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<sup>7</sup> There are norms, values, obligations, and duties that secure it.

<sup>8</sup> A Natolocal arrangement is a pattern in which the wife continues to reside with her brothers and the husband may merely visit her.

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In most Christian countries, monogamy is the only accepted and existing form of marriage. It is a form of marriage in which a person can only have one marital partner *at a time*. In such societies, where monogamy is the only form of marriage, if a man or woman enters in to a new marital arrangement before he or she settles the first one, it is considered as a crime and it's called **bigamy**.

## 2. Serial Monogamy

This marital pattern exists where some people just keep on divorcing and remarrying, but each time each marriage is a monogamous in its form (one at a time, one after the other, and they don't last long).

## 3. Polygamy

In some other societies it is perfectly acceptable to have more than one partner at a time. A general term referring to a marriage between one member of a sex and two or more members of the opposite at the same time is called **polygamy**. It might be a surprise to you to learn that most societies throughout the world, past and present, have preferred polygamy *not* monogamy. Anthropologist George Murdock sampled 565 societies and found out that 80% had some type of polygamy as their preferred form.

There are *two* basic types of **polygamy**. According to Murdock, the most common- endorsed by the majority of the cultures he sampled- was **polygyny**, which refers to the marriage of a man to more than one woman at a time. The various wives could be sisters, who are expected to hold similar values and have already had experienced sharing the household. In this case, the marital arrangement is called **sororal polygyny**. On the other hand, when a marital arrangement involves wives who aren't related (not sisters or kin), the arrangement is called **non- sororal polygyny**.

A specific form of sororal polygyny is the inheritance of a sister of kin of one's dead wife, which is known as **sororate**. Gumuz and the Zulu are peculiar examples of this type of marriage.

**Polyandry**, the other basic type of polygamy, has been accepted by some extremely poor societies, and by those who carry out female infanticide (the killing of female girls) and thus have a relatively small number of women. It is the union of women to several men at the same time. It is a very rare form of marriage found in the very isolated cultures of the world (e.g. the Toda culture of the Southern India, Marquesan Islanders in the Pacific). In this case too polyandry has two distinctive forms: *fraternal*<sup>9</sup> and *non-fraternal*<sup>10</sup>.

A specific form of fraternal polyandry is levirate, where a widow inherits her dead husband's brother.

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<sup>9</sup> By fraternal we are referring to that arrangement where the husbands are all brothers (where the several men are brothers.)

<sup>10</sup> By non-fraternal we are referring to that arrangement where the husbands are not brothers or related.

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Polyandry creates one problem that polygyny doesn't-the biological father of the newborn is not known, and no tracing (descent as well as inheritance) pattern is possible.

Nevertheless, there are some justifications for the existence of such a practice. Some say it is a mechanism of *adjustment to poverty*-regions where polyandry exists is very hostile to human settlement and to earning a livelihood.

Others contend the practice is because of the *unbalanced sex ratio* that exists between the male and the female population (which results from the practice of the killing of newborn female infants). These people on this line of contention also cite one advantage of the practice of polyandry; it enables to keep the birth rate low.

## II.5. Modes of Acquiring a Wife

There are several modes of acquiring a wife devised by diverse societies depending on their own cultural context. The most common ones are:

### 1. *Bride wealth*

in societies with descent groups, people enter in to marriage not alone, but with the help of their descent group. Descent group members often have to contribute to bride wealth, a customary gift before, at, or after marriage from the husband and his kin to the wife and her kin. It's the most common way of acquiring a wife. Another word for bride wealth is bride price, but this term is inaccurate because people with the custom don't usually regard the exchange as a sale.

Functions of the bride wealth:

1. It compensates the brides group for the lose of her *companionship* and *labor*.
2. It makes the children born to the woman full members of her husband's descent group, from which it is called a *progeny price*.

2. **Dowry:** it's a marital exchange in which the wife's group provides substantial gifts to the husband's family. Dowry best known from India correlates with low female status. Women are perceived as burdens. When a man and his family take a wife, they expect to be compensated from the added responsibility.

3. **Bride Service:** this is a practice where by a marrying man serves for a specified time for his wife-to-be family before he gets the permission to marry her.

4. **Gift Exchange:** this refers to an equivalent exchange of gifts between the families of the marrying couples at marriage.

5. **Abduction:** it is practiced in many different cultures. Here a person settles this marital arrangement with the use of force.

6. **Elopement:** this is the capturing of the wife-to-be without the use of force. Here it's assumed that there is a prior agreement between the marrying couples. It usually occurs when the two

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contracting couples are agreeing to form a marital relationship while their families failed to approve the affiliation.

**7. Inheritance:** this refers to a condition where a man of a house dies, there by his brother inherit his wife and assume his responsibilities, and vice-versa.

**8. Adoption:** in this case a man may obtain a wife by being adopted to a family-or a girl may obtain a husband by being adopted to a family.

**9. Sister Exchange:** it refers to an exchange between two families both having brother and sister to one another as husband and wife.

## II.6. Marriage Contract

Marriage contract is a formal contract, when a person gets married, having the objective of defining the rights and obligations of the spouses. It regulates the marital arrangement.

Although marriage unites the two spouses the society is always the third party; the society involves itself in the affairs of the spouses.

### II.6.1. Types of Marital Contracts

#### Customary Marriage

It is a type of marital arrangement practiced in most agrarian communities, and it is usually arranged by parents. Parents in trying to form a marital arrangement for their kids, they look for the right type of person in status and social rank. It is rather a marriage between the families than a marriage between the spouses. Hence, romance doesn't have a place in arranging the relationship.

#### Church Marriage (Religious Marriage)

Historically marriage is the concern of the church before it becomes the state's. And therefore the church considers the right to recognize any marital relationships as its jurisdiction and fails to recognize all other marriages that take place outside of it.

#### Civil marriage

Is the most common type of marital arrangement in most urban areas, for which the state provides a certificate for recognition. And equally, all other types of marriage contracts (customary and church) are recognized by *the state*.

## II.7. Mate Selection and Restriction on the Choice of Mate

**Mate selection:** is the process that results in the getting together of two spouses.

Some societies give no chance to individuals to choose whom they wish to marry. There are some guidelines; there is always strict control imposed over individuals by the society on the



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choice of whom to marry and whom not to. This stronger control resulted from what is known as *incest*-a sexual relationship between too close kin relatives. Therefore society has established what is known as *incest taboo*.

Every known society prohibits sexual relationship between kin, although there is a variation. And in almost all known societies a sexual relationship within a nuclear family is a universally taboo practice (except for the husband and the wife). An individual should have a sexual relationship or get married outside of his close kin, which is acceptable and institutionalized. Hence, in some societies, even a marriage between remote kin is forbidden but in some societies *cross-cousin marriage* (marriage between children of brothers and sisters) is allowed. Incest taboo exists and prohibits a sexual relationship between parents and children and marriage or sexual relationship between brothers and sisters.

A taboo that prohibits a sexual relationship between parents and children is called *intra-generational incest*. And the one which prohibits a sexual relationship between brothers and sisters is called an *inter-generational incest*<sup>11</sup>.

All cultures define who is an acceptable candidate for marital relationship for someone by providing regulations.

## II.7.1. Incest Taboo is Universal: Why?

Explanations of incest taboo have led to many and varied theories. However, one simple traditional explanation to incest taboo is that if it happens it will lead to disaster in the society as a result of the disappointment of the supernatural powers.

### *Six Theories to Explain Incest Taboo:*

1. **In-Breeding Theory:** It asserts that the mating of close kin produces bad results, such as abnormal, enfeebled, and insufficiently numerous offspring. The incest taboo is therefore adaptive because it limits inbreeding, and arose on that account. However, the theory assumes genetics beyond the capacity of the societies of the early times. In some societies, for example, cross-cousin marriage (between children of brother and sister, as it is the case in Afar) is allowed.

2. **Family Theory:** This theory states that unregulated sexual competition is disruptive for any group, which the family is crucial group, and the incest taboo is needed to maintain the family intact. S. Freud and B. Malinowski developed this theory. Freud argued that there is always a sexual attraction between the parents and the children of opposite sexes (which he identified as

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<sup>11</sup> The best known examples of intra-generational incest come from the Inca-Peru, ancient Egypt and traditional Hawaii. Those cultures allowed royal brother-sister marriages. Privileged endogamy, a violation of the incest taboo that applied to commoners in those cultures, was a means of differentiating between the rulers and the subjects.

Among the aristocratic families of the Ancient Egypt, there was a marriage between the members of the nuclear family, but because of two reasons: to keep the aristocratic family blood pure; to keep property and power within the family members. Except for such cases, incest taboo within the nuclear family is universal.

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the Electra complex-the daughter's sexual attraction towards her father-and the Oedipus complex-the son's sexual attraction to his mother). So according to this theory, incest taboo is established to avoid this sexual conflict, to protect and maintain the family and safeguard the society at large. If there is no incest taboo, roles will be confused, who the mother is, who the father is, and who the children are aren't known. This theory has its own shortcomings. It tries to explain incest taboo within the nuclear family. But it doesn't explain its existence outside of the nuclear family.

**3. Socialization Theory:** It asserts that the regulation of and control of erotic impulses is an indispensable part of socialization. Therefore these impulses should be frustrated and directed outside the nuclear family. In order for this learning to occur, the socializing agent must control but not directly gratify the child's erotic impulses.

**4. Demographic Theory:** This theory holds that for the early man, the short life span, small number of offspring to reach maturity, spacing of those offspring, and random sex ratio of the offspring, taken altogether made interfamilial inbreeding a virtual demographic impossibility. Later when technological improvements resulted in longer life, interfamilial mating becomes possible; but the already existing pattern of familial exogamy was given normative backing through the creation of the familial taboo.

**5. Social and Cultural Theory:** This theory holds that, left for their own devices, human beings prefer to mate with in the family; but the need for wider group (for sharing cultural innovations, for mutual aid and for economic security) makes family and supra-family exogamy highly adaptive as a device for joining families or larger kinship groups.

**6. The Indifference or the Revulsion Theory:** According to this theory, the incest taboo is either a formal expression of the sexual indifference of the kinsmen towards each other, or a formal expression of an instinctive horror of sexual relations among kinsmen. If people live together for long time, they will develop a strong relationship, and they think of no sex. But it fails to answer the question, "it is instinct, why some people violate it? Does that mean these people have no instinct?"

In addition to these theories Murdock had come up with a theory, an *Eclectic Theory of Incest Taboo*, which takes and integrates the good elements of each theory in order to explain why incest taboo is universal.

## II.8. Rules of Exogamy and Endogamy

Many societies have explicit or unstated rules that define potential mates as acceptable or unacceptable. These norms can be distinguished in terms of endogamy and exogamy and they refer to the question of selectivity.

### **Rules of Exogamy (*exo: outside*)**

This rule requires an individual to marry someone *outside* of his or her culturally defined group (kinship) to which he or she belongs. This is an extension of incest taboo that prohibits a marital relationship between family members. Nonetheless, exogamy is *broader* than the incest taboo by the fact that it needs a culturally defined group (a tribe, a clan, etc.).

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## **Rules of Endogamy (*endon: with in*)**

This rule requires a person to find a marrying couple within a culturally defined group, or kinship to which he or she is a member (a tribe, a clan, an ethnic group, a religious group, a social class, a race, etc.). The most vivid example of an endogamous marriage is the Indian Caste System. The Aderie in Ethiopia could also be considered as an endogamous group. Endogamy is intended to reinforce the cohesiveness of the group by suggesting to the young that they should marry someone of "*our own kind*". Endogamous restrictions can be seen as preferences of one group over another.

## **Other Types of Control over Mate Selection**

In certain instances, the parents, or the society at large may regulate the choice of partner. Therefore, love and mate selection do not necessarily coincide. Many of the world's cultures give priority in mate selection to factors other than romantic feelings. The newly married couple is expected to develop a feeling of love after the legal union is formalized.

### ***Child Marriage***

This is a sort of arrangement in which contracting parents enter to before the child had time to establish any attachment. In this type of marital arrangement, the parents or other members of the family might settle the marriage contract. In this type of marital arrangement the child has no right to marry what he or she wants or wishes to marry.

### ***Child Isolation***

This is marriage in which a similar effect to child marriage may be achieved by isolating the child, usually the girls, so that she will have no contacts with individuals of the opposite sex, and therefore she will be totally dependant on members of her family regarding the choice of mate.

### ***Supervision without Segregation or Isolation:***

It involves controlling without segregating the child from any contact with individuals of the opposite sex. This supervision is made possible through the parents teaching their kids about the great social value of *sexual purity, virginity* at time of marriage. 'Premarital sex' is shameful both for the girls and their families'.

### ***Indirect Parental Supervision***

In this case the choice of the partner is formally free, and in fact free as long as the partner comes from the right social category or milieu. The theory doesn't specify how the person's 'rightness' is to be determined and thus the way is wide open to the advice of more 'experienced' people, i.e., parents.

It ought to be noted here that the occurrence of these different types of control over choice of marriage partner can be understood in terms of the ideas that a society has about sexuality on the one hand, and the uses to which the system of marriage and affinity is put to, on the other.

Despite these restrictions, the general trend in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the new millennia is that there is a transition from the selection of a mate for a child by the parents to the selection of mate by the child himself or herself.

## II.9. Kinship and the Family

All societies have found some forms of family organization a convenient way to deal with problems faced by all human groups: the need to facilitate economic cooperation between the sexes, the need to provide a proper setting within which child rearing may take place, and the need to control sexual activity. Though efficient and flexible family organization may be in rising to solve challenges connected with such problems, the fact is that many societies need to deal with problems that are beyond the ability of family organization to deal with. For one, there is often a need for some means by which members of one local group can claim support and protection from individuals in another. This can be important for defense against natural and/or man made disasters. For another, there frequently is a need for some means to share rights in some means of production which can't be divided without its destruction. Finally, there is often a need for some means of providing cooperative work forces for tasks that require more participants than can be provided by family alone.

There are many way to deal with these sorts of problems. One way is through the development of a formal political system with personnel to make and enforce laws, keep the peace, allocate resources and perform other regulatory and other societal functions. A more common way in non-industrial societies is through the development of the kinship groups.

The study of kinship is the study of how people feel, or how they ought to behave to people in different genealogical categories. It is the study of how people should behave to the ones who are related to them by blood, marriage, etc. It is so basic as to be taken for granted.

### II.9.1. Definition of Kinship

*Kinship* is a social relationship based on family relatedness, as culturally defined, on marriage, or on adoption. It is the state of being related to others. It is culturally learned and is not totally determined by biological ties.

*Kinship* is a social relationship, which is not as such a biological relationship, which differs from society to society. The way societies classify people as kinsmen vary from culture to culture.

### II.9.2. Classification of Kin group

There are two basic types of kin classification: *consanguineal* and *affineal* kin. The first one referred to those people who are related by bonds of blood (mother, father, sister, brother, etc.). It is also sometimes called *cognatic*.

On the basis of distance from an *ego*, the mother and the father are the *first degree ascending generations*, while children are the *first degree descending generation*.

The second type of kin classification is the so-called the affineal kinship. It refers to those people with whom one is related by marital ties (brother-in-law, sister-in-law, etc.).

### II.9.3. The Universality of Kinship

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Kinship, like the family, is a universal phenomenon that exists in all known cultures. However, in industrial societies its cohesiveness is declining as relationships depend less and less on blood and other familial ties. People develop different forms of organizations and institutions that would replace the roles of the kinship network in the modern world. Nevertheless, kinship still is one of the universal human cultures.

There are two major approaches that try to explain kinship as a universal human phenomenon.

Most attempts to explain the universality of kinship relation are related to the '*extension theory of kinship*' developed by B. Malinowski. He argues that, *kinship* can be explained *in terms of the natural feelings of loyalty and affection that arose between members of biological group of parents and offspring, which were extended to remote categories of related persons.*

One major criticism against this theory of kinship universality is the fact that if kinship is so natural, we could have expected to have the same type of kinship systems everywhere in the world, which is, however, not the case. And the theory has also failed to account for the sentiments and feelings of affection that existed in children prior to the existence of a kinship system.

Another explanation to the universality of kinship was attempted in terms of the functions it performs: *for social life to be possible language and the rest of society's accumulated possessions should be transmitted to the next generation and an arrangement for its nurture during infancy and childhood must be made. Then, in the absence of any alternative arrangements, which are not likely under primitive conditions, and the kinship group must perform these activities.*

## II.9.4. Functions of the Kinship Group

### 1. *Mutual aid and security*

In a kinship group there exists an implied principle between members: that 'you should reach out for your relatives when they are in need of assistance.'

### 2. *Defines and regulates marriage and sexual relations*

Who should to marry and who not to? At what age? And a kinship group regulates incest taboo.

### 3. *Legal function and conflict resolution:*

Particularly in traditional societies a kinship group assumes every actions of the government. It is a kinship group that first handles every conflict that arose between the families, the kins, and other members of the community. It is a legal and universal unit and a first starting point of social organizations and other basic principles.

### 4. *Economic functions*

A kinship group usually settles the question of the ownership and inheritance of a property.

### 5. *Religious or ceremonial functions*

Kinsmen usually worship together. It links an individual to the past, present and the future.

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## **6. Continuity over generations**

It provides a link between one older generation and the younger generation.

## **II.10. Descent System or Patterns**

Kinship is a basis for a descent system. Descent system is a pattern of organized relationship, which is used for the transmission of duties, obligations, etc. All societies use the links of kinship for their descent system.

### **II.10.1. The Major Descent Patterns**

#### **a. Unilineal descent system** (sometimes called unisexual or unilateral)

It establishes a descent line exclusively through the male or the female line.

##### **a.1. Patrilineal descent system**

In patrilineal societies, the males are far more important than the females, for it is they who are considered to be responsible for the perpetuation of the group. Therefore, the rights, duties, etc. is transmitted through using the male line.

##### **a.2. Matrilineal descent system**

In matrilineal societies the duty of transmitting the rights and the duties from one generation to the next falls on the female members of the group.

#### **b. Ambilineal or Cognatic descent system:**

Ambilineal descent provides a measure of flexibility not usually found under unilineal descent; each individual has the option of affiliating with either the mother's or the father's descent group- which determines his or her descent system.

#### **c. Double descent or the double-unilineal descent system**

Here descent is reckoned both matrilineally and patrilineally, and it is very rare. But this is the case where property is divided between patrilineal line and matrilineal line possessions.

For example, in the Yako of the Eastern Nigeria, the patrilineage owns and transmits perpetual resources such as the land, whereas the matrilineage owns and transmits consumable property, such as livestock.

#### **d. Parallel descent**

It involves a descent system of transmitting resources through a sex specific group, i.e. from the mother to the daughter and from the father to the son.

#### **e. Cross descent**

It involves a descent system of transmitting resources from the father to the daughter and from the mother to the son.

## **II.11. Structure and Functions of the Family**

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The family has varied functions and activities to undertake: it has those functions that it performs for other social institutions, and those activities that are performed within the family; and also those functions that it performs for the individual personality.

## **II.11.1. the Family and the Other Social Institutions**

The relationship between the family and other social institutions can be conceived of as a *series of functional interchanges*. In these interchanges, the external systems regard the family, to some extent, as a *corporate and separate* unit. The individual family member is viewed as a representative of his family, and the actual interchange between the family and the external system may take place either as a family acting as a unit or an individual acting as a representative of his family.

### **1.1. the Family and the Economy**

The economy may be defined as that part of society that is concerned with the creation and distribution of material values and services. One interchange between the family and the economy is the *contribution of labor* by the family in exchange for *rewards for services*. The family, in addition to providing the individual with his basic skills and motivations, it allocates certain of the performance capacities of its members to the economy.

In some instances, the family contributes *finished and semi-finished products* and not labors; and in exchange the family receives the *functional equivalent of wages*. In general, wages are not determined by supply and demand but basically by the needs of the family.

In the consumption interchange, the family exchanges its *assets* for *consumer goods*. The family purchases are governed in large part by the supplies available in the economy. Any individual family has relatively little power in deciding the terms of this exchange.

### **1.2. the Family and the Polity**

Every social system has some type of administration of its activities to attain the goals of the system. The subsystem, which fulfills these functions for the society, may be termed as the *polity*. The nature of societal leadership requires that policies be made at a very general level; and thus with first interchange with the polity, the family contributes *loyalty* in exchange for *leadership*.

To some extent there is always a gap between the interests of the family and the interests of the state. In general, the time perspective of a single nuclear family being much shorter than the time span of the state, such projects as state expansion, austerity programs for basic state development, military programs and the like frequently require sacrifices from the family for which there is very little immediate motivation.

On the second level of interchanges, between the polity and the family, the family supplies *compliance* in exchange for *decisions* made by the polity. This depends, in part, on the polity's ability to deal successfully with the problems of the society. If the polity's decisions provide considerable benefits to the family its degree of compliance will be greater.

### **1.3. the Family and the General Community**



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All social systems face the problem of integrating the various activities and parts of the system; this problem is solved by the institutionalizing patterns of behavior and by using mechanisms of social control to motivate members to conform to these patterns. The sub-system of society concerned with this problem may be termed as *the community* defined as not as a single concrete group such as the village or the neighborhood, but as diffuse affective relationship of various social networks concerned with this task.

Even in a simpler society where a single group or a few overwhelming groups constituted the community and the polity; there is often a functional differentiation between the community and the polity. Whether one single group serves as both community and the polity, whether there is a variety of different ‘communities’, the diffuse affective bond to the community serves to integrate the family in to the society.

As one of the functional interchanges, the family *participates* in the community activities in exchange for *support* of the community. Ordinarily, the community reinforces the bonds of solidarity with in the family, but it may also prohibit the family from such intensive involvement in its own internal processes that it with draws from participation in community affairs. Thus from the view point of the community, both strains and involvements with in the family must be kept below a certain level, so as not to intervene with community activities. For example, not only is the family exempted from participation in the community activities at the times birth, marriage, death, and serious internal problems, but the community offers social support to the family, just as society gives special exemptions and therapy to the ‘sick’ person.

In the other functional interchanges the community offers the family an *identity* in exchange for *adherence* to the community patterns. At a minimum, the family is recognized as a legitimate part of the society, and usually the community provided the family with a *specific status position*, along with appropriate standards of behavior and rewards that accord with these norms.

In exchange for *identity*, the family *adherence* makes concrete the community patterns. While various members of the family have differential commitment to the various segments of a ‘community’ or to different ‘communities’, at a minimum the family gives tacit permission to its members to behave in accord with these various standards. As Durckheim argued, this attachment to the group strengthens adherence to the norms, i.e., the community becomes a *reference group* for the family and its relationship with other social institutions.

## **1.4. the Family and the Value System**

No society, however simple, can persist in an orderly fashion without general orienting principles. These principles are at a higher level than the concrete patterns for governing specific behavior, and they constitute a reference point for the more concrete patterns of behavior. Value patterns do not simply influence family behavior, but there is an active interchange between the family and the value system, and problems arising from attempting to live up to values may lead to modifications and changes in the value patterns.

While it is true that some societies have more flexible values permitting adaptability to contemporary situations, as a whole, the ultimate values have considerable stability over time.



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The significance of the family, with regard to the society's value system, stems from the fact that the family is the smallest social unit responsible for the preservation of the value system. It's the family's duty to see that new members are socialized in to the value system. The family also has a significant part in insuring that all members continue to abide according to the societal values.

An exchange between the family and the value system takes place in that the value system *specifies standards* and the family *accepts* them at a more general level than the community's specification of norms and the family's adherence to them. The value system defines what behavior is legitimate and desirable. The ultimate values in a society may also be embodied in certain aspects of the educational system, particularly if there is no specific religious education in the society. The family accepts the standards presented by those representatives of the ultimate values of the society. Ordinarily, children internalize these values through relationships in the family, and the family thus aids in the preservation of these values.

A second interchange between the family and the value system; the value system gives *approval* and the family supplies *conformity*. Not only do the representatives of the value system specify what the values are but also they offer approval for conformity to these values. Ordinarily, this approval or disapproval is internalized with in the personality at an early age, and the internal sanction operates to select and reject, to approve or disapprove of alternative behaviors. This internalization is reinforced by the community, which operates to see that the family conforms, at least to some measure, with the more specific norms derived from basic values.

The family strives to maintain a satisfactory relationship with societal value system, because it is concerned with approval, both internal and external. Typically, this means conformity to the basic values. If there is no conformity, then there is, ordinarily, an attempt to establish a relationship with the value system through modification of the basic values. Often, there is a cleavage between the ideal value system of the society and the specific concrete norms enforced by the community.

## **1.5. the family and Religion**

The three major religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), in all of which man's duty is to live according to ethical standards revealed by a personal God, have all attempted to regulate kinship relations, especially marriage and the family. There is some evidence that religious commitment may help to keep down the rate of divorce. Protestants in the US, for example, have a higher divorce rate than the Catholics, primarily as Protestants are less committed to their religious system of belief than the Catholics. Other studies have also found out that a higher percentage of happily married couples than of unhappily married couples are religious.

## **II.11.2. Internal Family Activities**

The family must carry on internal activities related to the external exchanges, and must perform other internal activities directly for its own benefits. Most activities carried out in the family have functional significance for the family itself and the external system. The general functional problems facing the family are similar to those facing the society as a whole, and those facing any other social system in it. In the case of the family, the functional problems may be termed as:

1. Task performance

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2. Family leadership
3. Integration and solidarity
4. Pattern maintenance

## **2.1. Task Performance**

Task performance within the family always occurs in the context of the family relationships with external systems. The internal activity is governed in part by *the requirements of the external interchanges* and in part by *the amount of goods obtained in the external interchange*. Yet task performance is also related to internal family characteristics, such as the standards of living and the solidarity and integration of relationships within the family. These tasks can't be performed except, as they are made consistent with the existing patterns of interpersonal relationships within the family. At a minimum, family members participate in the care and maintenance of the family possession. In addition, the family performs a variety of tasks that may be referred to as '*finishing*'. If there are dependent members of the family, then other members are expected to perform various tasks in connection with their welfare.

## **2.2. Family Leadership**

Because the family is a stable group with the same membership over a relatively long period of time, its division of leadership is ordinarily structured.

## **2.3. Integration and Solidarity**

For a group to maintain close relationships between members over a long period of time requires some commitment and feelings of solidarity.

Solidarity gives members the motivation to abide by the norms. If there is little solidarity within the family, the obligations imposed by the group may seem *oppressive*, but if there is a great deal of solidarity, the obligations may be accepted as natural and not even felt as obligations. In addition, feelings of solidarity are very important in dealing with individual *tensions* and *personality problems*. Family ritual activities and family symbols are all important elements in keeping intact solidarity in the family.

External institutions are also concerned with maintaining family solidarity and the family may be aided directly or indirectly in preserving itself by these institutions.

## **2.4. Pattern Maintenance/ the Family Value System**

Through their relationship with each other, family members come to have certain expectations about how other members should behave. These expectations are associated with the feelings of rightness and wrongness. This value system provides a hierarchy of goals and a body of rules for their attainment. The family attempts to maintain this value system because it gives meaning and purpose to the specific family activities. Often there is a disparity between what is explicitly legitimate and what is implicitly accepted as legitimate.

## **II.11.3. The Family and Personality**

If a social system is to operate successfully, the members must have, to a considerable extent, similar orientations to the group activities within it, to themselves, and to each other members and they must have motivational commitment sufficient to maintain the system and to meet its

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functional requirements. Now personality can be conceived of as a system of activities, orientations, motivations, etc, which has some internal boundaries.

The internal activities of a family, i.e., task performance, leadership, integration and solidarity, and pattern maintenance all to an extent or another have wide ranging effects up on the developing and the developed personality.

### II.11.4. Functions of the Family

The family fulfills a number of functions, such as providing religious training, education, and recreational outlets. Yet there are six paramount functions performed by the family (William Ogburn, 1934).

**1. *Reproduction*:** for a society to maintain itself, it must replace dying members. In this sense, the family contributes, to human survival through its function of reproduction.

**2. *Protection*:** human infants need constant care and economic security. Infants and children experience a long period of dependency, which places special demand on older family members. An all cultures, it is the family that assumes ultimate responsibility for the protection and upbringing of children.

**3. *Socialization*:** the family is the first agent in the socialization process, typically having more importance than peer groups, schools, churches, and the mass media. The personality of each new generation takes shape with in the family, so that ideally, children grow to be well-integrated and contributing members of the larger society. Even then, the family continues to socialize us through out our life cycle.

**4. *Regulation of sexual behavior*:** *sexual* norms are subject to change over time and across cultures. However, whatever the time period or cultural values in a society, standards of sexual behavior are most clearly defined with in the family circle.

**5. *Affection and companionship*:** ideally, the family provides members with warm and intimate relationship and helps them feel satisfied and secured; the family is obliged to serve the emotional needs of its members.

**6. *Providing social status or social placement*:** we inherit a social position because of the “family background” and “reputation” of our parents and siblings. The family unit presents the newborn child with an ascribed status that determines his or her position in a society’s stratification system.

### II.12. The Universality of the Family

Concerning contemporary societies, one can say that the nuclear family is a universal human social grouping understood either as the sole prevailing form of the family of a basic unit from which more complex familial forms are compounded. Professor Murdock, as specialist in the area, maintains that the universality of the family is explained by the fundamental nature of the functions it fulfills for society. Thus he wrote: ‘without provision for the sexual and reproductive

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functions, society would become extinct; without the economic, life itself would come to an end; without the educational, culture would cease to exist.’

One ought to bear in mind the fact that the family undergone dramatic changes and the rate at which these changes have been taking place has been further accelerated with the emergence of the modern industrial or the urban society.

## II.13. Changes in the Family

The family has undergone some fundamental changes starting from time immemorial, but especially from the days of industrialization. These changes include cultural, socio-economic and also structural ones.

The major changes that have been commonly thought to happen in the family include:

**1. *The changing role of the family in the society:*** some of the fundamental tasks once being performed by the family were removed and given to other social institutions, including the state.

*a. Reproduction and procreation:* this function of the family has not taken over by other institutions, but the high prevalence of contraceptives and the couples being less interested in having children is making the reproductive role of the family a losing one.

*b. The family and the kinship network:* in the past the family is used to depend on the kinship network for their needs of assistance. But these days, the family becomes less dependant on kinship relationship, as social securities and other social insurance benefits could be obtained from the government and other welfare agencies at times of need.

In the developed countries, all people who need some sort of assistance from the public are entitled to those services by virtue of their citizenship. For example, unemployed people are entitled to get unemployment benefits or allowances.

*c. Socialization and social control<sup>12</sup>:* the family is the primarily responsible agent of socialization. But this function has been taken over by the school system. And the social control role of the family has been taken over by the police, the courts and the political institutions.

*d. Production function:* before the development of the factory system, the family is a predominant unit of production-it produces what it wants for its survival. The family nowadays no longer produces goods and services that it needs for its own subsistence. Therefore, the contemporary family is a unit of consumption rather than a unit of production. It is dependant on the economic institutions for its consumptions.

*e. Religious function:* in the past religion is performed in the family by the family members. It is with in the family that the members of a traditional family perform religion. But now it becomes

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<sup>12</sup> Social control is a mechanism of that any society exercises to punish those who break the norms and to reward those who follow the norms.

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the responsibility of the church or the religious institutions to perform religious rituals of other functions of religious nature.

*f. Affective function of the family:* the family is supposed to provide some sort of emotional support for its members. But lately the relationship becomes more of impersonal with in the family. The family becomes a place of danger and hostility rather than being a place of emotional and sentimental support.

*g. Changing patterns of sexuality:* these days, extra marital sex, re-marital sex, adultery, pre-marital sex, etc. have been increasing in an unprecedented rate. Homosexuals and lesbians have been increasing in number and they are gaining more acceptance.

**2. The emergence of a privatization of the nuclear family:** the family type of the modern world is that of privatized nuclear family which resulted from the breakdown of the classical extended family.

**3. The emergence of the symmetrical family:** as a result of the emergence of the nuclear family in the modern world, there developed a family in which the roles of the husband and the wife are the same.

**4. Changes in the household size:** there occurred a decline in the average size of the family size.

**5. Increase in the single parent household with children:** particularly of those of the female headed families increases as a result of a large number of factors that affected the family.

**6. Reconstituted families with their multiple ties:** remarrying families are on increase.

**7. Un marrying and cohabitating couples:** are on increase.

**8. A move towards a more child centered families:** there is a change in the position of children in the family. In the past, children have a very low status in the family; they are not even expected to be seen. But 20<sup>th</sup> century families have become child centered. Parents put their children at the center of any decisions made with in the family. The welfare of the children is given the major priority even if it means a great cost or crisis to the family.

### **II.14. Current Family Issues (the 'darker side' of the family)**

Today's family is characterized by an intensive emotional and mental stress between the husband and the wife, between the children and the parents, and also between the children themselves. Far from being the base of a society, today's family with its narrow privacy becomes the center of the production of certain social evils. Instead of creating a warm and supportive environment for its members, it is becoming a hostile and dangerous place. This hostile environment with in the family results from the privatization of the modern way of family life, which leave the family with out the support of the other extended kin relatives. As the members dreadfully privatize the family life, they become isolated from the wider community, as a result of which they lack the necessary support of the community, which would make life much easier.

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The conflict in the family may lead to child violence, divorce, depression, anxiety, crimes, and also mentality decay. The modern family is not characterized by love and affection but rather by unresolved conflicts between members of the family and physical and mental abuse of children. And in some contemporary families violence has become an everyday fundamental occurrence. This is what we call the darkest side of the family. There is a discrepancy between the actual and the ideal (the supposed to be family type) type the family.

### II.14.1. Family Disorganization and Dissolution

Every family in the modern world suffers from one or another form of family disorganization and dissolution. It affects the functions of the family that it performs and also its members. Therefore, when we talk of family disorganization, we talk of mal-adjustment, mal-functioning, psychological decay and the existence of problems in the family.

**Definition of family disorganization**-According to W.J. Goode, *family disorganization* is the break up of a family unit, the dissolution or fracture of a family structure, of the social roles, when one or more members failed to perform adequately in their role obligations.

A group can be labeled as an organized group when those individuals who can perform their roles adequately occupy all its statuses. By the same token, a family can be seen as an organized one if it consists of the mother, the father and children who could execute their roles properly. And therefore a family disorganization and dissolution occurs when one or more members of the family fail to perform their roles adequately, or if one is missing from the group. The family is a disorganized one as it has a status that has not been filled by an appropriate personality. By this definition there are different types of family disorganization and dissolution:

a. **Illegitimacy**: the word derived its origin from a Latin word “*illegitimus*” which means ‘*not in accordance with the law*’. And in sociology it refers to the incomplete family unit along with unoccupied status.

b. **Annulment**: the word “annul” means ‘to reduce to nothing’. In sociology it means the legal ending of a marital relationship because as a result of conditions that existed prior to the marriage.

The legal institutions of a society can declare that a marriage did not come in to existence in the first place if certain essential element<sup>13</sup> or elements is or are lacking.

c. **Separation**: it refers to the willful abandonment of one’s spouse, children or both without any legal justification. It is usually a run away style. Sometimes it is used to threaten the partner to resolve conflicts, but it is just a step away from a permanent separation or divorce.

d. **Divorce**: of all the changes that have taken place in the family life in the modern society, divorce is the most apparent one of all. There has always been a family disorganization. But in

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<sup>13</sup> Examples of the lack of an essential element includes: being under age, the discovery of the existence of another marriage, the existence of an incurable disease in either of the partners, the existence of an incestuous relationship, insanity, etc.



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the past it was the out come of the death of one or both of the parents. But today's family disorganization seems to be more of because of divorce. There has been a sudden increase in the number of marriages hat end up in divorce. It seemed that divorce is an institutionalized social arrangement for the termination of marital relationships.

All known cultures in the world allow divorce. Through out the history of the human social life there has not been a society that prohibits divorce, although it dissolves the durial tie that was established by marriage.

## *Explanations of the rise in the rate of divorce*

There are many changes in the society that have made divorce a more practical and a socially accepted way of terminating a broken marriage.

*1. Changing social attitudes towards divorce:* divorce has become more socially accepted, there is less social disapproval and condemnation of the divorcees and there is less stigmatization<sup>14</sup> and ostrasization<sup>15</sup>. Divorce has no longer an impact on peoples' personal growth and promotions. There become less negative social consequences of divorce on individuals. People, therefore, are becoming less afraid of the unpleasant consequences of divorce and they are more likely to seek a legal ending to their unhappy marriage (therefore, an increase in rate of divorce).

*2. The growing secularization:* as we have seen earlier, in traditional societies, marriage seems more of a sacred institution and there is much religious sentiments attached to it. Therefore, the ending of a marital relationship through divorce is considered as sinful and offending to the supernatural powers. But, these days, divorce is never considered as something that is a morally wrong intention, or do, or breaking of a religious order.

*3. The growth of the privatized nuclear family:* in today's families it is virtually impossible to seek for advice or any support from relatives or kin, during any marital crisis. And there is also a very loose interference from their relatives to necessitate the couples to work on their marriage and keep it from ending. And this is the result of the ever-increasing privatization the family life by the members.

*4. Higher expectations in marriage:* marital satisfaction is the most important determinant in keeping any marriage intact. At present times, peoples' expectations of what should marriage look like is far reaching from their parents in the past. The media and other aspects of social life depict a very romantic picture of what marriage is. People therefore, expect more sexual compatibility, more understanding, more companionship, in their marriage, as opposed to the demand for an economic security of their parents in the times of yore. Therefore, couples are more likely to close up their marriage in divorce, when these expectations are not met.

*5. The changing role of women:* in modern times, women are less likely to accept the traditional mother role of house-keeping and child-rearing, particularly if it means the sacrifice of their own life advantages.

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<sup>14</sup> Stigmatization means to give a person a nick name because he have some things that members of his group think are or is out of the proper social behavior or acting.

<sup>15</sup> Ostrasization means excluding a person form a group to which he belongs because of his misdeeds.

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The factory system has reduced the importance of the as a production unit and has provided jobs for women, freeing them from the economic dependence on men; and when they are in unhappy marital relationship, their ability to earn a living by themselves make them less worried to end their marriage with no fear of who could support them financially or materially.

All these changes that have occurred in the development of the family have aggravated the rate of divorce at current times.

The impact of divorce on individuals is very grave. People who have undergone through divorce feel loneliness, depression, anxiety, incompetence, and will have low work efficiency. They may also have a suicidal feelings and intentions.

Children from a divorced family show a high degree of anti- social or aggressive behavior, feelings of anger, sadness, etc<sup>16</sup>.

e. **Empty shell family**: refers to a type of family in which family members continue to dwell together but have little communication or interaction with one another; refraining from any form of emotional support to each others. Here persons may occupy statuses, but they don't play out their role appropriately.

f. **Unwilled absence of one spouse**: some marriages and families may dissolve because the husband or the wife has died or is jailed, or is separated from the family because of war and other conditions.

g. **Unwilled major role failure**: when a person can't discharge his role because of factors beyond his control including severe mental, emotional and physical pathologies (sickness).

## II.14.2. Voluntary Childlessness

Both preferences and rates of voluntary childlessness have increased in industrial countries; particularly professional women give a small fraction of their time and emotion for bearing children. In addition, education, in industrial societies takes a long period.

## II.14.3. Conflict over Marital and Power Roles

Decision making in the family depend on a number of factors:

1. The personality of the spouses.
2. The overall status of women as related to men in the society
3. Resources, such as income, education, occupation, etc.

Resource Theory of Marital Power states that men have more power than women in many societies. Resources are the primary determinant of who makes a decision in the family. The more resources one has got, the more he will have a dictation over the other.

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<sup>16</sup> Children from two parent families do better in education or in any other activities as compared to children from divorced families.



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Women who are working have more power and dictation over others than housewives, since they have more resources; and the increase of resources will increase the power of the one over the other.

Although the family faces these problems, it has got some functions to perform; therefore it will remain to be an *omni-present* and an *enduring* social institution.

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## Chapter Three

### The Sociology of Religion

Religion is a cultural universal-general practice found in every culture; and religious institutions are evident in all societies. Religion exists throughout the world because it offers answers to such ultimate questions as why we exist, why we succeed or fail, and why we die. Though it is difficult to determine with certainty when religious behavior began, anthropological evidences suggest that such behavior was evident, from remains of burials, at least 100,000 years ago (Schaefer and Lanun, 1995: 393).

Many individuals and groups approach religion from different angles in their studies. Some have tried to prove that religion is a supernatural power, while others have tried to explain that religion is nothing but a *man created myth*. For the Enlightenment thinkers' religion is just irrelevant; and it disappears as human rationality increases.

The sociological study of religion concerns itself with the relationship and interaction<sup>17</sup> between the religious institutions and other social institutions.

The fundamental concerns of the sociology of religion include the following:

1. The analysis of the interaction of religion and society, and the forms of interaction which takes place between them (here the major concern is the dynamic and dialectic relationship that existed between religion and the society).
2. The understanding of the role and significance of religion in the society.
3. The understanding of the diversity, and the social forces and influences that shape it (there are counter religious movements in the world. Why is such diversity? What are some of the forces and influences that shape this diversity?).

The subject matter of the sociology of religion may further be classified when we consider what sociology of religion is not:

1. The sociology of religion is not the investigation of whether or not religious ideas are true. This is because, such a question is not something that can be experimentally validated. For example, '*Does God exist?*' is not a sociological inquiry. But 'Do people believe that God exist?' is a sociological question, because one can investigate and assert whether that people believe in the existence of God or not.
2. The sociology of religion is not an attempt to answer the question as to whether or not religion is good. With regard to this sociologists have to try to be value free and have some objectivity.
3. The sociology of religion is not an attempt to indicate that one set of religious values<sup>18</sup> is right and the other is wrong.

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<sup>17</sup> Interactions in this case refer to those that are primarily of religious in nature.

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4. The sociology of religion is not an attack on religion. The modern sociology of religion is not an anti-religious movement. It, like other academic disciplines, has developed from different backgrounds.

**III.1. A historical review of the sociological theory of religion:** it would be impossible to present all the major contribution of sociologists in the formulation of a theory on religion and society. Hence we will single out some major writers who left their marks on the sociological study of religious systems.

**Auguste Comte:** a French philosopher, who often refers to as ‘the father of sociology’ published his *treatise on sociology* in 1854. He pictured all of history as a three-staged evolutionary process. The *first stage*, beginning with the dawn of history and reaching to the European Middle Ages, was characterized by a religious understand of man, the world, and society. Ancient man, in Comte’s view, responded with awe and wonder to a world he couldn’t understand. He saw the world under the control of the supernatural spirits who must be placated. Since he couldn’t understand the world and the society, he attributed it ‘fate’ or ‘the gods’ everything that happened. When he tried to explain his life he used myth and symbolic theology.

The medieval man, according to Comte’s theory, came one step closer to the modern world. He abandoned religious language of explanation for more abstract, *philosophical categories*. Instead of a pantheon of gods he substituted terms like *nature of things* and *substances* as ways of understanding reality.

Finally, since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, modern man has discovered science. He must abandon religious or philosophical ways of talking about the universe. Whatever of religion and philosophy, which remain in the modern world, are like the human appendix vestigial remnants from man’s historic past. Comte predicted that religion based on God or the mystery of life would yield to a secular religion of humanity founded in science.

**Karl Marx:** another 19<sup>th</sup> century social thinker, K. Marx, is well known for his dictum, ‘religion is the opiate of the people.’ Like Comte, Marx thought that religion is only one stage in social evolution. He predicted that in the communist utopia religion would wither away.

“Religion,” for Marx, “is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the feelings of a heartless world.... It’s the opiate of the people.”

By calling religion, ‘the opiate of the people,’ Marx was objecting the preaching of the business oriented ministries of religion who told the laboring classes that their poverty was the will of God, and stressed that the poor should accept their lot in life as unchangeable. The poor will get their rewards in the afterlife. As the slogan puts it, the hungry poor would finally get their ‘pie-in-the-sky.’ Like opium or alcohol, pie-in-the-sky religion dulled the sensibilities of the poor to the injustices they suffered from greedy capitalists and made them inert about doing anything to better their social position.

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<sup>18</sup> Religious values are values that the followers of a religion are expected to tag on.

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Marx conclusion is that religion always reflected the values and the interests of the ruling class in society. The ruling class used religion as a weapon of social control over the multitude. Religion was essentially conservative, not revolutionary. 'Blessed are the poor' was a statement calculated to keep the poor content with their social environment. When asked 'what function does religion play in society?' Marx's theory replies, religion is a mechanism of social control that justifies the economic interests of the ruling class and prevents dissatisfaction among the poor by diverting their eyes and attention from the problems of this life at present to the rewards of the afterlife.

**Emilé Durkheim:** the best known French sociologist in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, introduced in his book, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, a distinction between sacred and the profane areas of life. Besides its distinction between the everyday world (the profane) and certain aspects that transcend the ordinary (the sacred), religion involves a set of beliefs and practices that are uniquely the property of religion as opposed to other social institutions and ways of thinking.

In profane areas of living, man uses rational techniques, such as science and industry, to control his environment. Even primitive man tries to use the best methods of fishing, hunting, or harvesting crops. The sacred, according to Durkheim, is characterized by an attitude of respect or awe, which men take toward certain objects, places, times, and religious legends. Believers have faith in the sacred; this allows them to accept what they can't understand.

According to Durkheim religion is a symbolic expression of the moral authority in law and society. Durkheim had proposed that society is always the real object of religious belief and worship. Religion is the social means of expressing and reinforcing those sentiments, which are most essential to preserving a society: respect for the law, a sense of group solidarity at times of crisis such as death.

**Max Weber:** a contemporary of Durkheim, German sociologist Max Weber, has made the most significant contributions to the sociological studies of religion. Against Karl Marx, Weber contended in his classic study, *The Protestant Ethic and he Spirit of Capitalism*, that religion doesn't always reflect and justify current economic arrangements in society. He contends that religion is not always a conservative force in society. In opposition to Durkheim, he asserted that religion was not restricted to the explanation of ultimate crisis and frustrations such as war and famine, or death, by pointing out the obvious fact that religion often influences the every day choices and attitudes of men.

In another study, *The Social Psychology of the World Religions*, Weber drew on his wide knowledge of various world religions to illustrate his method of an 'ideal types' in sociology. An ideal type is a category y=the sets out the essential characteristics of a social phenomenon.

**S. Freud and T. Parsons:** the 20<sup>th</sup> century produced major contributions from a psychologist and a sociologist for an empirical study of religion. Sigmund Freud counteracted Durkheim by stressing individual psychological aspects of religion. He pointed out the key role of family upbringing in determining religious attitudes. Freud tried to explain the origin of religion in his book '*Totem and Taboo.*' Freud and some of his followers tend to define religion as a psychological delusion. Many extremists of this school of thinking describe religion as a *psychological response for which there is no stimulus.*'

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Talcott Parsons, a student of Max Weber, advocates what is called ‘the functionalist theory<sup>19</sup>’ of religion. Functionalist theory maintains that religion interacts with other parts of the social or cultural system. Sometimes religion acts as a cause of changes in other areas of society. These and other changes in the society, in turn, also affect religious practices. Religion must somehow contribute to the preservation of society-otherwise it would not survive.

## III.2. Definitions of Religion

The search for a definition of religion is very difficult and has many difficulties, as religion can’t be scientifically knowable. Therefore, there are many definitions that are provided by many scholars.

In a narrower sense, **religion** means *a set of theological beliefs held and rituals performed by members of a particular group.*

However, the most famous definition of religion is the one that was provided by E. Durkheim: *a unified system of beliefs and practices related to a sacred thing, that is to say things set apart and forbidden after- beliefs and practices which unit in one single moral community called a church, all of those who are here to them.*

Religion is divided in to two: the secular and the sacred:

The **secular** or the **profane**: it refers to *the empirically observable objects that can be proven right or wrong by scientific investigation.*

The **sacred**: it refers to *the things that we can’t understand, but that we can understand by some kind of extra-ordinary power or experience or by some divine power.*

**Religion** is *a system of beliefs and practices that are related to the sacred issue only. Religion focuses on the supernatural thing.*

**Religion** is defined as *a human phenomenon that unites the cultural, the social and the personality system in to a meaning full whole.* This definition suggests that religion is the creation of man and it is part of the human culture. Although there is no single generally agreed up on definition of religion, an organized religion is more likely to include all or some of the following features:

1. A belief in a supernatural and sacred things, or symbols. They believe in the existence of a power, an event that is beyond the human control. That power is an *extra-ordinary*, an *indefinite*, an *omni-present* and that can’t be tested or touched, or heard, or smell. One can’t prove or

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<sup>19</sup> The functionalist theory of society is the **principle** of useful purposes. And this **principle** is defined as *the belief that any ideas, custom, belief, or attitude that is wide spread in a society and persists over a period of time must be assumed to have some useful purpose for that society, contributing to social order and promoting the survival of that culture.*

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disprove the existence of the supernatural thing. And in many case all accidents, successes, fortunes and misfortunes are attributed to this supernatural power. In addition, people believe in the worshipping of some other things like man himself, cows, rivers, stones, etc. Some people believe in some mysterious supernatural power beyond their understanding and sensation (extraordinary, indefinite power) in the universe and some other people still believe in the existence of such a power simply by faith rather than by empirical evidence.

2. A set of teachings and beliefs (theology), usually based on a holy book such as The Bible and The Koran.

3. A series of rituals or ceremonies to express their beliefs either in public or in private, such as baptism, marriage taking place in church, funerals, fasting, singing and dancing, praying, sacrifices offering.

4. Some form of organization of the worshipers or the believers.

5. An organized institution (of religion) is likely to include a set of organized values and moral values that guide or influence the every day behavior of the believer. Religion usually provides a direction to be pursued by its followers and defines how to interact with one another and define what is ethically good and what is not. As a result of sharing the same beliefs and practices, people who belong to the same religious group or church have common values.

### III.3. Concepts Related to Religion

**Animism:** is the belief that spirits of souls permanently or temporarily inhabits all objects, both animate and inanimate. It involves the beliefs in objects, as these objects that exist around us have spirit and consciousness like human beings. These spirits of souls could reside in physical environment, like in rivers, animals, rocks, etc.

**Animatism:** is the belief that a supernatural force or power exists in persons, human beings, animals and inanimate objects. Many traditional groups believing in animatism consider their chiefs to be possessed by a supernatural power.

**Polytheism:** is the belief in a number of gods and the powerful deities. Here one god has a particular sphere of influence, and one could be more powerful than the others and it may oversee or control the activities of the others.

**Monotheism:** is the belief in the existence of only one God. In the evolutionary theory of religion, many scholars argued that religion has evolved from *animism* to *animatism*, from *animatism* to *polytheism*, and from *polytheism* to *monotheism*. And they considered monotheism as the final stage of the evolution of religion.

**Totemism:** totem is an ordinary object such as a plant or an animal that has become a sacred symbol to particular group or clan. And often members of a clan or group consider themselves as having been descended from that object. Here the particular example is the Australian Aborigines.

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Totemism is a complex system of belief related to a totem. It is a belief organized around a totem. According to Durkheim, each clan worships a totem but that totem represents their own clan not god as such. For him religion is a system of belief that people worship their own society not god as such. As from the Durkheim's perspective, a totem is a symbol of their own common social identity.

### **III.3.1. Religion and Magic**

Max Weber used the term "magic" to refer to religious action believed to be automatically effective, whether the goal is empirical (observable) or non-empirical (unobservable). For the well-known anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski magic is a source of power or control over the gods, or the use of supernatural means to try to obtain empirical ends; but he distinguished magic from religion. Magical words and ceremonies force gods to grant what a man desires. Magic either wards off evil influences or wins favors. Religion doesn't control god but tries to worship him, as religion means submission to and worship of the divine power upon which man feels dependant. But for Harry Johnson (1960) to regard magic as part of religion is technically justified on the ground that in magic, as in other religious activities, there is concern with the supernatural order and with the problem of salvation.

### **Relationships between Religion and Magic**

These two concepts are closely related in many societies, as they commonly share a concern for supernatural powers- a power that exists beyond the human scientific understanding and grasp. Both use different techniques to operate that supernatural power in their own interest. Both religion and magic are communities' ways of adapting to the problems, frustrations, and dangers that they face in their daily life.

The major differences between religion and magic include:

a. The concern with the animate and the inanimate powers: magic is a belief in the impersonal (inanimate) powers, forces or objects. Religion is a belief in personal supernatural beings.

Magic is more manipulative in its techniques; it is an active attempt, usually using coercion and force, to control the spirits. Magicians order or command power. While on the other hand, religious approach to the supernatural power is characterized by an attitude of humbleness, politeness, and with a broken heart. Religious people don't command their God to do what they want him to do, but they pray for his good will.

b. A magician serves only those who are willing to pay the necessary fee for the service, but religion is not that way. Magic is the re-substitution of techniques that are used to influence the gods. If one attempt doesn't work another is tried. But religion is not that way. The way of approaching God is not substitutable. In general, magicians are manipulative of power whereas religion is usually requester of help (supplicative) from the supernatural powers.

c. The goals of magic are specific and limited: magic is obtained for obtaining some specific objectives and goals and is designed to help those individuals who use it. On the other hand, religion permits or pursues more general goals for its followers. It is mostly used for a group



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rather than for an individual as illustrated by the fact that when people of a church pray they not only pray for people who are members of the church but the prayer extends to those who are not.

Religion is concerned with the whole philosophy of life whereas magic's concern is specific, limited and atomistic.

d. Magic is more of a private practice than a group activity. Magic has more of a personal character than a communal nature. There is also a difference in the organization of rituals, belief systems. While these systems are more formalized, organized, or institutionalized in the case of a religion they aren't as in the case of magic. Magic does not organize its follower in to a unifying system or group where they can lead a common social life of their own. The organization of magic is based on the relationship between the clients and the magicians themselves that is how the interaction takes place. There contacts are transitory and accidental, whereas in the case of religion, members are united in to a moral community.

e. Magic involves less emotion, whereas religion members are so emotionally involved to their religion. This might be because of the fact that magic is potentially more anti-social than that of the religion.

### III.3.2. Religion and Science

These two concepts seem to exist at two extremes of explaining the existence and futurity of things in the universe. As science is dependent up on empirical facts and scientifically observable phenomenon, religion is based on beliefs, speculations, and faith in the existence of God.

However, their similarity lies in their attempt to explain the universe, the natural order, but in different languages and methods. Both are views of the natural order.

In religion everything is attributed to God, but it is more than a dogma, it explains everything in the social and natural world.

### III.4. Theories of Religion

Theories of religion try to explain how religion evolved or came in to existence, what functions it serves in the society, and why people believe in religion.

***Evolutionary theory of religion:*** this theory perceives religion as an expression of stages in man's cognitive development. Personalities who belong to this group of theorizing argue that progress comes with time and age, and people progress from simpler to the more complex. They also contend that every society progresses through stages of ever increasing complexity until they reach at some final stage of perfection. They saw religion as a *primitive, pre-scientific* effort to explain and predict natural events. For Comte, as we have seen earlier, for example, the human intellect has passed through three stages of explaining thing in and around his social milieu:

1. The theological stage;
2. The metaphysical; and



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### 3. The positive or the scientific stage.

In the theological stage, thoughts and ideas were religious in nature. Comte again divided this stage in to three different sub-stages.

- i. The fetishism: in which both the animate and the inanimate objects had been animated by a life of soul, like a human being;
- ii. The polytheism: in which there was a belief in the many gods.
- iii. The monotheism: which is characterized by the development of organized institutions.

Human intellect passed through the metaphysical stage where people used reason and faith in combination for the purpose of explaining the natural phenomenon.

And finally the second stage gives way to the final (positive) stage where people explain everything in terms of scientific reasoning.

Comte's conclusion is that when people reach the positive stage they will worship science, as the importance of religion in the social life declines.

According to Taylor, religion had evolved through the following stages. The first is the belief in the souls, which is followed by the belief in deities and the animism. The third stage is the polytheism. And the fourth and the final stage is the monotheism. And he contends that after people reached the stage of monotheism, religious beliefs will slowly declines.

According to the, many social-evolutionary theorists the origin of religion is animism and it developed to polytheism and finally it culminated in monotheism.

***De-evolutionary Theories:*** this theory exactly reverses the arguments of the evolutionary theorists by arguing that later of development in religion is a regression from an early and universal monotheism. It points out that it was not animatism or animism, or polytheism that was the earliest form of religion, but was monotheism. All animism, or animatism or polytheism are the later developments of monotheistic religion.

Religion is considered as a stage of degeneration from a primitive revelation. During the early period God revealed the one true religion. But other developments are simply degenerations.

According to the de-evolutionary theorists man's spiritual evolution proceeds and inversely related to that of his social and cultural sophistications. As man advances in science and technology, his spiritual development will decline, and the importance of religion in his life will decline and people may turn to other developments. As a result the world will come to an end and the cycle will start a fresh again. According to these theorists, there are a number of vices because of which man's spiritual power declined. Therefore, man's refusal to obey the commands of the sanctified power, and other developments in the society has led to the decline on the spiritual power of the society.

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***Psychoanalytic and Anxiety Reduction Theories:*** with development, man may abandon religion but he will not rationalize, rather become unrestrained anomic and lacks direction. The theory considers religion as a projection of, and therapy for emotional problems and needs. People usually follow religion when they are uncertain of the future.

A prominent psychoanalytic theorist who had developed this theory was the scholar Sigmund Freud. For him life involves privatism-the lack of what is needed for existence (material and emotional). Because of this the inevitable consequence is that of individuals suffer from feelings of frustration. And nature also holds a number of threats and fears in it. Because of all these man-made and natural problems the life of man is uncertain. Therefore, for Freud, religion is an attempt to coup up with these threat and danger by humanizing it. And this gives him a great relief and conciliation and it gets rid of terror in nature.

Freud also tried to make an analogy between the parent-child relationship and the relationship between the gods and the people. The way people relate themselves to their gods is similar to the way a child relates himself to his parents. A small child is helpless, and Freud argues that a child fears his father, but at the same time is sure of his protection from danger.

Freud says that ***religion*** is an *illusion-any belief true or false that is held not because there are good grounds for holding it but because there is a strong desire or need to believe it.*

Freud believes that as man becomes progressively aware of the sufficiency of his own reasoning, the need for religion will disappear. Like for Marx, *religion* for Freud is *like opium to the people that gives false hopes and dreams about the next world.*

In conclusion, there is one thing needs to be noted. There is no way of telling whether one theory is valid than the other as one could not be able get a theory that constitutes all the truth, but one could only get grains of truth from a theory.

## **III.5. Religion and Other Social Institutions**

There is an active, mutual, and reciprocal relationship between religion and other social institutions.

### **III.5.1. Religion and the Polity**

Religion actively engages in the political affairs and activities that take place in a given country.

\*Religion usually states, justifies, and reinforces the values of the society and these values are usually translated in to political behaviors and laws of the government.

\*Religion promotes the activities of the government and maintains peace and order.

\*In some industrialized countries religion promotes the concern of the interest or the pressure groups<sup>20</sup>.

\*Religion also serves as a source or reconciliation; it preaches the citizens to be obedient to the laws of the government. Government in religious societies appears to its members as an inherent

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<sup>20</sup> *Interest or pressure* group is a group that persuades the government or the decision-making bodies to make decisions that are in their interests.

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government. No distinction could be made between religious leaders and government leaders. In such a society most of the people belong to that single moral community. The moment they are born they believe that kings have a divine power to rule.

In traditional sacred societies religion has had a strong influence on the incumbent government and there is a closer relationship between the two. As a society moves from the sacred to that of the secular order, we find a meaningful distinction made between the religious and the political leaders. Religious institutions began to be confined to an ever-narrowing social influence; people turn to the secular forces for guiding in their daily life.

In such societies where there exists a distinction between the government and religion, there we will find three types of relationship that exist between the government and religion:

1. The government supports one religion and rejects or discriminates the rest. e.g. the Anglican Church in England.
2. The government supports or tolerates religion in general, but gives no marked preferential treatment to anyone's religion. e.g. The US constitution prohibits any state owned religion
3. The government rejects all religion. e.g. the Communist Countries.

### III.5.2. Religion and the Economy

Religion and the economy could be mutually supportive or antagonistic. Religion has a major function of providing a moral definition and values, and these values and definitions may affect the economic institutions negatively or positively. Religion influences productivity, handwork, and investment positively or negatively, as some religions define the use of certain materials<sup>21</sup> as morally appropriate and others may define it as morally inappropriate.

The most important and the famous book depicting the relationship between religion and the economy was written by Weber, and it was entitled *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

Both Marx and Weber were interested in questioning 'why capitalism emerged in W. Europe?' Marx simply answered that the abundance of the material conditions in w. Europe was the main reason for the emergence of capitalism. At this point Weber asks one question: if that was the case (the main impetus for the emergence of capitalism in the Western Europe was the material condition), why did it have to wait till the industrial revolution?

He agrees that, it is not the material abundance that led to the emergence of capitalism, but was the existence of favorable cultural value systems. He further develops his theory by saying that the values and beliefs of a society determine the economic base of a society.

Making reference to the 17th century beliefs in predestination<sup>22</sup> and asceticism<sup>23</sup> Weber made his argument for the emergence of a capitalist mode of production/system. These two forms of

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<sup>21</sup> Materials could be the tree, the animals, etc.

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beliefs were associated with the French protestant theologian and theorian John Calvin (1509-64) and his followers. His ideas, therefore, came to be known as Calvinism. Predestination and asceticism are the two-central underlying principles of Calvinism.

According to Weber, Calvinists adopted an attitude towards work and money, which radically changed their daily life. Because they wanted to be members among the elect, the Calvinists took hard work, strict discipline self-control and economic success as ways of salvation. And, on the other hand, asceticism led them to frugal or thrift way of life. Saving occupies a higher place in their value system. As a result, the Calvinist way of life opened the door to capital accumulation. This capital then was reused for the investment in the emerging new industries. Good Calvinists who wish to save their lives from the hands of the damned were engaged in many industrious activities and frugal way of life.

It was this, according to Weber, which contributed to the rise of capitalism. The development of the economic system was based on religious beliefs, beliefs that an individual Calvinist protestant hold to ease the pain of living in predestination. However, according to Weber, as Judaism, Islam, and other Asiatic religions didn't offer the necessary framework for the emergence of capitalism as did the protestant religion, and that is why capitalism emerged in w. Europe, not in the Middle East or Asia, and after the 17<sup>th</sup> century, not before.

### III.5.3. Religion and Education

Religion is part of the culture of a given society, and it is acquired through the process of interaction. We can't learn religion with out a social interaction. We learn religious beliefs, values, norms, etc through the process of education, both formal and informal. This is evidence of interdependence that exists between religion and education.

Throughout history and all over the world, religion has been responsible for the establishment of formal educational systems. First established schools were religious ones. Religion has been the bases for and contributed a lot to the secular education: medicine, law, arts, and philosophy.

### III.6. The Role of Religion in Society

Weber, Radcliff, Durckheim, and other social thinkers have been concerned with what role religion could play in the present day society. And they criticized the evolutionists who concern themselves with the evolution of religion and the decline in the importance of religion in society.

For these social thinkers religion, since the emergence of mankind, has played a number of roles. Sociologists divided these roles in to three categories.

**1. Individual support:** this is connected with the roles a religion could play for an individual. Religion can play an important role in a number of ways for an individual.

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<sup>22</sup> Predestination refers to the uncertainty of human eternal fat as belonging to the elect/favored or to the damned/cursed.

<sup>23</sup> Asceticism refers to the belief in a limited satisfaction or in self -denial.

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a. *Religion* can provide a source of comfort, explanation, and meaning for individuals when faced by strains and crisis in their lives such as wars, deaths, accidents, and natural disasters. It provides psychological support, and avoids uncertainties that people face in their everyday life. This can be illustrated by a recent study that claims the majority of those who faced strains and stress in their daily activities preferred to see a priest than a psychotherapist or a psychologist.

b. *Religious ceremonies* can give their believers a feelings of identity and security, and a sense of belongingness to a group that cares about them, and unite them around a shared moral code of behavior. It avoids the feeling of powerlessness.

c. *Religion* can provide a source of explanation and understanding or justification for an individual's social position. In all societies there is a social inequality between individuals as well as between groups. There is status difference between the powerful and the powerless for which any religion can give an approved explanation of by its members.

d. *Religions* carry out some important welfare roles for individuals. Providing a welfare service for the needy in general and for the poor religious followers in particular was initially the role of the religious institutions, before it was taken over by some other institutions as the polity.

**2. Social Integration/ Cohesion:** religion helps to maintain cultural tradition, as it is a part of the general culture of the society. This purpose of religion arise from the assumption that a given society can only survive, if its people share some common belief about what is right and what is wrong. And religion usually serves this purpose, as at least the majority of the members of the society must have a common understanding of the good and the bad. Religion encourages people to accept the central values whose internalization is important for the adequate integration of the various parts of the given society. Religious groups usually lend their theological support and prestige to ratify and sanctify values already prevalent in the general community.

The French sociologist E. Durckheim<sup>24</sup> argued that religion is a social glue that integrates individuals as well as the major parts of the society together. Religion persuades the integration of individuals to the society by encouraging them to accept certain basic social values. He considers religious rituals as serving as social cement. Worshipping together reinforces the sense of unity, solidarity among individuals. And it is partly through the religious practices that people get used to the values of the society in which they live and in way they become socialized. Religion reinforces social norms, for sometimes violations of secular laws is also violation of religious laws.

In ethnic minorities, religion is a means for the maintenance of their cultural identity tradition, and a means of integration.

**3. Social Control:** for Marx religion is an instrument that the powerful and the privileged used to oppress the poor and then powerless. Religion is the heart of the heartless, the sound of the oppressed creature and the soul of the soulless. It is the *opium* of the people, the mass. Religion

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<sup>24</sup> Durckheim's view of religion: he viewed religion as one means of creating social solidarity. Because traditional religion was declining in his days, he desperately tried a functional substitute (a specific one) for it.

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is an illusion, an anesthesia that attempts to justify the existing arrangement by encouraging people to accept them.

Religion makes the poor to be passive and accept the existing system without questioning and challenging it. He pointed out that religion justifies the existing inequalities in a society by pronouncing that it is the will of God. The position of the poor in a society is considered to be because of the will of God.

The poverty of the poor is considered as a virtue. Religion provides comfort for the poor and draws their attention from their present misery, inequality, and injustice with a promise in the life after death. The poor are encouraged to postpone their personal happiness for a reward in the heaven. For Marx this can only benefit the wealthy, the powerful, or the privileged class as the poor are persuaded to find a better way through religion than challenging the unjust system.

The whole point here is the fact that religion makes people conform to the social control laid down by the powerful. Needless to say, for the majority of those who write from a conflict perspective or point of view, religion is a conservative force that inhibits social change by lending sanctity to dominant culture values just as they are.

However, religion can also be a source of social conflict and social change. Religion could be a source of social conflict as a result of the fact that members of one religious sect consider their own religion and religious practices a superior to any other's religion. On the other hand religion could play a significant role in the fight against political dictatorships, inequalities, poverty, injustices, and many other forms of social inequalities that were evident in the secular aspects of the society. For example, in Iran there was a revolution called 'the Islamic revolution' which overthrew the monarchy and established the Islamic republic<sup>25</sup> (1978/79).

Religion can be used to resist the existing systems, the corrupt ones, and as a means of protesting and bringing down of that corrupt system.

### **III.7. Secularization**

In contemporary industrial societies, scientific and technological advances increasingly affected all aspects of life, including the social institution of religion. The term secularization refers to the process through which religion's influence on other social institutions diminishes.

It is an isolation of religion from its influence on the important decisions of national and everyday life. It is a process where by religious thinking, practices, and institutions, loses their social significance in a society, which they are part of. Religion and religious values and beliefs are declining in importance both for the individual and the society.

Secularization can be examined in three aspects:

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<sup>25</sup> Islamic fundamentalism: is a major force of change in many Islamic countries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It fought and still fights for the removal of the western culture in Muslim countries and for social change in these countries. It also fights for the changing of the position of women in the society of Muslims. Women in Muslim societies should dress up including their face, they should go in to public places accompanied by men, they should not drive, and they should not be given access to schooling, and other out side home occupations, etc. and the establishment of legal measures against those who come against these restrictions.



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**1. Religious thinking:** the significance of religion on peoples' lives has declined. People do no longer want religion to be the influential part of their everyday life activities. There is a growing lack of interest in religious customs, practices, and a lesser readiness to lead their life in terms of religious beliefs and values.

Today people have developed a more positive, at least tolerant, attitude towards divorce, and other vices as homosexuality, lesbianism, pre-marital sex, etc. which any religion prohibits and condemns. People are adopting more non-religious explanations of events that happen around them. For example, sickness is explained in terms of sanitation or viruses, or in terms of bacteria, or other reasons, not in terms of God's punishment for certain misdemeanor.

**2. Religious practices:** the level of church membership and church attendance is declining, which is an indication of secularization as a result of preoccupation with activities other than religious.

**3. Religious institutions:** secularization can be measured by the extent to which the church and other religious institutions have maintained their social influence and wealth. There was a very close relationship between the religion and the other aspects of the society. But nowadays, in many respects, religion is not maintaining its influence over the society. For many reasons the church's activities are over taken by the government and other secular organizations of the society.

## **III.7.1.Reasons for the growing secularization**

A combination of a number of intellectual, political, economic, social, and other factors result in the growing secularization of the modern society.

**a. The growth of the welfare state:** this development has removed many of the tasks performed by the religious institutions. For example, the government started to provide family allowance for the needy family, elderly allowance for the old age, unemployment benefits for the unemployed section of the population. This reduces the significance of religion in the lives of people in the society.

**b. The development of the mass media:** this advancement, especially the TV, has replaced the church as the main source of authority and knowledge for many people. People nowadays form their attitudes and outlook on the basis of what they see from the TV, what they read from the newspapers, rather than on the basis of what religious institutions said or their interpretation of the do.

**c. In many countries there is a complete total separation between the church and the state:** Many of the central parts of the government were used to be occupied by religious believers of one sect. The church used to have a control over the education so that the educated ones would have the values of that particular church. There were days and still does when both the church and the state used to be managed by persons who share the same or common church values. Only few, these days, governments rely on the supports that come from the religious institutions. State power focuses on ethnic and political affairs than on religious affairs.



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d. ***The modern world is more complex with too many problems for religion or magic to offer an effective solution:*** there is a decline in the confidence that religion can provide a more acceptable and plausible solution to the problems of the modern world than scientific solutions. There is a strong belief that today's problems demand socially planned solutions by the expertise and trained scientists in the area. Beliefs and good will are not enough in the modern world; people need more practical solutions to their problems.

e. ***Advances in the scientific and technological arena:*** these advancements now provide a more scientific and verifiable explanations for the questions, which were posed by the social problems of the society, traditionally answered by religion. The miracles of yesterday have become the scientific discoveries of today. These mounting in the scientific knowledge and explanations tend to undermine religious beliefs of the members. There is growing conviction that the responsibility of man's destiny should be in his own hands.

## Chapter Four The Sociology of Education

EDUCATION is an important part of socialization-the life long process of learning the attitudes, values, and behavior appropriate to individuals as members of a particular culture. Socialization may, therefore, occur in the classroom, it may also take place through interactions with parents, friends, and even with strangers. Socialization results as well from exposure to books, films, television, and other forms of communications. When such learning is explicit and formalized-when people consciously teach while others adopt the social role of learner-this process is called *education*.

The sociology of education is a branch of sociology that tries to analyze the social processes and patterns in the educational system. It is the scientific analyses of the educational system.

This part, the sociology of education, will focus on:

1. The analysis of the relationship between the educational system and other social and cultural systems of the society. It examines how education as a social institution is influenced by the social and cultural values and forces of the society and vice versa.

It tries to see the relationship between the power system, social control system, and education.

2. The examination of the function of education in the social and cultural changes of a given society and in the maintenance of the existing system or the status quo<sup>26</sup>.

3. The analysis of the school as an on going social system. Educational sociologists try to see the school subculture, and its relationship with the general culture of the society. They try to see the general pattern of interaction, or the structure of the school system. By taking the school system as subculture, sociology of education tries to analyze how education as a social institution is organized and functions.

Education from a sociological point of view begins at the day we are born and ends on the day we die. It is a continuous process that comes in many different forms. For some scholars education is a consciously controlled process where by changes in behavior are induced within the group. It is a controlled social process in the sense that we learn everything as we interact with others.

### Defining Education

#### Parsons Definition of Education

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<sup>26</sup> How education contributes to the creation of social classes and strata in a society? What roles education plays in maintaining inequality among the members of a group? What opportunities education provide for the poor in upgrading their status position? How education promotes unbalanced racial and ethnic relations?

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Probably a very restrictive definition of education (to the formal one) is provided by the well known American anthropologist Talcott Parsons: *it is the process through special institutional arrangements and formal procedure, individual members of the society are brought to know, command and/or become committed to the important elements of the cultural traditions of the society.*

In simple societies, socializing (a word almost synonymous with education in primordial societies) new members and transmitting the values and norms of the society from one generation to the next is the responsibility of the family, the kinship system and the community. Learning occurs at the family level and it is called the *informal*. Education as a separate institution doesn't exist. People learn through association, interaction, and friendship experiences. There were no specialized training institutions and centers.

In complex societies, on the other hand, education takes place in a school setting and in specialized training centers. There are strict rules, regulations, and bureaucratic procedures-when and by who to be thought and usually it involves a sort of payment-school fees. It is such type of education that we call *formal* education.

When societies become more and more complex (as they move from the simple to the complex societal arrangement), the educational system evolve from the informal to the formal structure to prepare the young for an adequate participation in their societies. As a result, in modern societies, a distinction is made between education and socialization process. Socialization is more of an upbringing (and rearing of children), and it is informally undertaken by the family. Education is more formal and needs a more structured arrangement; and it is taken over by the school system. The family's responsibility becomes feeding and teaching children some mannerism, but training them to fit in to the society is left to the school system. However, this doesn't mean that there is no socialization in the educational system and there is no education in the socialization process. It can only mean that education is a special form of socialization, which involves the systematic and formal transmission of *skills, knowledge* and *other aspects* of the social culture.

## **Perspectives on Education**

Learning is a fundamental mechanism for adapting to our environment. Learning is critical to social life. Many societies transmit certain attitudes, knowledge and skills to their members through formal and systematic training-the institution we call education. Education is one aspect of the many sided process of socialization by which people acquire those behaviors essential for effective participation in a society. Both the functionalist and the conflict perspectives are in agreement on the importance of education, but they differ in their conception of the part it plays in modern life.

### ***Structural Functionalism Perspective***

The perspective strongly rests on the belief that social pattern is best understood in terms of its functions and contributions to the integration and maintenance of a society. Norms, values,

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customs and institutions are all structures and are there to serve some purpose and they are necessary.

This school of thought considers the human society as an organism composed of many parts functioning in an integrated manner to maintain the whole system going. It draws an analogy between the human society and the biological organism.

The basic characteristics of the society are agreement, consensus, integration and nationalistic feelings. In addition, it assumes that all people agree on the norms and values of the society. If conflict exists in a society, it's rather an exception than a rule.

## *Conflict Perspective*

The perspective usually argues that it is an illusion to assume that a modern society is in a harmonious balance. As a term implies, for the conflict theory proponents, society always experiences conflict, and its basic condition is not agreement, integration and consensus; the basic conditions of the society are competition for scarce resources, power, and advantages; and there can be no consensus as the functionalists claim there to be.

The functionalist perspective examines education in terms of the functions it fulfills in the society; such as cultural transmission, socialization, social control, transmission of academic knowledge and skills and etc. The conflict perspective, on the other hand, perceives the educational system as an instrument of securing power and privileges in the modern society. Education is a means or an instrument to maintain inequality that exists in a given society.

## **Structural Functionalist and Conflict Perspective on Education – A Comparison**

1. While structural functionalists' emphasizes the fact that education contributes significantly to the stability, integration and the conflict-free existence of the modern society, and provides the poor with the opportunity for changing their position and environment by providing access to scarce resources, conflict theorists make the claim that education perpetuates the existing inequalities among the members of the modern society, since most of the time it is the wealthy and people with high status who get the chance for better education.
2. While functionalist perspective argues that schools pass knowledge and academic skills that make it possible for people to participate in the central activities of the society, the conflict perspective is less optimistic. According to the conflict perspective, formal education seems to be more of a status achieving mechanism than a mechanism for imparting new knowledge. Conflict theorists, like Randall Collins, argue that the school system teaches very little to people, but they simply assign a rank and these people are not more knowledgeable than others. It is just a means of acquiring a status (Credentialism<sup>27</sup>).

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<sup>27</sup> For a discussion on the concept refer to a book by James W. Vander Zanden the social experience: an introduction to sociology , 1990 p. 495

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3. While functionalist perspective argue that education serves in promoting social and political integration, the conflict theorists see the educational system as a means of maintaining the status quo: the existing socio-economic system. For conflict theorists, the function of education is to produce people that the government and the economic institutions need to maintain their system going. Most teachings learned at school are not in accordance with the formal curriculum; rather it teach what is known as the hidden curriculum - society's attitudes and values learned in school that prepare children to accept the requirements of adult life and to fit in to the social, political, and the economic systems (Philip Jackson, 1968). It refers to the standards of behavior that are deemed proper by society and are taught subtly in schools. Schools, for the conflict theorists, are instruments of national and political policy of a given country.

According to the conflict theorist, the school systems have several important functions in service of the existing capitalist system or class:

- a. The school supplies students with cognitive, intellectual, and technical skills required by the capitalist class.
- b. Students are discipline, punctuality, and blind obedience to authority.
- c. The school teaches students loyalty to the state and obedience to the law.

4. As to the question of 'Why compulsory education expanded in the industrial societies?' the structural functionalists contend that it is a response to the demands of increasingly specialized occupations that require skilled workforce. It is a response to the extensive economic and social development. Industrialization created new occupational structures and these developments required more specialized and skilled manpower, which could only be successfully met by the expansion of educational institutions and compulsory education rather than by the family as it has been in the earlier period.

Viewed from the conflict perspective, the increase in the secondary and higher education and in the educational requirements for jobs in many industrial countries resulted from the desire of status groups to maintain their positions in the operational hierarchy than from the need for more formal training.

For the conflict theorists, the well educated are doing similar jobs as the less educated ones used to do. Formal education doesn't provide the necessary training in the actual job skills needed. Most skilled workers acquire their skills when they do the job, not by teachings and trainings.

From the conflict perspective, beyond the stage of mass literacy, formal education does not necessarily lead to economic development. Education serves as a means or resource in the struggle of power, wealth and prestige. Educational qualifications are being used in the struggle for advantages and prestige. Social institutions are instruments of the powerful to control and dominate others. By the same token, education is an instrument of the elite domination, rather than a means of preparing skilled manpower for the requirements of the economy, and the market.

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## **Functions of Education**

*(As illustrated by the Functionalists)*

Social institutions exist because they meet one or more basic needs of the society. Like wise, the educational institution performs various vital functions for the modern society. These include:

### ***1. Cultural Transmission***

Through schooling, each generation of young people is exposed to the existing norms, beliefs, and values of the culture of the society. Although schools mainly concentrate in teaching the basic academic skills (like writing, reading, mathematics, and etc.), they also pass on basic values, norms, beliefs and attitudes of the society. Cultural transmission must always take place for the society to endure. The educational institutions contribute to the perpetuation of the culture of a society by formally passing on the cultural heritages from one generation to the next.

### ***2. Social Control***

In performing the manifest function of transmitting knowledge and culture, schools go far beyond teaching basic skills. School children are introduced to standards of proper conduct in public life.

Like such basic social institutions as the family and the religion, education prepares the young to lead a productive and orderly live as adults by introducing them to the norms, values and sanctions of the larger society.

Through the exercise of social control, students are taught the various skills and values that will be essential in their further positions within the labor force. They learn punctuality, discipline, scheduling, and responsible work habits. In effect, schools serve as a transitional agent of social control - between parents and employees in the life of most individuals. This function of social control is undertaken by schools not only through transmitting the existing culture but also by recreating within their walls the social control mechanism found in other institutions such as government and the economy.

### ***3. Social and Political Integration***

The educational system remains to be the major agent of social integration. Formal education provides the means of transforming people with different backgrounds in to a common cultural identity. Attending schooling together, learning the same type of education and being exposed to similar environment result in most cases in the development of attitudes and values that contribute to social integration, stability and consensus. As a result, the members of that particular society will become more or less homogenous with respect to their values, beliefs, norms and attitudes.

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## ***4. Agent of Change***

Education can stimulate or bring about desired social changes. It promotes social change by serving as a meeting ground where society's distinctive beliefs and traditions can be shared among people of different social, cultural, political and religious backgrounds. On the other hand, increased years of formal schooling is associated with openness to new ideas and more liberal social and political view points that encourage people to question established 'truths' and practices.

## ***5. Selection and Screening of Talent***

Schools are usually places where people's talent and innate abilities are identified and screened out. By using exams and IQ testes, schools usually place students according to the consistence of their abilities.

## ***6. Promotion of Personal Growth and Development***

Students are exposed to diverse perspectives, models, experiences, and an environment that promote the development of individual abilities and intellectual creativity and advancement in the verbal and artistic means of personal expression. Schools also enable a person to be able to get a place in the occupational structure, in that they promote the development of personal abilities and talents that provide for the greater range of social mobility (Refer to a book by Richard T. Schaefer and Robert P. Lamm, 1995 **SOCIOLOGY** (fifth edition) p.457-8.).

## ***7. Creation, Dissemination and Preservation of Knowledge***

The creation or the innovation, i.e., the discovery of new knowledge through research and ingenious thinking is the function of the educational institutions, and traditionally, this is thought to be the role of, and carried out at the higher educational level.

Dissemination can be taken to refer to the teaching and learning process that takes place in a classroom setting. It takes different forms: written, audio-visual means that could reach a hundreds or thousands of people. The task of preservation of knowledge can be achieved through such activities as maintaining a manuscript, artifacts or publishing a report. For example, writing a book is both a dissemination of knowledge and a preservation of it.

## **Student (College) Subculture**

When people observe high schools, colleges, or universities from the outside, students appear to constitute a cohesive, uniform group. However, the student subculture is actually much more complex and diverse.

Burton Clark and Martin Trow (1966) – and more recently, Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz (1987) - have identified distinctive subcultures among college students.



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## **Collegiate**

The collegiate subculture is a world of sports, dates and fun. Its symbols are the star athlete, the homecoming queen, and the fraternity dance. The collegiate subculture usually recruits its most active supporters for the upper and upper-middle classes, for it takes money and leisure to pursue round social activities. This subsystem of values and activities is compatible with strong college loyalty. Its graduates often become devoted alumni, sentimentally tied to the college through happy memory of things of the past. However, the collegiate subculture is resistant to involvement with ideas beyond what is required to pass courses and gain the diploma.

## **Vocational**

A second orientation is the vocational subculture. In this sub world, students are narrowly and directly concerned with job preparation and see college as course and credits leading to a diploma and a better job. Symbols of this subculture are the placement office and the slide hanging from the engineering students' belt. Its patterns are most fully represented in the student who is poor and have dependants.

The vocational subculture is not usually compatible with strong college loyalty since its members do not participate intensely in the extracurricular life of the college. Like the collegiate, the vocational subculture is resistant to intellectual demands beyond what is required to pass courses. This subculture is likely to flourish in colleges that recruit primarily the sons and daughters of lower-middle and working class homes. It usually has little social unity.

## **Academic**

A third blueprint for behavior is the academic subculture, the way of life of serious students who identify with the intellectual concerns of faculty members. This subculture is carried by students who work hard, get the best grades, talk about their course work outside of class and let the world of ideas and knowledge reach them.

Their symbols are the library, laboratory and seminar; they are liked by the instructors but are 'greasy grinds' in the eyes of the collegiate crowd. The academic subculture is generally compatible with college loyalty, through identification with the faculty. It is the dominant portion of the climate found at the academically strongest colleges.

Students with serious academic orientation come from all social strata and cultural groups, but proportionally more of them are likely to come from upper-middle homes where parents are well educated, value books and learning and have the financial resources to support their children study.

## **Nonconformist**

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The fourth orientation is the nonconformist subculture. There are many types of nonconformity among the college students, but a principal type is the nonconformist intellectual. The nonconformist intellectuals are critical of the 'establishments' and they seek to be independent, and they are usually hostile to the college administration and somewhat detached from the college as a whole.

These students are often deeply concerned with issues of the classroom, but even more with issues current in art, literature and politics of the wider adult society.

Nonconforming students often strive for a personal identity, and in the process they adopt distinctive styles of dress, of speech, and of attitude. In the eyes of their more conforming classmates, they are the unwashed. The nonconformist subculture involved with ideas but not identified with the college, apparently attracts participants from all social backgrounds. It offers the rebellious student shelter and intellectual support for his rebellious idealism.

These four types of subculture emerge from the combination of two factors: the degree to which students are involved with ideas and the extent to which students identify with their college

## **Educational Inequality**

It is assumed that education will provide an opportunity for individuals to develop their skills, and abilities and modify their attitudes and behaviors. When universal education (at least primary education) in some industrialized countries was declared a couple of decades ago, it was assumed that it would provide the young with the necessary skills and trainings to enable them to find a valued position in their society. However, there is a still going on debate on the fact that education as one means of reducing inequalities between individuals and groups. There is a strong argument that states 'education is just a means of expressing, perpetuating, and reaffirming the existing inequalities in power and privileges between individuals and groups than acting to change it in any way'. In support of this argument, many researches show the fact that, there is a differential treatment in education, i.e., a system that rewards some and penalizes others.

Traditionally, equality in education was defined as referring to the availability of schools to all regardless of their ascriptive factors, such as family background, race or gender. Those scholars, on the other hand, who wanted to go deep in to the essence, they take in to account the quality of teachers (the extent of their training), the quality and equality of educational materials, the age and quality of the school and etc.

Sociologists, however, take a different stand. They tried to shift the notion of equality of education from mere exposure to the effects and results of education. Accordingly, educational equality is a situation where the distribution of educational outcomes is independent of students' ascriptive characteristics. If students from different background score similar grades, and earn

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equal incomes when they are employed for the same job, then that is what they call equality in education.

## **Educational Inequality by Social Class**

Family's socioeconomic position affects how far youths will go in schooling and how well they will perform in school. Families influence the careers of their children by socializing them to high educational and occupational aspirations and by providing them with the support necessary for achieving these aspirations. On average, the higher the social class of children's families, the greater will be the number of formal grades the children complete.

The higher the socioeconomic status of students' families, the more academic honors and awards the children are likely to receive, the more better off offices they are likely to held and the greater the children's participation in extracurricular activities is likely to be.

In sum, success depends heavily on the socioeconomic position of one's family of origin. Sociologists have identified a number of explanations for these patterns:

### ***1. The Home Circumstance***

The home circumstances where children come from affect their attendance and performance in schools. Most lower class families experience acute poverty because of low family income. There is a higher level of sickness in lower class families as they can't support basic medical care for family members. Besides the overcrowded living arrangements, low class families usually fail to support the so-called 'the hidden educational costs' of their children. Books and other educational materials are very scarce in the lower class families.

Combination of these factors result in low educational attainment of children from low class families compared to children from high class families.

### ***2. Parents' Attitude towards Education***

Subcultural differences also play a part. Many studies show that middle class families show a keen interest in their children's education and supervise their progress and advancement at schools. Middle and upper class parents usually make it clear to their children that they are expected to apply themselves to school tasks. Their children typically enter school already possessing a variety of skills that children from other backgrounds lack. Perhaps, even more important, middle class children are much more likely than lower class youngsters to have the conviction that they can affect their environment and their future.

In addition, the interest showed by middle class families towards the education of their kids acts as a strong motivational factor. For example, research evidences suggest that middle class families visit schools more frequently to discuss on their children's educational performance. This keen interest of middle class families towards their children education is partly because of the role education played in achieving their social position in the society.

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### ***3. Parents' Level of Education***

In most societies, middle class families are better educated, and they understand the school system better. They know about the school, the examinations, the career opportunities and the occupational system; and therefore are in a better position to advise and guide their children to schools and departments that provide a promising future.

### ***4. Teachers' Attitude towards Students of Different Social Class***

The social class or background of the children influences teachers' 'judgment of children' abilities in education. Teachers' expectation of students to perform in education, to some extent is influenced by their physical appearance, parental occupations, and the type of dress they wear. Even if children are of equal abilities, they are most likely to expect the upper and middle class students to be better thoughtful and intelligent than the lower class students.

### **Educational Inequality by Gender**

When we speak of a person's 'sex', we ordinarily are referring to the biological status of being a female or male. However, cultures assign different meanings to the definitions of 'male' and 'female'. To differentiate it from the term 'sex', the term 'gender' frequently is used to denote the definitions and assignments that different groups and cultures associate with the sexes. In other words, 'gender' is a cultural construct.

Educational inequality by the sex of a child is virtually found in all societies. Some social customs and norms hinder or at least adversely affect the girls' educational progress. Although the general trend is changing, the number of women decreases as the level of education progresses or advances.

In a society (at one point in time), males are more likely to attend or receive any type of formal training as compared to their female counterparts. In addition to the fact that women are less represented in the formal educational institutions than the men relative to their population size in a society, their misrepresentation varies along a social class. Girls from a lower social class have lower chances of advancing their education to the next higher level.

Women have lower chances of attaining any formal training and qualifications as compared to males, and attending education at higher educational institutions. Even when they are able to find a place in higher institutions there are differences in the subjects they study. Traditionally, in many societies, females tend to study art or social science subjects: history, languages, literature, commerce, home economics, typing, nursing and other caring professions. Males, on the other hand, naturally tend to do better on science and other technical subjects, which most likely lead to the betterment of the life of the professionals on the field.

The way children are socialized also reveals the difference in the expectations of both the society in general and the family in particular. Girls are socialized to take the role of housewives, in their later years, and a position subordinate to men; they are expected to play the roles that are restricted to the domestic sphere. Boys, on the other hand, are expected to take a role in the public domain or perform roles for the social good, and be the breadwinner of their families.

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As a result of this differential expectations and treatment of children, girls give more precedence to marriage, love, motherhood, and children, but less to out side home jobs, or career moves, etc.

One other factor, related to the socialization factors that affect achievements of the girls in education, is what we call *self-fulfilling prophecy*. In some instances, people may respond to stereotypes and act up on them (girls who are considered as lazy in a family may consider themselves as lazy and think of their laziness as a normal behavior), with the result that false definition become accurate. In other words, a person or group is described as having particular characteristics (such as girls lack self-esteem and ambition for formal education) and then begins to display the very traits that were said to exist. It means people will behave as effected by others to behave. So children will behave according to the parents, who want them to behave in certain manners.

### **Educational Inequality by Geography**

Educational inequality is also apparent in the mal-distribution of educational facilities and opportunities between the rural and the urban areas. There is a shortage of qualified teachers and other staffs, adequate books, libraries, laboratories, media (radio and TV education), and other facilities in rural areas that are relatively better available in urban areas.

Besides, students of both rural and urban areas are required to take the same exams, either in type and quality, to join higher educational institutions or for other screening purposes, with no distinction with reference to the availability of educational facilities. Therefore, there is inequality between the rural and urban areas.

Children in rural areas, in most cases, are not permitted to attend schooling, for their labor is very much needed in the family farms. Even those who are enrolled at school, perform very poorly as they do not have the time to study on their courses.