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Sociology of Work , Industry and Organization

A Compiled Reading

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1 Introduction

1.1 Origin and Historical Development

An interest in industrialization, and in the evolving patterns of work and employment in industrial enterprises, can be traced back to the first emergence of sociology as a distinct discipline, an emergence which represented a response to the industrial, and democratic, 'revolutions' in Europe. There are insights and theoretical formulations in the works of the 'founding fathers' of the subject which continue to influence research to the present day.

The works of Marx, Durkheim and Weber were all informed, and fundamentally shaped, by a reflection on work and economic life. Leaving aside the claim of those who crudely portray Marx as an economic determinist, it is not very difficult to see that the world of work and industrial relations were of central importance to **Marx's** work. Marx's writing combined an interest in the macro forces and historical trends shaping work with an attempt to map in detail micro social interaction at the level of the shop floor. In **Durkheim's** writing work plays an equally crucial role. His interest in the shift from mechanical to organic social forms is rooted in an analysis of the changing nature of the division of labor in modern society. In his thesis he specifically addressed the division of labor but an interest in economic life was also apparent in his other work, most notably the neglected Professional Ethics and Civic Morals. Finally **Weber's** interest in the area was very broad, examining questions of the division of labor, bureaucracy and occupational identity. In particular his ideas on rationality provide an overarching analysis of changes in the workplace and the wider industrial society which they form a part of.

The sociology of work and industry has held a vital place within the development of contemporary sociology. In many ways studies of work and industry, alongside class analysis, came to define the discipline during its expansionary phase from the 1930s to the 60s. Though the field was flourishing field in the United States during the 1930s and 1940s, it was later largely absorbed into the study of complex organizations. In Britain, however, industrial sociology has remained a separate area of research. Particularly, a real upsurge

in British industrial sociology came in the **post World War II** era emerging out of wartime research into industrial production and the recognition of the importance of 'social influences' and shop floor culture. Supported by funding from the British Government as well as from American Conditional Aid money, early studies sought to promote 'industrial efficiency' as part of the post war planning process. Later, with the expansion of universities in the UK research took on a more independent and critical edge.

1.2   Scope and Subject Matter

Work and how it is organized and experienced is central to the traditional concerns of sociology— a discipline which developed to provide a critical understanding of the industrial capitalist society. In spite of this, there has never emerged an integrated industrial sociology or sociology of work. This, in part, reflects the fact that the sociological discipline itself **contains a variety of different theoretical traditions**. But it also reflects the fact that sociologists interested in work have tended to specialize and to concentrate on such separate areas as work organizations, occupations, employment relations, or work behavior and attitudes. Figure 1.1 below gives examples of the concerns of these various areas of the sociology of work and industry and indicates that each of these represents one facet or another of industrial capitalist societies.

Work
E.g. work experiences, values, orientations; work and non-work; gender and work

Occupations
E.g. occupational structures & types; class & work; professionalization; division of labor

Sociology of Work, Industry & Organizations

Organizations
E.g. bureaucracy; power and authority; job design; organizational cultures

Employment Relations
E.g. conflict and cooperation; trade unions, sanctions; strategies of opposition and human resourcing
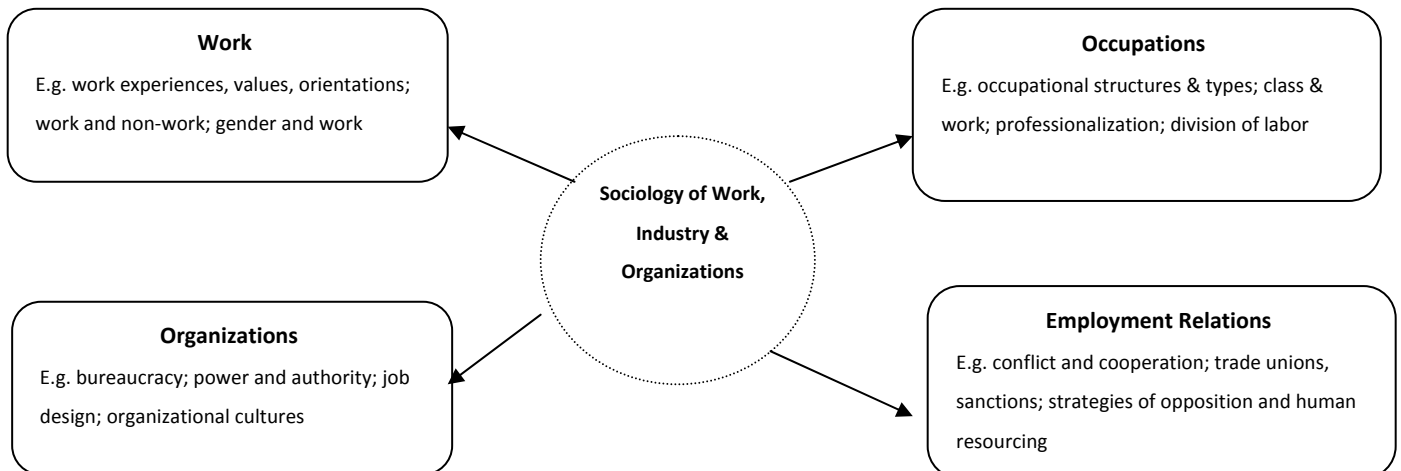
Figure 1.1 The components of the Sociology of Work, Industry & Organizations

A degree of diversity is welcome in any discipline which deals with important social issues about which members of society have a variety of views and preferences. A degree of division of labor or specialization within a discipline also has the advantage of achieving a sharper focus on particular areas of activity or concern. But this can be taken too far and can lead to confusion and frustration on the part of those who come to sociology with a desire to see what the sociological perspective can offer to their understanding of contemporary problems of work and how it is organized. It can be off-putting if the person involved in industrial problems discovers, for example, that they are located in **a work organization** which has a separate sociology that they belong to **an occupation** which has another distinct sociology and that they are involved in **employment or industrial relations** issues which have their own separate literature. And it can be even more discouraging when they discover that different studies or analyses within these compartments tend to vary quite considerably in the set of concepts which they use and the extent to which they stress, say cooperation in social life or, alternatively conflicts of interest.

To come to terms with this problem, the student interested in the sociological analysis of work and industry needs to recognize that the discipline is fragmented into both theoretical traditions and substantive areas of study. To help with this it is convenient to recognize that the sociology of work and industry (a) tends to cover the areas of study shown in Figure 1.1; and (b) tends to approach these through different theoretical traditions or strands of thought (which will be discussed in the coming sections).

1.3 Relevance

Industrial organizations dominate industrial societies. They are, indeed, one of the most distinctive features of such societies. Though large-scale industrial organizations did not appear to any great extent in the earliest stages of industrialization in Europe and the United States of America, their importance was apparent well before the end of the

nineteenth century; and during the present century their influence has become increasingly pervasive.

Many small enterprises still exist, of course, but for most people in modern societies paid work means employment as one of hundreds or thousands of others in a large industrial corporation, or in an equally large or larger public sector organization. For industrialization and the urbanization which accompanied it have seen not only the domination of the economy by large industrial and commercial organizations, but also the parallel growth of central and local government, and the development of organizations to provide mass education, mass communications, mass leisure and mass representation, all employing large numbers of people.

It should therefore be no surprise that sociologists have been concerned to investigate these developments. In this as in other areas of sociology the aim is to go behind the newspaper headlines and common-sense understandings of the patterns of work and employment in industrial enterprises to identify underlying trends and patterns of cause and effect, both intended and unintended.

2 Work

2.1 Meaning and definition of work

Work is the carrying out of tasks which enable people to make a living with in the environment in which they find themselves.

The above relatively uncomplicated definition makes the concept of work appear easy to define, but in reality it is not. Keith Grint (1991) claims no unambiguous or objective definition of work is possible. He examines a number of definitions to illustrate this point:

1. First, he considers whether work can be seen as 'that which ensures individual and societal survival by engaging with nature'. One problem with this definition is that many activities commonly regarded as work — for example, writing sociology books! — may not be seen as essential or necessary for a society's survival.
2. Grint argues that work cannot be defined simply as employment. Many activities in which people are employed are also done by people who are y employed. Examples include washing—up, ironing child minding, car maintenance, decorating and breastfeeding.
3. Grint denies that work can be defined as something have to do whether we like it or not. Eating and drinking come into this category but are not usually seen as work.
4. Work cannot be seen as none-leisure activities. Activities which are leisure for some may be work for others, such as playing football. In any case, work and leisure take place simultaneously and be hard to separate. A couple of beers for a manager with an important client may combine work and leisure. In some societies work and leisure run together in nearly all activities.

It is thus sensible to see that work is socially defined: any definition has to be specific to a particular society at a particular time. Grint says: 'Work, then, in its physical features and

its linguistic descriptions is socially constructed…there are aspects of social activities which we construe as work and this embodies social organization.'

In some cases activities are seen as work depends upon whose interpretation of the activity carries the most weight. For instance, some people might clearly define housework as work, but others do not.

It is important to recognize that the meaning which work has for people in any particular setting and at any particular time is influenced by a wide range of factors (Ioyce 1987). We can nevertheless note some broad patterns of difference which have existed historically:

- The ancient Greeks regarded the most desirable and the only 'good' life as one of leisure. Work, in the sense of supplying the basic necessities of life, was a degrading activity which was to be allocated to the lowest groups within the social order and, especially to slaves.

Slavery was the social device which enabled the Greeks to maintain their view of work as something to be avoided by a full human being: what human beings 'shared with all other forms of animal life was not considered to be human'.

- The Romans tended to follow the Greek view; the Hebrews viewed work as unpleasant drudgery which could nevertheless play a role of expiating sin and recovering a degree of spiritual dignity.

- Early Christianity also modified the relatively extreme Greek view and recognised that work might make one healthy and divert one from sinful thoughts and habits. Leading thinkers of the Catholic Church, such as Aquinas, were influenced by the Greek view but a doctrine did emerge which gave a role for work in the Christian scheme whereby it was seen as a penance arising from the fall and original sin. It also contributed to the virtue of obedience but was by no means seen as noble, rewarding or satisfying; 'its very endlessness and tedium were spiritually valuable in that it contributed to Christian.

- The Reformation and the emergence of Protestant Christianity saw work coming to be treated positively within western cultures. With Luther we see the suggestion that work

can itself be a way of serving God. What we must note here is that it established the all—important idea that one's work was a 'calling' of equivalent value to that of a religious vocation which had previously involved a turning of ones back on the mundane and a movement 'upwards' towards virtue and other-worldliness.

- With the growth of modern industrial capitalism we see the work ethic spreading further and wider. The modern work ethic makes work the essential prerequisite of personal and social advancement, of prestige, of virtue and of self-fulfillment.

2.2 Dimensions of Work

2.2.1 The Personal Dimension of Work

Work has a personal dimension, in defining one's psyche and creating a self-image. This personal dimension certainly has a strong hold on all persons, in market and in nonmarket societies. In Ethiopia, the Wayto hippopotamus hunter seeks gratifying praise as "a stalwart hunter." There the Qemant plowman seeks rewarding respect as a proficient speaker at a legal proceeding. In America, this hold on the psyche is true even for those only marginally employable and thus barely sharing in the economic, social, and psychic rewards of work. Summarizing the view of self held by street corner men only slightly prepared for participation in the work force in Washington, DC., Elliot Liebow writes that "the street corner man is under continuous assault by his job experiences and job fears. His experiences and fears feed on one another. The kind of job he can get——and frequently only after fighting for it, if then-steadily confirms his fears, depresses his self—confidence and self—esteem until finally, terrified of an opportunity even if one presents itself, he stands defeated by his experiences, his belief in his own self-worth destroyed and his fears a confirmed reality" (1967:71). Work greatly affects the integration of a personality.

2.2.2 The Social Dimension of Work

Work also has a social dimension: it concerns social relations as much as material fabrications. Western scholars recognize the central importance of the social relational aspect of work. Much

of the behavior of work is explainable at the collective level. Individual self-interest is dampened by what could be called the behavioral modalities of work, ranging from norms to etiquette. Such a view long held in economic anthropology is also found in the writings in socioeconomics. Cross—culturally compared, not every social relation is work, but work is at least a potential aspect of any social relation. Walter

Goldschmidt analyzes particular social dimensions of work cross-culturally for tribal and agrarian peoples. Work has institutions and patterned social regularities and arrangements that may be considered as its social structures. These structures are sometimes so large and complex that they are beyond the social relational ken of the average person, but they control his or her work nevertheless. Invar Berg discusses these social structures of work at three analytic levels. In industrial society with its atrophied ties of kinship and community, work provides opportunities for humanly needed socializing. These interactions with coworkers include exchanging positive affect for both work and nonwork experiences, having a "sounding board" for voicing private concerns, releasing tensions before a supportive audience, and having membership in an in-group of intimate persons—a surrogate tribal "us," socially bonded by links of work instead of kinship.

2.2.3 The Temporal Dimension of Work

Through the ages, every human society has been structured around work in its dimensions of time as well as social relations. Accurate minutely divided time reckoning is a hallmark of industrial society. To coordinate and facilitate industrial work including transportation, standard time zones and daylight savings time had to be created. For industrial processes, timing to the microsecond became necessary. Without a precise and invariable reckoning for the fourth dimension, time, the three dimensions of space could not be used efficiently enough for the evolution of the technologically advanced societies of the late nineteenth century. For effectiveness, work in industrial society must be timed in a variety of modes such as frequency, synchronization, and duration. A needed piece of material must arrive by a particular time; an event must occur in the correct sequence; and a process must be of an exact duration. Without

timings of these kinds, work becomes dysfunctionally independent instead of functionally interdependent.

Timing is necessary not just for creating goods and services but also for planning them. Without timing of work, terminal dysfunction would undermine industrial society. It is no accident that one of the purposes of public school is to enculturate children to be as regular as clockwork regarding their timed events and tasks.

2.3   Work Orientations and Worker Behavior

Orientation to work refers to the meaning attached by individuals to their work which predisposes them both to think and act in particular ways with regard to that work.

The notion of orientation to work is used to investigate the various ways in which different individuals and groups approach their work and it takes as its starting point a fundamental distinction which was implicit in much of the thinking discussed above: a distinction between work meanings in which work offers intrinsic satisfactions to people and meanings which recognize only extrinsic satisfactions. From this dichotomy we can set up two extreme ideal types of work meaning and suggest a continuum along which people's actual positions can be located as suggested in Figure 2.1.

Unfortunately, this essentially binary way of looking at what work means to people has encouraged an 'either/or' type of debate. Much discussion of work attitudes and work motivation has centered upon the question of whether people generally are intrinsically or extrinsically oriented towards their work. It is therefore frequently debated whether, on the one hand, people generally go to work 'just for the money' or 'basically for company' or, on the other hand, they primarily want 'job satisfaction' or self-fulfillment. But this is simplistic and industrial sociologists have developed the concept of work orientation to go beyond this and to show how people's approach to their work typically includes mixtures of these basic inclinations whilst nevertheless containing specific leanings in one or other of these general

directions. And the concept has been employed to help explain the factors, both individual and structural, which influence people's attitudes and behavior with regard to their work.

WORK WHICH GIVES INTRINSIC SATISFACTION	WORK WHICH GIVES EXTRINSIC SATISFACTION
-Work is an enriching experience -Work provides challenges to the individual -The individual develops and	-Work yields no value in itself -Work becomes a means to an end -Human satisfaction or fulfillment is sought
WORK HAS AN EXPRESSIVE	WORK HAS AN INSTRUMETNAL
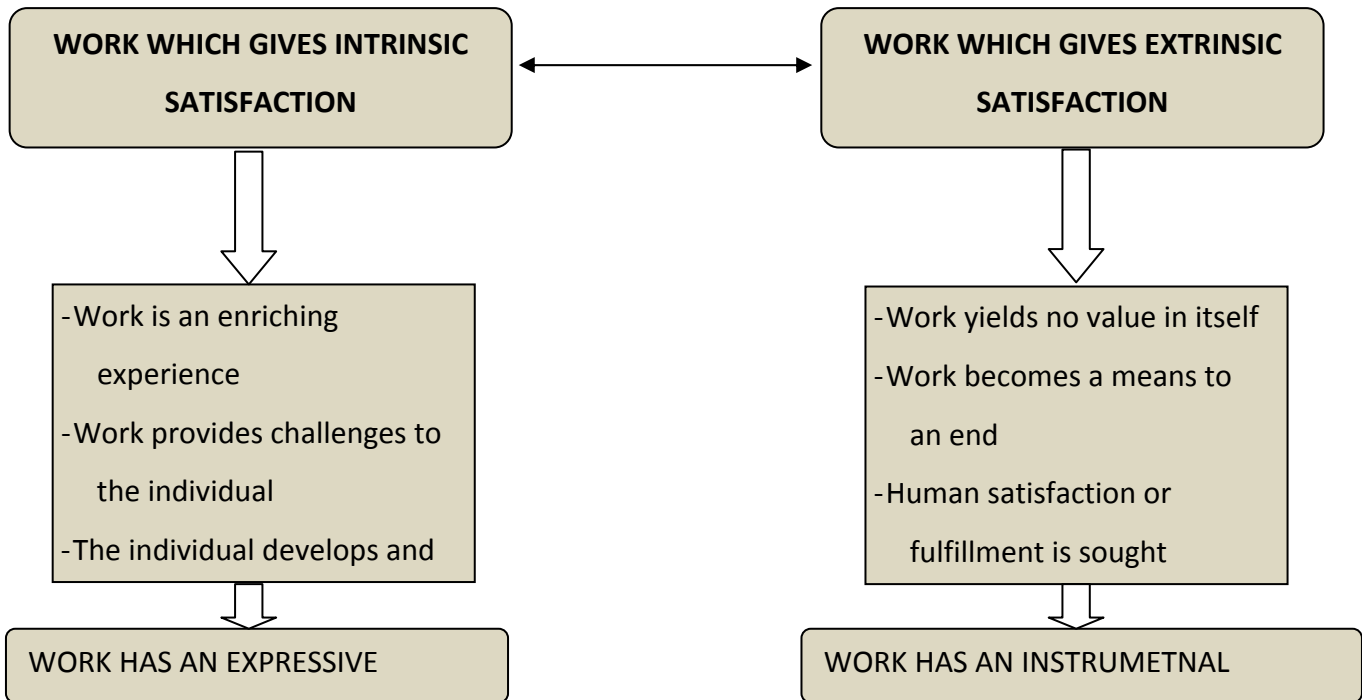
Figure 2.1. Meanings of Work: A continuum

In the social sciences, much of the thinking about attitudes and behavior at work has derived from a concern with manual workers. Two reasons can be suggested to explain this:

- Such groups have been more accessible to investigation.
- Manual workers have been regarded as a particularly problematic group.

This second factor applies in an immediately managerial sense in that managements are always interested in ideas which might give them insight into motivations and activities of those whose efforts they have to direct. A corresponding concern also exists at the socio—political level. The 'Working class', its loyalties, aspirations and accommodations has been a focus of concern ever since its creation. Sociologists have been at the forefront of those showing this concern. In looking at the development of theoretical perspectives on the relationship between work and

the individual, therefore, we inevitably find ourselves examining the changing ways in which sociologists have attempted to explain shop floor attitudes and behavior.

Traditional thinking about industrial behavior tended to focus on the assumed 'needs' of workers, concentrating sometimes on the economic needs of the employees, as with the scientific managers, and sometimes on their so-called social needs, as with the human relations tradition. A significant breakthrough in distinctively sociological analysis was made, however, once closer attention was given to the influence of, technology in the workplace. The technological implications approach   discussed later in this chapter stressed the influence that technology can have on the way people act and think at work. Although the orientations to work perspective gives a less central role to technology as an influence on work attitudes and behaviour than the technological implications approach, the importance of its insights should not be underestimated. It is vital, however, not to assume some relatively direct causal link between the technology being applied and the attitudes and behavior of those applying it. In practice, we often find that there are differences in attitudes and behavior between organizations which have similar technologies and that even within a given organization changes may occur which are the result of adjustments other than to the technology itself. This can be illustrated by looking at two studies of the car industry. Turner et al. (1967) in their investigation of industrial relations in the car industry pointed out that the differences in strike records of different car manufacturers could not be put down to variations in technology and Guest's (1962) US case study demonstrates the possibilities of changes in conflict and general interpersonal behavior which can be achieved by changes in managerial policy and staff

The research study which first introduced the notion of 'orientation to work' also looked at workers in the car industry. As part of their wider study of social class in Britain in the 1960s, Goldthorpe, Lockwood et al. (1968) examined the attitudes and behavior of assembly line workers in the Vauxhall plant in Luton. These workers did not appear to be deriving either intrinsic or social satisfactions from their work experience. Yet they did not express dissatisfaction with the jobs which they were doing. The possible paradox here was removed by the authors' explanation that these workers had knowingly chosen work with these

deprivations, regarding such work as a means to a relatively good standard of living which could be achieved with the income made on the assembly line. The workers were said to have an instrumental orientation to work. The sources of this orientation were in the class, community and family backgrounds of the employees and not in the workplace itself. The technological implications approach was strongly questioned by the finding that workers in other technological situations investigated (a chemical plant and a batch-production engineering plant) had similar work orientations with consequently corresponding patterns of behavior and attitude. Technology thus appears to be less important a variable than had previously been suggested. The motives, interests and outside-work background of the worker had to be taken into account if not given central emphasis. These authors accepted that technology does have an influence but argued that this influence has to be put into the context of what it is people are looking for in their work.

The work orientation perspective takes the employee's own definition of the situation as an 'initial basis for the explanation of their social behavior and relationships'(Goldthorpe, Lockwood et al. l9o8).

This approach has the great strength of encouraging us to recognize the variety of meaning that work can have for employees. Whilst accepting that all work in industrial societies has an Instrumental basis, Goldthorpe, Lockwood et al. suggest that a typology of work orientations can nevertheless be offered. These are indicated in Figure 2.2.We see here the following orientations:

• An instrumental orientation associated with the study's affluent manual workers.

• A bureaucratic orientation reflecting patterns found among white- collar employees.

• A solidaristic orientation inferred from the authors' understanding of more 'traditional' working-class employment situations like coalmining and shipbuilding.

Orientation to Work	Primary Meaning of Work	Involvement In Employing Organization	Ego-Involvement	Work & Non-Work Relationship
INSTRUMENTAL	Means to an end. A way of earning income	Calculative	Weak. Work not a central life interest or source of self-realization	Spheres sharply dichotomized. Work relationships not carried over into non-work activities
BUREAUCRATIC	Service to an organization in return for career progress	'Moral' elements: some sense of obligation	Individual's position and prospects are sources of social identity	Not sharply dichotomized. Work identity and organizational status carried over
SOLIDARISTIC	Economic but with this limited by group loyalties to either mates or firm	'Moral' when identification is with firm 'Alienative' when this is more with workmates than with employer	Strong social relationships at work are rewarding	Intimately related. High participation in work-linked formal or informal associations
PROFESSIONAL	No details given			

Table 2-1: Four possible orientations to work

In the same way that the technological implications approach represented a move towards an approach which was more sociological than those approaches which had emphasized universal human needs, so this move towards an analysis in the social-action tradition can be seen as progressing towards an even more fully sociological understanding. It recognizes the importance to any appreciation of what goes on within work of both the individuals and their social context. This had not been totally ignored previously. Such an approach became central to industrial sociology, however, only with the appearance of Goldthorpe, Lockwood et ul.'s Affluent Worker study, despite the fact that Weber himself foreshadowed such developments early in the century. The analysis provided by Goldthorpe, Lockwood et al. has been shown by researchers who have revisited the Luton setting to have exaggerated the amount of choice being exercised by the 'instrumental workers'. Devine (1992a) and Grieco (1987) have pointed to pressures of avoiding unemployment and looking for better housing which were as relevant as a desire to maximize earnings. The study can also be criticized for going too far in stressing the factors which influence workers' initial choice of job and for failing to recognize that the individual's work orientation, once in that job, is constantly liable to change as a result of both factors operating within and factors located outside the workplace. Subsequent work in this area has suggested that attention to 'prior orientation' to work has to be balanced by a greater recognition of the structural conditions in which these orientations then operate and a recognition that orientations or definitions of the situation are not necessarily fixed but are dynamic.

2.4 The social organization of work

2.4.1 Occupations

Occupations are categories of jobs that involve similar activities at different work sites (Reskin and Padavic, 1994). When we meet someone for the first time, the conversation is likely to touch on work. Because occupations signal approximate education level, income, and status, discovering another's occupation allows us to estimate the chances of a relationship. People

group occupations into categories that they associate with images about the persons in these categories. One such system of grouping which became the basis for official data collection was developed by **Dr. Alba Edwards** of the U.S. Census Bureau, who constructed a classification system of six broad categories, organized on the principle of socioeconomic commonalties within categories and differences between them. He used the following occupational divisions:

1. Professionals.
2. Proprietors, managers, and officials.
3. Clerks and kindred workers.
4. Skilled workers and foremen.
5. Semiskilled workers.
6. Unskilled workers.

The US Census Bureau, with some adjustments to reduce Edwards' six categories to four, used his scheme until 1980. It was then changed to a somewhat different six—category system. The list below shows the later classification with specifics:

1. White-collar workers
    a. Professional and technical
    b. Managers and officials
    c. Clerical workers
    d. Sales workers
2. Blue-collar workers
    a. Foreman and skilled workers
    b. Semiskilled workers
    c. Nonfarm laborers
3. Service workers
    a. Private household workers
    b. Other service workers
4. Farm workers
    a. Farmers and farm managers

b. Farm laborers and foremen

Since the turn of the 21st century, white-collar jobs have continually increased in the west. However, since World War II, the trend has been just the opposite for blue—collar work. More than one-fourth of the entire labor force would be semiskilled workers or laborers if the U.S. economy had the same mix of work today as it did in 1950. The expansion of some white-collar jobs generated better opportunities, but others did not—jobs in professional-technical and managers-officials categories provide more advantages than those in clerical or sales work. The growth of service workers' jobs provides mixed opportunities.

The service workers category includes a diversity of jobs, many at the lowest levels of an occupational cluster. In food services, for instance, waitresses, waiters, dishwashers, and cooks are considered service workers, but bakers are counted as skilled workers, and foodservice supervisors are classified as managers. In health services, practical nurses and attendants are included as service workers, while registered nurses are in the professional-technical category. Also among service workers are firefighters, police and detectives, barbers and beauticians, guards, door-keepers, watchmen, porters, and janitors. Many of these are low-skill, minimum-wage occupations. Overall, then, changes in the distribution of occupations indicate favorable openings for people who can take advantage of growth in the high-education, high-skill sectors (professional, managerial, and technical jobs), and less favorable consequences for others.

2.4.2 Professions

What occupations are professions? Although sociologists do not always agree on exactly which occupations are professions, they do agree that the number of people categorized as "professionals" has grown dramatically since World War II. According to sociologist Steven Brint (1994), the contemporary professional middle class includes most doctors, natural scientists, engineers, computer scientists, certified public accountants, economists, social scientists, psychotherapists, lawyers, policy experts of various sorts, professors, at least some journalists and editors, some clergy, and some artists and writers.

2.4.2.1 Characteristics of Professions

Professions are high status, knowledge-based occupations that have five major characteristics (Freidson, 1970, 1986; Larson, 1977):

1. Abstract, specialized knowledge. Professionals have abstract, specialized knowledge of their field, based on formal education and interaction with colleagues. Education provides the credentials, skills, and training that allow professionals to have job opportunities and to assume positions of authority within organizations (Brint, 1994).

2. Autonomy. Professionals are autonomous in that they can rely on their own judgment in selecting the relevant knowledge or the appropriate technique for dealing with a problem. Consequently, they expect patients, clients, or students to respect that autonomy.

3. Self-regulation. In exchange for autonomy, professionals theoretically are self-regulating. All professions have licensing, accreditation, and regulatory associations that set professional standards and that require members to adhere to a code of ethics as a form of public accountability.

4. Authority. Because of their authority, professionals expect compliance with their directions and advice. Their authority is based on mastery of the body of specialized knowledge and on their profession's autonomy: professionals do not expect the client to argue about the professional advice rendered. Professionals also have authority over persons in subordinate occupations; for example, doctors control much of the work of nurses and others in the health-care field.

5. Altruism. Ideally, professional's have concern for others. The term Altruism implies some degree of self-sacrifice whereby professionals go beyond self-interest or personal comfort so that they can help a patient or client (Hodson and Sullivan, 1990). Professionals also have a responsibility to protect and enhance their knowledge and to use it for the public interest.

2.5 Other Aspects of the World of Work

People who are unemployed but looking for work are part of the labor force. But there are also the underemployed-part—time or temporary workers who would prefer full—time work and those whose jobs do not measure up to their capabilities. Part—timers, temporary workers, and a group called independent contractors are considered part of the growing contingent workforce.

2.5.1 Unemployment

Unemployment may be **seasonal** (some occupations, such as construction or picking crops, require workers for only part of a year), **cyclical** (ups and downs that result from periodic economic fluctuations), or **frictional or structural** (Bronfenbrenner, Sichel, and Gardner, 1987).

Frictional unemployment refers to short-term unemployment after quitting or losing a job and before finding another. Economists suggest that due to frictional and seasonal causes, an unemployment rate of around 6 percent is normal, even in good times.

Most ominous is structural unemployment, the long-term or permanent job losses resulting from technological or market changes that affect an industry. Older workers are especially at risk, since they may find it difficult to learn new skills or to find other employment.

Structural unemployment occurs when jobs are available and there are workers seeking employment but the workers do not match the jobs. There are two main types of structural unemployment: regional and sectoral.

1. **Regional unemployment** exists where unemployed workers do not live in the areas where suitable vacancies are available. In the second half of the l980s as unemployment fell, it became difficult to fill some vacancies in southeast England because of labour shortages in that region, despite high unemployment in other parts of Britain.

2. Sectoral unemployment exists when the unemployed lack the appropriate skills or qualifications to fill vacancies. As old industries decline and new ones develop, some workers are left with obsolete skills. In Britain, workers in such industries as textiles, coalmining, shipbuilding and iron and steel, who have been made redundant, have found it difficult to find work which matches their skills.

Cyclical unemployment: Both frictional and structural unemployment occur when vacancies are available for the unemployed. Although these types of unemployment accounted for some of the unemployment during recent decades, clearly they could not account for it all. The number of unemployed far exceeded the number of vacancies: the supply of labour exceeded the demand or workers by employers. Such a situation is sometimes called cyclical unemployment.

All economies experience fluctuations, with periods of depression and boom following one another. These economic cycles may be short term, with minor fluctuations over four- to six—year periods, or they may be long term. For example, the British economy experienced a major depression in the 1930s, which was followed by a postwar economic boom in the 1950s and 1960s, which in turn was followed by recession in the 1970s and l980s. The early l990s saw a recession, while economic growth returned in the late 1990s.

The measurement of unemployment is based on the following three criteria that must be satisfied simultaneously; "without work", "currently available for work" and "seeking work'' (ILO, 1983).The standard definition of unemployment that is based on the "seeking work" criterion refers to take specific steps in specified period to seek paid employment or self employment. The specific steps may include registration at a public or private employment exchange, application to employers, checking at worksites, farms, factory gates, market or other assembly places, placing or answering newspaper advertisements, seeking assistance of friends or relatives, looking for land, building, machinery or equipment to establish own enterprise, arranging for financial resources, applying for work permits and licenses, etc. However, in situations where the conventional means of seeking work are of limited relevance, where the labour market is largely unorganized or of limited scope, where labour absorption is, at the time inadequate or where the labour force is largely self-employed, the above standard definition of unemployment with its emphasis on seeking work criterion might be restrictive and might not fully capture the prevailing employment situations in many developing countries including Ethiopia. Hence, the

International Standards introduced provisions, which allows for the relaxation of the seeking work criterion in certain situations. The provisions are two types, namely; partial relaxation and complete relaxation. Following the recommendations of the International Standard and reviewing the prevailing national situation, the 2005 National Labour Force Survey introduced a provision to capture the different forms of unemployment using the above alternative measurements. The treatment of the two options in the survey is described as follows.

Under partial relaxation, the definition of unemployment includes discouraged job seekers in addition to persons satisfying the standard definition. Discouraged job seekers are those who want a job but did not take any active step to search for work because they believe that they cannot find one.

Under the completely relaxed definition, unemployment includes persons without work and those who are available for work, including those who were or were not seeking work. That is, the seeking work criterion is completely relaxed and unemployment is based on the "without work" and "availability" criterion only. The availability in this situation is tested by asking the willingness to take up work for wage or salary in locally prevailing terms, or readiness to undertake self-employment activity, given the necessary resources and facilities.

(CSA, 2006: 43-44) Report On the 2005 National Labour Force Survey

2.5.2 Underemployment and the Contingent Workforce

Underemployment refers to workers who have part-time jobs (officially counted as less than 35 hours a week) but who prefer full-time employment, temporary workers who want stable work, or persons with jobs for which they are overqualified (a teacher working as a teacher's aide, for instance). Underemployment thus means workers are not fully utilized.

The *contingent workforce* includes part—time and temporary workers and independent contractors. Temporary workers may be hired directly by a firm or assigned to jobs by a temporary help agency. These agencies match workers with employers, pay the workers, and may offer them benefits (though there are often hurdles to qualifying for them). Independent contractors make their own arrangements directly with an employer who needs an employee. Independent contractors are self-employed and must make their own payments for unemployment insurance, Social Security, and health insurance. Whether assigned by an agency or hired directly as a temp or an independent contractor, such employment is unstable and dependent on employers' short—term needs. The concept of a contingent workforce thus is characterized by loose ties between workers and employers.

Especially in recent years, the use of temporary or contract workers has become more attractive to employers, due to stiffer competition and concerns about fixed costs. Temporary workers and independent contractors can easily be added or shed. They can handle workload fluctuations, meet seasonal demands, undertake special projects, fill in for vacancies and buffer the regular workforce if downturns occur (Carre, 1992). Contingent workers are available for all sorts of assignments, from production to professional and administrative tasks, and they are found in all industries.

Contingent workers offer another advantage: They are frequently less costly than regular workers. Temporary employees—whether hired from an agency or directly—are often ineligible

under the law for unemployment compensation. This insurance is costly to employers, who also do not need to offer temporary workers other benefits their regular workers might have, such as medical insurance and retirement plans. Independent contractors must individually reach agreements with prospective employers, who may be reluctant to provide such benefits. For the employer, therefore, hiring contingent workers may seem a wise plan, but damaging results have also been observed (Carre, 1992). Temporary workers form bonds with a company; they have no commitment to its future success. Immediate labor cost savings may handicap long-term productivity gains.

2.6   Work Outcomes

Work outcomes are the consequences of working, the glue that attaches people to their work. The following list gives some idea of the range of outcomes for workers:

1. Without work, the hours may drag by; work prevents a feeling of drift, aimlessness.
2. Work provides a culturally approved means of obtaining income.
3. Work is a basis for being the head of one's household or a partner in supporting the family.
4. The content of work may be experienced as pleasing.
5. A job's features (prestige, income), or simply holding a job, may raise one's self—esteem.

In this section we examine two major work outcomes—prestige, and satisfaction.

2.6.1 Prestige

Prestige, often described as social standing, status, or respect, indicates location in a social hierarchy. The emergence of city—states and empires introduced rigid social layering, or stratification, which became the usual social pattern for the next 5,000 years. India's ancient

(and still lingering) caste system, the aristocrat—free person—slave ranks of antiquity, the noble—commoner—serf distinctions of the Middle Ages are all examples. Not until the 1860s were feudal titles and privileges abolished in Japan, serfdom ended in Russia, and slaves freed in America.

Birth dictated social location in these systems. To use the terminology of sociology, rank was based on **ascription** (assigned) rather then achievement (earned). In the industrialized societies of the modern world, however, birth is viewed as a starting point from which unfavorable circumstances can be overcome.

The key social measure of achievement is *occupation*. Donald Treiman (1977) noted that differences in occupational prestige result from **variations in control over scarce resources.** These include **(1) the knowledge or skill required for socially valued tasks, (2) control over economic resources on which others depend, and (3) the authority to coordinate or define others' work.** Disparities in power are thus embedded in the division of labor, and power underpins prestige. Treiman went a step further, proposing that elite occupations in one country also will be highly regarded elsewhere: "the connections between educational requirements, income and prestige are similar throughout the world". Other analysts agree that education and income are the best predictors of occupational prestige (Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1993).

Surveys of on occupational prestige have found consistent rankings over the years. It is not surprising that physicians and other professions are ranked at the top, skilled workers and technicians around the middle, and unskilled occupations at the bottom. However, Bose and Rossi (1983) give this type of research an interesting twist. Along with the conventional occupations ranked in their study, three nonpaying roles were included—housewife, househusband, and "person living on welfare." Housewife was ranked in the middle, house-husband among the lower scores, and living on welfare nearly at the bottom.

Social judgments of occupations and alternative sources of livelihood have consequences. **Internal effects bear on self-esteem; external effects involve relations with others.** A core sociological principle is that people see themselves the way they think others see them. A personal circle of friends or relatives might respect a person for having a pleasant personality or being reliable, but local reputation can only soften, not displace, the broader social evaluations grounded in how the person earns a living. Low social standing, then, can result in low self-regard (Sennet and Cobb, 1973; Lewis, 1993). **The external impact on social relations is also significant.** For example, the choice of a marriage partner from among potential mates is far from random. In addition to age, race, and religion, a social layering effect is visible. Men and women with similar aspirations and educational credentials usually find each other (Western and Wright, 1994). Baxter (1994) studied dual-earner couples in the United States, Sweden, Norway and Australia, examining the correspondence between the occupational levels of husbands and wives (six levels were used in this research). Over 50 percent of American couples were at the same level, and most of the rest were in an adjacent rank. The proportions were similar for couples in the other three countries.

Neighborhoods, too, tend toward homogeneity, housing families of roughly similar status and income. An important consequence is that children's futures are affected. In wealthier areas, many youngsters attend private schools, and going on to college is common; in the inner city many of them attend rundown, sometimes dangerous schools in which the dropout rate is high, and continuing on to college is neither prepared for nor encouraged. Though a school's staff and physical resources are important to school achievement, so are the students. As parents know, and the classic study of Coleman and his colleagues (1966) confirms, adolescents strongly influence each other's responses to schooling.

These situations reflect a class form of stratification. **Judgments are anchored in the outlook that occupation is not predestined by birth, effort can overcome disadvantages,** and as Lewis observes, **"It is the individual alone who is socially significant and who is therefore responsible for the degree of personal success achieved'.** The contest is pictured as open to

all, so falling short may bring a sense of inadequacy while getting ahead can bolster self-confidence.

2.6.2 Job Satisfaction

Work is an important Source of self-identity for many people; it can help people feel positive about themselves or it can cause them to feel alienated. Job satisfaction refers to people's attitudes toward their work, based on (1) their job responsibilities, (2) the organizational structure in which they work, and (3) their individual needs and values (Hodson and Sullivan, 1990). Studies have found that worker satisfaction is highest when employees have some degree of control over their work, when they are part of the decision-making process, when they are not too closely supervised, and when they feel that they play an important part in the outcome (Kohn et aI., 1990).

Job satisfaction often is related to both **intrinsic** and **extrinsic** factors. *Intrinsic factors pertain to the nature of the work itself, while extrinsic factors include such things as vacation and holiday policies, parking privileges, on-site day-care centers, and other amenities that contribute to workers' overall perception that their employer cares about them.*

The number of sociological studies on work satisfaction reaches into the thousands. Much of the interest has focused on three issues: the link between satisfaction and productivity; the degree of job satisfaction among members of the labor force; and the connection between satisfaction and occupational or organizational characteristics.

2.6.2.1 Job Satisfaction and Productivity

Systematic research on job satisfaction and job performance can be traced to the famous **Hawthorne studies** of 1927-1932, conducted at the Western Electric Company's Hawthorne Plant in Chicago. The first studies had produced a totally unexpected finding. Lighting was

increased and decreased in three departments, but no consistent link with productivity emerged. One department was then divided into a test group and control group. Lighting for the test group was increased and decreased, but it was kept constant for the control group. Productivity in the test group went up as illumination increased; surprisingly, it rose equally in the control group. Another two groups were then set up, and again the productivity of both groups increased. This led to more and broader studies, until funding stopped.

By the end of the 1930s the researchers' results were published (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939; Whitehead, 1939; Roethlisberger, 1941). Among the conclusions were:

1. Behavior should not be viewed as motivated primarily by economic or rational considerations. Rather, values, beliefs, and emotions largely influence actions.
2. Groups within organizations are the carriers of values and norms. Because people value their relationships in work groups, they powerfully affect behavior.
3. Organizations gain members' cooperation by satisfying them. The basis of satisfaction is membership in a cohesive, supportive work group.
4. A satisfied employee will be more productive.

These principles launched the field of human relations, which emphasizes the interactions within and between groups and the characteristics of tasks. If these elements satisfy people's needs, work effort will be energized. Specifically, the relationships within work groups should be supportive and cohesive, the relations between supervisors and employees should be collegial and non-authoritarian, and tasks should provide opportunities for growth and autonomy (McGregor,1957; Herzberg, 1968; Maslow, 1965). The human relations perspective directly contradicted the theory and practice of scientific management. Its advocates insisted that the motivational key to higher productivity was the pay envelope (Taylor, 1947/ 1911). Work-group members, according to scientific management, were naturally concerned with restricting output in order to protect themselves against higher production standards for the same wage. The solution was to offer a tangible incentive for productivity.

Singly or in combination, these views continue to provide the themes for explanations of job satisfaction and productivity. Individuals are viewed as responsive to the material benefits (extrinsic rewards) of their work, to its psychological stimuli (intrinsic rewards), or to both.

Roethlisberger and Dickson's influential report promoted the idea that productivity is tied to employee satisfaction. While at first glance this may seem reasonable, research has not supported the satisfaction-effort correlation. Curiously, the original Hawthorne data can be interpreted as showing weak or no association. Since the researchers could not agree on what the data proved, the experiments funding and leadership apparently swayed the published conclusions (Gillespie, 1991). As early as the 1950s, a review of research on morale and productivity had concluded that **"there is little evidence in the available literature that employee attitudes of the type usually measured in morale surveys bear any simple—or for that matter, appreciable—relationship to performance on the job"** (Brayfield and Crockett, 1955, p. 408). Ever since, weak associations have been reported (Vroom, 1964; Ronan, 1970; Steers and Porter, 1987).

The link, in fact, is not necessarily obvious. In survey after survey,]apanese workers report lower work satisfaction than their Western counterparts (Lincoln and McBride, 1987). A large-scale study by Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990) directly compared Japanese and American workers, again with the same results. Considering these satisfaction measures, perhaps American workers outdo Japanese workers' productivity and quality, but these researchers make no such claim. What, then, is going on? Lincoln and Kalleberg explain that Japanese workers, regardless of satisfaction levels, have a robust sense of obligation to do the work as best they can. The feeling of duty (reinforced by job security and profit sharing) is thus central to these workers' behavior. Others have also pointed out that] Japanese workers' gripes about their bosses and companies are not reflected in work performance.

Thus it appears that satisfaction is a dubious predictor of behavior on the job. Nonetheless, analysts have found that intentions do relate to actions (Pinder, 1984, ch. 8; Robbins, 1994). A

general attitude (such as satisfaction) is of slight help in predicting a broad behavior (such as work effort), but narrowly specified intentions can reasonably well predict specific actions. For instance, if a coworker says she wants to improve her job skills, what can be predicted? Not much. But if she says, beginning next week, she will learn computer programming, and she'll sign up tomorrow for the appropriate class, we could predict with some assurance that she will follow through. Specific intentions attached to clearly specified actions result in firmer connections. The managerial practices of management by objectives and goal setting take advantage of this intention-action relation (Robbins, 1994).

Another link between attitude and behavior can be seen when a distinction is made between (1) the motivation to exert more effort or less effort at work and (2) the motivation to remain in an organization or escape it through absences or quitting. Level of satisfaction is a weak predictor of (1) but a stronger predictor of (2). Workplace pressures limit uncooperative actions by employees. Performance standards and expectations (including their own), performance reviews, pay and promotion decisions, and potential job references constrain such overt behavior, but absenteeism and quitting are other forms of noncooperation or withdrawal of effort. So while satisfied workers may not be more productive, the evidence indicates that they will decrease absenteeism and turnover in the firm. Still, discontent does not necessarily produce retreat from work situations. A worker may want to get out of a displeasing situation but believe that the results could be even worse—frequent absences could lead to loss of the job, and quitting without an alternative in hand is risky. Satisfaction-dissatisfaction thus joins other concerns that also influence absenteeism and turnover. The attitude-behavior relationship is by no means simple. Satisfaction with intrinsic rewards will not by itself sustain higher levels of effort. The combination of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, however, constitutes an effective set of incentives. High-performance work sites offer a package of incentives. Finally, there is an interesting twist in the commonly weak link between satisfaction and performance. Among service jobs that involve direct customer / client contact (salesclerk, insurance agent, flight attendant, and dentist), the provider's attitude, as reflected in his or her

behavior, is critical. Attitudinal signals that are petty in behind-the-scenes work are key aspects

of performance in contact situations.

3 Sociology of Industry

3.1 Industrialization and the Industrial Process

What is industrialization?

- A process that transforms agrarian and handicraft-centered economies into economies distinguished by industry and machine manufacture

- The change in social and economic organization resulting from the replacement of hand tools by machine and power tools and the development of large-scale industrial production: applied to this development in England from about 1760 and to later changes in other countries

- the major technological, socioeconomic and cultural change in the late 18th and early 19th century that began in Britain and spread throughout the world

- A massive increase in production, and related acceleration of transportation, communication and sales capacities. The heart of this increase was new technology, particularly technology based on coal or waterpower instead of human or animal power.

3.1.1 Industrial Revolution

Industrial revolution is widespread replacement of manual labor by machines that began in Britain in the 18th century. The Industrial Revolution was the result of many fundamental, interrelated changes that transformed agricultural economies into industrial ones. The most immediate changes were **in the nature of production**: **what was produced, as well as where and how.** Goods that had traditionally been made in the home or in small workshops began to be manufactured in the factory. Productivity and technical efficiency grew dramatically, in part through the systematic application of scientific and practical knowledge to the manufacturing process. Efficiency was also enhanced when large groups of business enterprises were located within a limited area. The Industrial Revolution led to the growth of cities as people moved from rural areas into urban communities in search of work.

The changes brought by the Industrial Revolution overturned not only traditional economies, but also whole societies. Economic changes caused far-reaching social changes, **including the movement of people to cities, the availability of a greater variety of material goods, and new ways of doing business.**

The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain during the last half of the 18th century and spread through regions of Europe and to the United States during the following century. In the 20th century industrialization on a wide scale extended to parts of Asia and the Pacific Rim. Today mechanized production and modern economic growth continue to spread to new areas of the world, and much of humankind has yet to experience the changes typical of the Industrial Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution is called a revolution **because it changed society both significantly and rapidly.** Over the course of human history, there has been only one other group of changes as significant as the Industrial Revolution. This is what is called **the Neolithic Revolution**, which took place in the later part of the Stone Age. In the Neolithic Revolution, people moved from social systems based on hunting and gathering to much more complex communities that depended on agriculture and the domestication of animals. This led to the rise of permanent settlements and, eventually, urban civilizations. The Industrial Revolution brought a shift from the agricultural societies created during the Neolithic Revolution to modern industrial societies. The social changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution were significant. As economic activities in many communities moved from agriculture to manufacturing, production shifted from its traditional locations in the home and the small workshop to factories. Large portions of the population relocated from the countryside to the towns and cities where manufacturing centers were found. The overall amount of goods and services produced expanded dramatically, and the proportion of capital invested per worker grew. New groups of investors, businesspeople, and managers took financial risks and reaped great rewards.

3.1.2 Preconditions for Industrialization

The industrial revolution depended on the coming together of a range of basics in addition to **capital - resources, manpower, food, entrepreneurs, markets, and ideological support**. Capital alone was not enough, but it was the key factor. It was needed in particular to exploit the resources - the raw materials and energy - without which industrial development could not take place. And it was needed also to support a workforce paid in cash, not kind; to invest in food production to feed and maintain that workforce; and to develop and maintain an infrastructure of transport and communications, and of educational and, more gradually, welfare systems. Entrepreneurs also played a vital role: the ability to recognize the possibilities of industrial development, to organize the resources and manpower, and, perhaps above all, to risk the necessary capital, was crucial. Similarly, the prevailing ideology and the political structures needed to be supportive by being open to innovation and change, at best encouraging, at worst not obstructive. Last and by no means least, markets needed to be developed and expanded, both at home and overseas.

3.1.2.1 Why Britain?

The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain because **social, political, and legal conditions there were particularly favorable to change.** Property rights, such as those for patents on mechanical improvements, were well established. More importantly, the predictable, stable rule of law in Britain meant that monarchs and aristocrats were less likely to arbitrarily seize earnings or impose taxes than they were in many other countries. As a result, earnings were safer, and ambitious businesspeople could gain wealth, social prestige, and power more easily than could people on the European continent. These factors encouraged risk taking and investment in new business ventures, both crucial to economic growth.

In addition, Great Britain's government pursued a relatively hands-off economic policy. This free-market approach was made popular through Scottish philosopher and economist Adam

Smith and his book The Wealth of Nations (1776). The hands-off policy permitted fresh methods and ideas to flourish with little interference or regulation.

Britain's nurturing social and political setting encouraged the changes that began in a few trades to spread to others. Gradually the new ways of production transformed more and more parts of the British economy, although older methods continued in many industries. Several industries played key roles in Britain's industrialization. Iron and steel manufacture, the production of steam engines, and textiles were all powerful influences, as was the rise of a machine-building sector able to spread mechanization to other parts of the economy.

3.1.3 Some Consequences

The Industrial Revolution had considerable impact upon the nature of work. It significantly changed the daily lives of ordinary men, women, and children in the regions where it took root and grew.

3.1.3.1 Growth of Cities

One of the most obvious changes to people's lives was that more people moved into the urban areas where factories were located. Many of the agricultural laborers who left villages were forced to move. Beginning in the early 18th century, more people in rural areas were competing for fewer jobs. The rural population had risen sharply as new sources of food became available, and death rates declined due to fewer plagues and wars. At the same time, many small farms disappeared. This was partly because new enclosure laws required farmers to put fences or hedges around their fields to prevent common grazing on the land. Some small farmers who could not afford to enclose their fields had to sell out to larger landholders and search for work elsewhere. These factors combined to provide a ready work force for the new industries.

New manufacturing towns and cities grew dramatically. Many of these cities were close to the coalfields that supplied fuel to the factories. Factories had to be close to sources of power because power could not be distributed very far. In preindustrial England, more than three-quarters of the population lived in small villages. By the mid-19th century, however, the country had made history by becoming the first nation with half its population in cities. By 1850 millions of British people lived in crowded, grim industrial cities.

3.1.3.2 Effects on Labor

The movement of people away from agriculture and into industrial cities brought great stresses to many people in the labor force. Women in households who had earned income from spinning found the new factories taking away their source of income. Traditional handloom weavers could no longer compete with the mechanized production of cloth. Skilled laborers sometimes lost their jobs as new machines replaced them.

In the factories, people had to work long hours under harsh conditions, often with few rewards. Factory owners and managers paid the minimum amount necessary for a work force, often recruiting women and children to tend the machines because they could be hired for very low wages. The nature of work changed as a result of division of labor, an idea important to the Industrial Revolution that called for dividing the production process into basic, individual tasks. Each worker would then perform one task, rather than a single worker doing the entire job. Such division of labor greatly improved productivity, but many of the simplified factory jobs were repetitive and boring. Workers also had to labor for many hours, often more than 12 hours a day, sometimes more than 14, and people worked six days a week. Factory workers faced strict rules and close supervision by managers and overseers. The clock ruled life in the mills.

By about the 1820s, income levels for most workers began to improve, and people adjusted to the different circumstances and conditions. By that time, Britain had changed forever. The

economy was expanding at a rate that was more than twice the pace at which it had grown before the Industrial Revolution. Although vast differences existed between the rich and the poor, most of the population enjoyed some of the fruits of economic growth. The widespread poverty and constant threat of mass starvation that had haunted the preindustrial age lessened in industrial Britain. Although the overall health and material conditions of the populace clearly improved, critics continued to point to urban crowding and the harsh working conditions for many in the mills.

3.2   Industrial Relations

3.2.1 Labour Unions

Labor unions are association of workers that seeks to improve the economic and social well-being of its members through group action.   A labor union represents its members in negotiations with an employer over all aspects of an employment contract, including wages and working conditions. These contract negotiations are known as collective bargaining. By giving workers a united voice, a union can often negotiate higher wages, shorter hours, and better fringe benefits (such as insurance and pension plans) than individual workers can negotiate on their own.

3.2.1.1 The development of unions

Industrial conflict between workers and employers in the first half of the nineteenth century was frequently only semi—organized. Where there was confrontation, workers would quite often leave their places of employment and form crowds in the streets; they would make their grievances known through their unruly behavior or by engaging in violence against the authorities. Workers in some parts of France in the late nineteenth century retained the practice of threatening disliked employers with hanging! The use of the strike, which is now associated with organized bargaining between workers and management, developed slowly and sporadically. The Combination Acts passed in Britain in 1799 and 1800 made the meeting of

organized workers' groups illegal, and banned popular demonstrations. The Acts were repealed some twenty years later, when it became apparent that stimulated more public disturbances than they suppressed. Membership of trade unions grew and trade unionism soon became a mass movements. Union activity was legalized in the last quarter of the nineteen century, after which membership increased to cover 60 per cent of manual workers in Britain by 1920.

At the turn of the century, there was little direct connection between the existence of unions and the tendency to strike. Most early strikes were spontaneous, in the sense that they were not called by any organizations of workers. A report of the US Commissioner of Labor in 1907 showed that about half of all the strikes at the time were not initiated by by unions (Ross 1954). Much the same was probably true for Britain. This situation had changed by the end of World War One, since when the proportion of strikes occurring among non-unionized workers has become small.

The development of the union movement has varied considerably between countries, as has the influence of the unions over workers, employers and government. In Britain and the Unite States unions have been established for longer than in most European states. The German unions, for example, were largely destroy by Nazis in the 1930s, and set up afresh after World War Two, where as main development of the French union movement did not start until the 1930s, when the freedom to organize unions and negotiate collective labour contracts was formally recognized.

3.2.1.2 Why do unions exist?

Although their levels of membership and the extent of their power vary widely, union organizations exist in all Western countries and many other countries. Countries legally recognize the right of workers to strike in pursuit of economic objectives. Why have unions

become basic features of modern societies? Why does union—management conflict seem to be a more or less ever-present feature of industrial settings?

Some have proposed that unions are effectively a version of guilds — associations of people working in the same trade—reassembled in the context of modern industry. This interpretation might help us understand why unions often emerged first among craft workers but does not explain why they have been so consistently associated with wage bargaining and industrial conflict. A more sound explanation must look to the fact that unions developed to protect the material interests of workers in industrial settings which bring them together, creating solidarity, but in which they hold very little formal power.

In the early development of modern industry, workers in most countries were without political rights and had little influence over the conditions of work in which they found themselves. Unions developed in the first instance as means of redressing the imbalance of power between workers and employers. Whereas workers had little power as individuals, through collective organization their influence was considerably increased. An employer can do without the labour of any particular worker, but not without that of all or most of the workers in a plant. Unions were originally mainly 'defensive' organizations, providing the means whereby workers could counter the overwhelming power over their lives which employers enjoyed.

3.2.1.3 Recent developments

Unions themselves, of course, have altered over the years. Some have become very large and, as permanent organizations, have become bureaucratized. Unions are staffed by full-time officials, who may themselves have little direct experience of the conditions under which members work. The activities and views of union leaders can thus be quite distant from those of the members they represent. Shop-groups sometimes find themselves in conflict with the strategies of their own unions. Most unions have not been successful in recruiting a high level

of women workers. Although some have initiated campaigns to increase their female membership, many have in the past discouraged women from joining.

In current times, unions in Western countries are facing a threat from connected sets of changes: high levels of unemployment, which weakens the unions' bargaining position; the decline of the older manufacturing industries, in which the union presence has traditionally been strong;   and the increasing intensity of international competition, particularly from Asian countries, where wages are often lower than in the in the United States; and several European countries, including, France, Germany and Denmark, rightist governments came to power in the 1970s and 1980s, mostly determined to limit what they thought as excessive union influence in industry.

In the United States, the unions face a crisis of even greater dimensions their counterparts in most European countries. Union—protected conditions and wages have been eroded in several major industries over the past fifteen years. Workers in the road transport, steel and car industries have all accepted lower wages than those previously negotiated. The unions came out second-best in several major strikes.

Decline in union membership and influence is something of a general phenomenon in the industrialized countries, and is not to be explained wholly in terms of political pressure applied by rightist government against the unions. Unions usually become weakened during periods when unemployment is high, as has been the case for a considerable time in many Western countries. Trends towards more flexible production tend to diminish the force of unionism, which flourishes more extensively where there are many people working together in large factories.

3.2.2 Industrial Conflicts

3.2.2.1 Strikes

What is a strike? The answer is by no means obvious or easy to formulate. For example, can we distinguish between a strike and a short stoppage of work? In the strike statistics of many countries an attempt made to do so, by only counting as strikes stoppages lasting more   than a specific time (like half a day), or where more than a certain number workers are involved.

On the whole it seems preferable to define 'strike' in a reasonably   narrow sense, or else the term loses all precision. We can define a strike as **a temporary stoppage of work by a group of employees in order express a grievance or enforce a demand** (Hyman 1984). All the components of this definition are important in separating strikes from other forms of opposition and conflict. A strike is *temporary*, since workers intend to return to the same job with the same employer; where workers quit altogether, the term is not appropriate. As *a stoppage of work*, strike is distinguishable from an overtime ban or 'going slow'. A *group* of workers has to be involved, because a strike refers to a collective action, not the response of one individual worker. The fact that those acted against are *employers* serves to separate strikes from protests such may be conducted by tenants or students. Finally, a strike involves seeking to make known a grievance or press a demand; workers who are absent solely to attend a sports event cannot be said to be on strike.

3.2.2.2 Lockouts

Strikes represent only one aspect or type of conflict in which workers and management may become involved. Other closely related expressions of organized conflict are *lock-outs*. Lockout is shutting down, as of an industrial plant, and withdrawal of employment from a body of workers who refuse to accede to the employer's conditions. The lockout is to be distinguished from the strike on the ground that in the lockout it is the employer who directly causes the stoppage of operations, and in the strike the initiative lies with the employees. The lockout may

not be used by an employer to defeat the employees' right to join a union or to abrogate the employer's duty to bargain collectively in good faith.

Other manifestations of industrial conflict include *output restrictions*, clashes in contract negotiation, and other less organized expressions of conflict such as high labour turnover, absenteeism and interference with production machinery.

3.3   Major theoretical strands in industrial sociology

A variety of different theoretical perspectives and methodological preferences is available to the sociological analyst of work and industry. The individual researcher/ analyst can draw on concepts and ideas from across the range of available theoretical traditions to create a framework most appropriate for his/her particular investigation, but must ensure that the overall approach they take has internal conceptual consistency and methodological integrity. This is to adopt a strategy of **pragmatic pluralism.**

The six strands of thought that we are going to look at below should not be seen as constituting watertight 'schools' of thought. The 'map', which is designed to help the student through the jungle of different perspectives, is simply one possible scheme for organising ideas by bringing together contributions which appear to have something in common. The arrows crossing some of the boxes in the figure below indicate developments which have been influenced by more than one of the theoretical strands. In the case of three of the strands we see approaches which have been especially influenced by a particular founding figure of sociology Durkheim, Weber and Marx.

The first strand, however, contains what are usually seen as quite separate and indeed contrasting schools of thought. These strands are brought together here to represent **a style of thinking about people and work which the five other strands can be seen as reacting to and reaching substantially beyond.**

3.3.1 The Managerial –Psychologistic Strand

Strictly speaking, neither of the two approaches brought together here should be seen as part of sociology of work and industry. Yet they are vitally important to an understanding of the strictly sociological way of thinking because **they provide an ever—present general style of thinking with which sociologists of work have to come to terms and advance beyond.**

Although the two stands are diametrically opposed in underlying sentiment and assumptions about human nature, **they both represent a style of thinking about work which is highly individualistic and which is concerned to prescribe to managers how they should relate to their employees and should organize workers' jobs.** They both concentrate on questions of *'human nature'* and, as a consequence of this, tend not to recognize the *cultural dimension* of social life and the range of possibilities of work organization and orientation implied by this. The concern of each of the approaches is *to harness scientific method to discover and make legitimate the techniques of manipulation* rather than disinterested concerns with understanding.

3.3.1.1 Scientific management

The leading advocate and systematiser of what he named scientific management (and others frequently call 'Taylorism') was **E W Taylor** (1856-1915), a US engineer and consultant. Taylor's importance as the leader of the movement which has given the world work-study, piece-rate schemes, and time-and-motion study has to be set in historical context. The increasingly rationalized division of tasks and the mechanization of work reached a point at the beginning of the twentieth century where the need to coordinate human work efforts not surprisingly invited the attentions of men interested in applying scientific and engineering criteria to the human sphere as they had to the mechanical. Taylorism sees the worker basically as **an economic animal**, a self-seeking, non-social individual who prefers managers to do their job-related thinking for them. Given this, the management simply has to work out the most efficient way of organising work and then tie the monetary rewards of the work to the level of

output achieved by the individual. This would produce results which would benefit employer and employee alike, removing the likelihood of conflict and the need for trade unions. Among others, scientific management involves the following approaches:

- The scientific analysis by management of all the tasks which need to be done in order to make the workshop as efficient as possible.

- The design of jobs by managers to achieve the maximum technical division of labour through advanced job fragmentation.

- The separation of the planning of work from its execution.

- The reduction of skill requirements and job-learning times to a minimum.

- The conduct of manager-worker relationships "at arms length"—following a "minimum interaction model"

The psychologistic assumptions of scientific management are best illustrated by reference to Taylor's concept of '**soldiering**'. Soldiering in Taylor's sense is *'the natural instinct and tendency of men to take it easy'*. When this is combined with people's economic interests and the failure of managers to design, allocate and reward work on a scientific basis, it leads employees to get together and rationally conspire to hold production down. They do this to maximize their reward without tempting the incompetent management to come back and tighten the rate (which only needs tightening because it was originally guesswork, not a scientific one). However, this soldiering is not seen as inevitable, rather it can be avoided if management relate directly to each individual and satisfy their personal self—interest then they will get full co—operation. The ultimate explanation of work behavior, then, is a psychologistic one. It can be so labeled because scientific management is reductionist in its precluding of wider social considerations and because it is not an explanation which has stood up to more academically rigorous psychological study.

3.3.1.2 Democratic Humanism

The prescriptions offered to managements by democratic humanist writers and researchers are very much in conflict with those of scientific management. It is suggested that organizational efficiency can be achieved through 'participative' approaches, which may take the following forms:

• Subordinates becoming involved in setting their own objectives.

• The 'enriching' of jobs by reducing the extent of their supervision and monitoring.

• The development of more open and authentic colleague relationships.

These represent the sort of ideas which have become popular with more 'enlightened' managers since the writings, manuals and training films of a group of American psychologists and management consultants encouraging such an approach began to have an influence in the 1960s. It is the opposite of scientific management but in some ways it is a mirror image of it. It bases its approach to human work behavior **on a theory of human nature** and one of the popular early writers of this school made quite clear the equivalence of the two opposing propositions by labeling them Theory X and Theory Y. McGregor (1960) characterized the scientific management approach adopted by unenlightened managers as based on Theory X.

This sees human beings **as naturally disliking work and therefore avoiding it if they can.** The manager therefore controls and coerces people towards the meeting of organizational objectives. The effect of this is to encourage the very behavior which managers wish to avoid; the employees' passive acceptance of the situation may be encouraged, leading to a lack of initiative and creativity on their parts, or their resentment may be fuelled and hence their aggression and lack of co-operation. But Theory Y; which McGregor advocated and which social science research was said to support, states that people **are not like this but would generally prefer to exercise self-control and self-discipline at work.** He believed this would occur if employees were allowed to contribute creatively to organizational problems in a way which enabled them to meet their need for self-actualization.

The notion of a self actualization need within all human beings is taken from the work of the US humanistic psychologist Maslow. The basic scheme which has been taken from Maslow and used by numerous 'enlightened' management writers and teachers is the 'hierarchy of needs' model. This suggests that there are five sets of genetic or instinctive needs which people possess and that as one satisfies most of the needs at one level one moves up to seek satisfaction of the needs at the next level.

In evaluating scientific management and democratic humanism we can easily get into a paradoxical muddle. In effect, both are right and both are wrong. To make sense of this statement, we must add the magic words *"depending on the circumstances".* And by circumstances is meant the structural and cultural factors which were shown in previous sections of this course to be central to a sociological approach to analysis. Thus, if we have on the one hand, (a) a culture which lays primary value on money and an industry structured on the basis of mechanization and minute task specialization, it is possible that people will deliberately choose to do such work and will happily accept close supervision and a degree of boredom in return for cash; and on the other hand, (b) a wider culture which places central value on 'doing your own thing' and sees work as a key to identity, then we might expect the scientific managers to lose out to the self-actualizers as guides to appropriate managerial policy.

The difficulty we face in industrial sociology in practice, however, is that we find a mixture of these circumstances in modern societies. Consequently we need a more sophisticated sociological approach to studying work behavior and attitudes.

3.3.2 The Durkheim/systems strand

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) was one of the creators of the discipline of sociology and his thinking emphasises **the structural and 'communal' aspects of societies and their division of labour.** Consistent with Durkheim's approach are the mid-twentieth century 'Human Relations'

and 'systems-thinking' industrial sociologies and the late 20th century advocacy of 'strong' corporate cultures.

3.3.2.1 Human Relations

Durkheim's analysis of anomie and his concern about social solidarity and integration was a strong influence on the work of **Elton Mayo,** who has come to be seen as the leading spokesman of the human relations school of industrial sociology. In place of Durkheim's seeking of social integration through moral communities based on occupations, Mayo put the industrial workgroup and the employing enterprise, with the industrial managers having responsibility for seeing that group affiliations and social sentiments were fostered in a creative way. Like Taylor, Mayo was anxious to develop an effective and scientifically informed managerial élite. If managements could ensure that employees' social needs were met at work by giving them the satisfaction of working together, by making them feel important in the organization and by showing an interest in their personal problems, then both social breakdown and industrial conflict could be headed off. Managerial skills and good communications were the antidotes to the potential pathologies of an urban industrial civilization.

The human relations school was mainly working with in the context of controlling increasingly large-scale enterprises of the post war period and the problem of legitimating this control in a time of growing trade union challenge.

Human relations industrial sociology has been widely criticized for its managerial bias, its failure to recognize the rationality of employee behavior and its denial of underlying economic conflicts of interest. The investigations which were carried out have also been examined and found to be lacking in some aspects. Some of the writers in the tradition are more vulnerable to criticism than others, but what cannot be denied is the enormous influence these researchers, and especially Mayo, had on subsequent social scientific investigation of industrial behavior.

3.3.2.2 Systems Thinking in Industrial Sociology

System thinking is an approach which argues that *societies or organization scan be viewed as of they were self regulating bodies exchanging energy and matter with their environment in order to survive.* The idea of looking at society itself or at industrial organizations as social systems is rooted in the old organic analogy which has been transferred to contemporary sociology through the work of Durkheim, Pareto and various others. As a result of the influence of systems thinking, the view of the organization as an open system functioning within its environment became popular in various schools of organizational theory.

System theory uses the metaphor of the organization as a living organism constantly adapting in order to survive in a potentially threatening environment rather than the classical managerial metaphor which sees the organization as a rationally constructed system designed to meet its objectives. Systems theories have two strengths:

1. They recognize the fact that organizations are much more than the official structures set by their initiators. They are, rather, patterns of relations which constantly have to adapt.
2. They stress close relationships between the different subsystems of the organization.

Social systems theory has been much criticized, because it involves an organic analogy which is inappropriate; entails a conservative bias towards the study of social order rather than social conflict; does not provide a satisfactory theory of social change, since it merely describes the process of differentiation; has not generated an adequate explanation of social stratification, especially of social class.

3.3.3 The Interactionist Strand

Members of the Chicago School of sociology have made a distinctive contribution to the sociology of work and organisations,

- Theoretically, with the *symbolic interactionist* view of organisations as *negotiated orders* and
- Empirically, with their emphasis on field studies and detailed analyses of work and occupational activity, especially 'dirty work' activities.

3.3.4 The Weber/interpretivist strand

Max Weber (1864-1920) created some of the main foundations of modern sociology, attempting a balance between considerations of processes at a historical/ societal level and processes of interpretation and action at the individual level. He analysed the processes of **rationalisation** *(a trend in social change where traditional or magical criteria of action are replaced by technical, calculative, or scientific criteria)* underlying modernisation and noted the unintended consequences of aspects of this, especially with regard to bureaucratisation.

The interpretive emphasis in the Weberian tradition inspired the sociology of work tradition of analysing 'orientations to work' and is seen in more institutional-level analyses of social-construction-of-reality processes.

3.3.5 The Marxian strand

Marx's analytical work has been a major input to sociological thinking providing an analysis of the key characteristics of capitalist societies and of the tendency of the class-based nature and the contradictions of capitalism to bring about its eventual collapse.

In contemporary industrial sociology a focus on the *labour processes* at the heart of capitalist functioning has produced important debates, theoretical refinements and empirical studies of work activities and organisational processes.

4 Organizational Sociology

4.1 The Nature and Definition of Work Organizations

A *work organization* is a socially designed unit or collectivity that engages in activities to accomplish a goal or set of imperatives, has an identifiable boundary, and is linked to the external society. Work organizations can be demarcated from other social entities or collectivities by four common characteristics:

- The presence of a group people who have something in common and who deliberately or consciously design a structure and processes.
- Activity is directed towards accomplishing "a goal or set of imperatives".
- The existence of an "identifiable boundary" that establishes common membership
- The organization is connected to the "external society" and draws attention to the fact that organizational activities and action influence the environment or larger society.

Multiple types of work organizations are possible. They vary in terms of their:

- **Size** - Organizations can employ fewer than ten people to over 100, 000.
- **Products or services** - Organizations can be grouped into four major categories according to their products: [1] those that grow food and extract raw material, [2] organizations that manufacture commodities, [3] organizations that provide services, and finally [4] those that supply and process information.
- **Purpose -** whether the work organization is operating for profit or is a not-for-profit institution.
- **Ownership -** the organization may be privately or publicly owned. Private organizations are usually owned by a small group of people, whilst publicly held organizations issue shares that are traded freely on a stock market and are owned by a large number of people.
- **Management -** The owners of an organization are its principals and these individuals either manage the activities of the organization themselves or they may employ agents (the managers) to manage on their behalf.

4.2 Modern Work Organizations: Basic Design Principles

At the heart of any work organization will be the official control apparatus which is designed and continuously redesigned by those 'managing' the enterprise. The official control apparatus of an organization are the sets of roles, rules, structures and procedures managerially designed to coordinate and control work activities.

In designing the organization, the management makes the following decisions:

- How the tasks to be done within the chosen technologies are to be split into various jobs.
- How these jobs are to be grouped into sections, divisions and departments.
- How many levels of authority there are to be.
- The nature of communication channels and reward structures.
- The proportions of supervisors to supervised.
- The balance of centralization to decentralization and authority to delegation.
- The degree of formalization and standardization of procedures and instructions.

The most basic set of principles which underlies the formal aspect of organizational design in the twentieth century are those of bureaucracy. We can consider what this entails first, and then go on to examine two prescriptive 'schools' of organizational thinking, classical administrative Principles and Taylorism, which have provided managements with design guidance, respectively, for the— organization as a whole and for the part of the organization most directly involved with productive tasks.

4.2.1 Bureaucracy

In the late 1800s, Max Weber disliked that many European organizations were managed on a "personal" family-like basis and that employees were loyal to individual supervisors rather than to the organization. He believed that organizations should be managed impersonally and that a formal organizational structure, where specific rules were followed, was important. In other

words, he didn't think that authority should be based on a person's personality. He thought authority should be something that was part of a person's job and passed from individual to individual as one person left and another took over. This non-personal, objective form of organization was called a *bureaucracy*.

Bureaucracy is a formal organization with a hierarchy of authority; a clear division of labor; emphasis on written rules, communications, and records; and impersonality of positions

4.2.1.1 The Essential Characteristics of Bureaucracies

Although the army, the post office, a college, and General Motors may not seem to have much in common, they are all bureaucracies. As Weber (1947) analyzed them, these are the essential characteristics of a bureaucracy:

1. A *hierarchy* with assignments flowing downward and accountability flowing upward. The organization is divided into clear-cut levels. Each level assigns responsibilities to the level beneath it, while each lower level is accountable to the level above for fulfilling those assignments.

2. A *division of labor*. Each member of a bureaucracy has a specific task to fulfill, and all of the tasks are then coordinated to accomplish the purpose of the organization. In a college, for example, a teacher does not run the heating system, the president does not teach, and a secretary does not evaluate textbooks. These tasks are distributed among people who have been trained to do them.

3. *Written rules*. In their attempt to become efficient, bureaucracies stress written procedures. In general, the longer a bureaucracy exists and the larger it grows, the more written rules it has. The rules of some bureaucracies cover just about every imaginable situation. In our university, for example, the rules are bound in handbooks. The guiding principle generally becomes, "If there isn't a written rule covering it, it is allowed."

4. *Written communications and records*. Records are kept of much of what occurs in a bureaucracy. ("Fill that out in triplicate.") Consequently, workers in bureaucracies spend

a fair amount of time sending memos back and forth. They also produce written reports detailing their activities. An NGO, for example, may require that each employee fill out quarterly reports summarizing the number of hours per week spent on specified activities as well as an annual report listing what was accomplished.

5. *Impersonality*. It is the office that is important, not the individual who holds the office. You work for the organization, not the replaceable person who heads some post in the organization. Consequently, members of a bureaucracy owe allegiance to the office, not to particular people. If you work in a bureaucracy, you become a small cog in a large machine.

These five characteristics not only help bureaucracies reach their goals but also allow them to grow and endure. If the head of a bureaucracy dies, retires, or resigns, the organization continues, ordinarily hardly skipping a beat, for the functioning of a unit does not depend on the individual who heads it.

4.2.1.2 Dysfunctions of Bureaucracies

Although no other form of social organization has been found to be more efficient in the long run, they also have a dark side, and do not always operate smoothly. Let's look at some of bureaucracy's dysfunctions—*red tape, lack of communication, alienation, goal displacement, and incompetence.*

Red Tape: A Rule Is a Rule. Bureaucracies can be filled with so much red tape that they impede the purpose of the organization. In the Bronx, Mother Teresa spotted a structurally sound abandoned building and wanted to turn it into a homeless shelter. But she ran head-on into a rule: The building must have an elevator for the handicapped homeless. Not having the funds for the elevator, Mother Teresa struggled to get permission to bypass this rule. Two frustrating years later, she gave up. The abandoned building is still an abandoned building (Tobias 1995).

Obviously this well-intentioned rule about elevators was not meant to stop Mother Teresa. But, hey, rules are rules!

Lack of Communication between Units: Each unit within a bureaucracy performs specialized tasks, which are designed to contribute to the organization's overall goals. At times, these units fail to communicate with one another and end up working at cross purposes. In Granada, Spain, for example, the local government was concerned about the rundown appearance of buildings along one of its main roads. Consequently, one unit of the government fixed the fronts of these buildings, painting and repairing concrete, iron, and stonework. The results were impressive, and the unit was proud of what it had accomplished. The only problem was that another unit of the government had considered these same buildings for demolition (Arías 1993). With neither unit of this bureaucracy knowing what the other was doing, the huge expense and effort of the one ended in a rubble heap.

Bureaucratic Alienation: Many workers find it disturbing to deal with others in terms of roles, rules, and functions rather than as individuals. Similarly, they may dislike writing memos instead of talking to people face to face. It is not surprising, then, that workers in large organizations sometimes feel more like objects than people, or, as Weber (1978) put it, "only a small cog in a ceaselessly moving mechanism which prescribes to [them] an endlessly fixed routine. . . ." Because workers must deal with one another in such formal ways, and because they constantly perform routine tasks, some come to feel that no one cares about them and that they are misfits in their surroundings.

Marx termed these reactions *alienation* and attributed them to the fact that workers are cut off from the finished product of their labor. Although assigning workers to repetitive tasks makes for efficient production, Marx argued that it also reduces their satisfaction by limiting their creativity and sense of contribution to the finished product.

Underlying alienation is the workers' loss of control over their work because they no longer own their own tools. Before industrialization, individual workers used their own tools to produce an entire product, such as a chair or table. Now the capitalists own the machinery and tools and assign each worker only a single step or two in the entire production process. Relegated to repetitive tasks that seem remote from the final product, workers lose a sense of identity with what they produce. Ultimately they come to feel estranged not only from their products but from their whole work environment.

Goal Displacement: Bureaucracies sometimes take on a life of their own, adopting new goals in place of old ones. In this process, called goal displacement, even when the goal of the organization has been achieved and there no longer is any reason for it to continue, continue it does. A good example is the National Foundation for the March of Dimes, organized in the 1930s to fight polio. The March of Dimes began to publicize individual cases. An especially effective strategy was placing posters of a child on crutches near cash registers in almost every store in the United States. The U.S. public took the goals of the organization to heart and contributed heavily. The organization raised money beyond its wildest dreams. Then during the 1950s, when Dr. Jonas Salk developed a vaccine for polio this threat was wiped out almost overnight. What then? Did the organization fold? After all, its purpose had been fulfilled. But the March of Dimes is still around. Faced with the loss of their jobs, the professional staff that ran the organization quickly found a way to keep the bureaucracy intact by pursuing a new enemy— birth defects.

Bureaucratic Incompetence: In a humorous analysis of bureaucracies, Laurence Peter proposed what has become known as the Peter Principle: *Each employee of a bureaucracy is promoted to his or her level of incompetence* (Peter and Hull 1969). People who perform well in a bureaucracy come to the attention of those higher up the chain of command and are promoted. If they again perform well, they are again promoted. This process continues until finally they are promoted to a level at which they can no longer handle the responsibilities well;

this is their level of incompetence. There they hide behind the work of others, taking credit for what those under their direction accomplish.

Although the Peter Principle contains a grain of truth, if it were generally true, bureaucracies would be staffed entirely by incompetents, and none of these organizations could succeed. In reality, bureaucracies are remarkably successful.

4.2.1.3 The Sociological Significance of Bureaucracies

Perhaps the main sociological significance of bureaucracies is that they represent a fundamental change in how people relate to one another. When work is rooted in social relationships, much more is at stake than efficiency in performing tasks and keeping an eye on the bottom line. Seeing that all family members are employed, or that everyone in the community has a chance to make a living, for example, may be the determining factors in making decisions. Bureaucracies, or the rationalization of society, changed all this.

Weber was concerned to contrast characteristically modern forms of administration (which he saw based on a legal—rational form of authority in which orders are obeyed because they are seen to be in accord with generally acceptable rules or laws) with earlier forms (based on traditional or charismatic authority). As we shall see in the next main section of the present chapter, Weber was in no way advocating bureaucracy nor was he addressing himself to the managers of organizations. The bureaucratic principle which he was analyzing in his historically-based political sociology was put into prescriptive form by a number of writers who can be grouped together as the advocates of classical administrative principles.

4.2.2 Classical Administrative Principles

Classical administrative principles refer to the universally applicable rules of organizational design widely taught and applied, especially in the first half of the twentieth century.

Largely drawing on their own experiences and reflections, writers such as Fayol (1916), Mooney and Riley (1931) and Gulick and Urwick (193 7) attempted to establish universally applicable principles upon which organizational and management structures should be based. Fayol can be seen as the main inspirer of this approach and the following suggestions, for practice can be found among the mixture of exhortations, moral precepts and design principles which make up his writings:

- There should always be a 'unity o5ommand' whereby no employee should have to take orders from more than one superior.
- There should be a 'unity of direction' whereby there should be one head and one plan for a group of activities having the same objective.
- There should be regular efforts to maintain the harmony and unity of the enterprise through the encouragement of an esprit de corps.

The advocates of principles like these for the designers and managers of   work enterprises vary in their sophistication and in the extent to which they see their principles as relevant to all conditions. However, there is a pervasive underlying principle of there always being a 'one best way'.

This can be seen in the suggestion that there should always be a differentiating of 'line' and 'staff' departments (those directly concerned with producing the main output of the organization and those who support this process) and in the various attempts to fix a correct 'span of control' (the number of subordinates any superior can effectively supervise). This kind of Universalist prescribing is of importance because it has influenced a great deal of twentieth-century organizational design.

Yet, as we shall see later, more recent research and practice has shown the limits of such a search for rules which can be applied to all organizational circumstances.

4.2.3 Taylorism or 'Scientific Management'

Whilst the classical administrative writers were advocating what amounts to a set of basic bureaucratic design principles for work organizations as a whole, E W Taylor and his associates were putting forward principles for job and workshop design which would apply to the 'lower parts' of these organizations. The details of the Taylor's 'scientific management' approach were discussed in section 3.3.1.1 of this handout and it is easy to see how Weber came to see in these principles the most extreme manifestation of the process of work rationalization and the 'greatest triumphs in the rational conditioning and training of work performances'.

Although Taylorist principles of work organization can be under- stood as part of the general rationalising process hastening the bureaucratization of work organizations after the turn of the present century it is very important to note that these principles are only partly to be understood as bureaucratic. This is pointed out by Littler (1982) who notes that the 'minimum interaction model' of the employment relationship implied in Taylorism contrasts with the career aspect of the principle of bureaucracy. An official in a bureaucracy has the potential to advance up the career hierarchy but a shop-floor worker, under scientific management, has no such potential. Different conditions therefore apply to people employed in the lower half of the industrial organization's hierarchy than apply to those located in the upper part — which therefore more fully bureaucratic. And this has considerable implications for the way in which formal organizations are implicated in the social class structure of society as a whole.

The logic of work deskilling which is central to Taylorism is by no means an invention of the scientific managers. They were only developing in a particularly systematic way principles of work organization which were first written about by Adam Smith in 1776.

Smith recognized that part of what was later to be seen as the industrial revolution was a move beyond the principle of a general or social division of labour into crafts and occupations (as examined in our into what can be called a detailed or 'technical division of labour'. Smith recognized that enormous gains in efficiency were to be obtained if what might be seen as a 'whole' task such as the making of pins could be split up into a number of smaller scale and less—skilled tasks or jobs. Each job would be easy to learn and each operation readily repeatable. The employer would benefit enormously from the increased dexterity of the worker, the reduction of time spent in preparation and changeover from one operation to another and from the possibilities which were opened up for further mechanization. But it was Charles Babbage, in 1832, who pointed out that this kind of deskilling also reduced the cost of labour. If 'whole' tasks were carried out then you had to pay each worker a rate which was appropriate to the most skilful or physically demanding element of the task. You could, however, 'by dividing the work . . . into different degrees of skill and force . . . purchase
the precise quantity of both that is necessary for each purpose.

4.2.4 Fordism

To some observers, the growing significance of die assembly line alongside the spreading influence of Taylorism is sufficient to warrant the recognition of a set of work design and management principles which exist in their own right. Henry Ford, in his car factories, is seen as introducing what amounts to a development of Taylorism in one respect and a departure from it in another.

Fordism refers to a pattern of industrial organization and employment policy in which
   a) Mass production techniques and an associated deskilling of jobs is combined with
   b) Treatment of employees which recognizes that workers are also consumers whose earning power and consumption attitudes — as well as their workplace efficiency — affect the success of the enterprise.

'Fordism' follows such scientific management principles as the use of a detailed division of labour, intensive management work—planning and close supervision and, in fact, extends these considerably in the close attachment of the individual to the work station and in the mechanizing of work handling. But it goes beyond Taylorism, which tends to treat labour strictly as a commodity in making a connection between labour management policy and attention to markets. Fordism is essentially a mass production process which recognizes that the people which it employs are part of the market for its products. It therefore recognizes the necessity of taking an interest in the lives of workers as consumers as well as producers.

The connection between production and consumption in Fordism is stressed by Aglietta (1979) who points to Fordism's recognition of the need to develop working—class 'social consumption norms' which stabilize the markets for the products of mass production industries. The mass consumption on market has to be created and stabilized to fit the mass production organization of the factory. It is in this context that we can understand Ford's particular innovation of the Five Dollar Day — a relatively high wage level which could be obtained once the worker had a minimum of six months continuous service and as long as they complied with certain standards of personal behavior. Ford's policies in this latter respect are simply one example, appropriate to their time and place, of a more general feature of what has been labeled (Fordism: the recognition that the workforce should be treated as more than a commodity to be dealt with at arm's length whilst, nevertheless, keeping it under the close control and instructions of the management in a machine—paced environment. Having considered some of the principles which underlie modern work organization and how it is designed at various levels, we can now consider how both theorists and organizational practitioners have come to recognize the limits within which these principles can be applied.

4.3 Organizations, Environments and Effectiveness

Sociological perspectives typically focus on the social and class environments of organisations. However, when those managing organisations think about their own organisational environment in a day-to—day sense they are much more likely to focus on the threats and opportunities which they perceive in the behaviour of other organisations, be these competitors, suppliers, the state, trade unions, pressure groups or the communication media. All of these can create the kinds of uncertainties which were discussed in the above analysis of intra-organisational power. Organisational leaders do not simply react passively to problems in the environment but, as Child argued in his critique of contingency theory actions are taken as an outcome of internal political processes within management and 'strategic choices' are made with regard to the environment. Organisations adopt external domination strategies (McNeill 1978) to achieve a degree of administrative predictability in the face of the inherent unpredictability of the market logic of the capitalist market environment. Consequently we observe the managements of large organisations seeking to influence governments; legislatures and local authorities and we see them attempting to manipulate the affairs of smaller or weaker organisations as well as influencing their clients and consumers in ways ranging from advertising to bribery. One way of considering the relationship of organisations to other organisations in the environment is to regard them as involved in a process of natural selection: a fight for survival within the ecological system of which they are a part. This line is taken as part of the population ecology approach (Carroll 1988; Morgan 1990). Here, organisations are seen as adapting and evolving in order to survive within the organisational population of which they are a part. They go through both planned and unplanned 'variations' in their form, and, largely through processes of competition, the environment 'selects' the form which best suits the organisation. Organisations then 'retain' the form which best suits their particular 'niche' or 'domain', this retention process including all those normal organisational practices — from the use of operating manuals to socialisation activities — which organisations follow to maintain stability.

With resource dependence analysis and in the strategic exchange perspective the determinist and biological problems of the above approach are avoided whilst the essential idea of organisational strategies being ultimately to do with a light for survival is retained. Organisations are not seen here as simply competing with others but as depending on a whole series of other organisations (state, client bodies, pressure groups, trade unions and soon) as well as on various managerial and employee internal constituencies for the supply of resources upon which their continued life depends.

Internal micropolitical and industrial relations processes are thus intertwined with market and other macropolitical processes. In the strategic exchange perspective, organisational effectiveness is seen, not as the making of profits, the curing of patients, the educating of pupils per se, but as the satisfying of the demands of resource—supplying constituencies to the level below which the constituencies would withdraw resources from the organisation and thus threaten its survival. At particular times particular groups would have more pull than others so that managements have to deal first with the currently most 'strategic constituency'. Thus a manufacturing organisation located in a capitalist political economy in which investors demanded profits of a certain level before they would continue their investment would be effective only if it produced those profits, although it would also need to pay employees enough to get the required level of performance, comply with the state and local laws, and so on. However, a similar enterprise in a command economy in which ruling groups demanded output at any cost, would be effective, however inefficiently it performed, as long as it kept those groups happy and did not lose the support of other resource suppliers. Effectiveness is thus a contingent matter and not an essential quality which an organisation either possesses or lacks. This approach has the virtue of recognising the interplay between human initiatives and structural constraints vital to the sociological perspective. It also successfully relates the 'micro' or small-scale processes of organisational functioning to the 'macro' or political-economic dimension of societal processes. And it puts a very necessary stress on the power dimension of all social life. What now needs to be added to the attention given to political processes in social

life is attention to the ways in which people create meaning for themselves and others in the world and develop cultures.