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# **BASOC202** **CLASSICAL** **SOCIOLOGICAL** **THOUGHTS-II**



**BA (SOCIOLOGY)**

**4<sup>TH</sup> SEMESTER**

**Rajiv Gandhi University**

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# **CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT**

**BASOC 202  
FOURTH SEMESTER  
PART-II**



**RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY**  
Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA - 791 112



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E-28, Sector-8, Noida - 201301 (UP)  
Phone: 0120-4078900 • Fax: 0120-4078999

Regd. Office: 7361, Ravindra Mansion, Ram Nagar, New Delhi 110 055  
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## About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives as envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

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# SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

## Classical Sociological Thought

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### Syllabi

### Mapping in Book

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#### UNIT 1

**Weber:** Types of Social Action, The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism; Ideal Type; Power and Authority

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#### UNIT 2

**Marx-I** Influence of Karl Marx on Sociological Theory: dialectical materialism, Historical materialism; Alienation and capitalism

#### UNIT 3

**Marx-II** Class conflict, Theory of Revolution and other concepts

#### UNIT 4

**Life of Pareto:** Pareto Economic Concepts, Circulation of elites  
Residue and Derivations, Logical and Non-logical action

# CONTENTS

## UNIT 1 WEBER

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Unit Objectives
- 5.2 Max Weber's Contribution to Sociological Theories
  - 5.2.1 Types of Social Action
- 5.3 Power and Authority
- 5.4 The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism
  - 5.4.1 Religion and Social Change
  - 5.4.2 The Religion of China
  - 5.4.3 The Religion of India
- 5.5 Summary
- 5.6 Key Terms
- 5.7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 5.8 Questions and Exercises
- 5.9 Further Reading

## UNIT 2 MARX-I

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Unit Objectives
- 2.2 Influence of Karl Marx on Sociological Theory
  - 2.2.1 Dialectical Materialism
  - 2.2.2 Historical Materialism
- 2.3 Alienation and Capitalism
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 Key Terms
- 2.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 2.7 Questions and Exercises
- 2.8 Further Reading

## UNIT 3 MARX-II

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Unit Objectives
- 3.2 Class Conflict
- 3.3 Theory of Revolution and Other Concepts
  - 3.3.1 Transitional Proletarian State
  - 3.3.2 The Dictatorship of the Proletariat
  - 3.3.3 Surplus Value
- 3.4 Summary
- 3.5 Key Terms
- 3.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 3.7 Questions and Exercises
- 3.8 Further Reading

## UNIT 4 PARETO

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Life of Pareto
  - 4.2.1 Pareto Economic Concepts
  - 4.2.2 Circulation of elites
- 4.3 Residue and Derivations
- 4.4 Logical and Non-logical action
- 4.5 Summary
- 4.6 Key Terms
- 4.7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 4.8 Questions and Exercises
- 4.9 Further Reading



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# INTRODUCTION

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In sociology, sociological perspectives, theories or paradigms are complex, theoretical and methodological frameworks used to analyse and explain the objects of social study. They facilitate organizing sociological knowledge. Sociological theory is constantly evolving, and can never be presumed to be complete. New sociological theories build upon the work of their predecessors and add to them, but classical sociological theories are still considered important and relevant.

Whereas the field of sociology itself and sociological theory by extension is relatively new, dating to 18th and 19th centuries, it is closely tied to a much older field of social sciences (and social theory) in general. Sociology has separated itself from the other social sciences with its focus on society, a concept that goes beyond nation, and includes communities, organizations and relationships. Sociological theory is not just a collection of answers to queries about the nature and essence of society. Not only does it provide many answers, it also offers help in putting better questions and further developing research projects that can help understand complex social phenomena.

Like any other subject of science, it is always under development in response to the changing dynamics of our social lives as well as the increase in sociological knowledge. The adventure of sociological theory is comparatively new—spanning just about two centuries. However, it is very closely connected to a long history of social thought dating back to Greek philosophers, Roman lawyers, and Jewish and Christian religious scholars. This period can be termed as the prehistory of sociological theory. Their systematic way of thinking about society laid a foundation for the sociological thought capable of understanding and expressing the emerging complexities in society.

The learning material in the book is presented in a structured format so that it is easy to grasp. Each unit begins with an outline of the *Unit Objectives* followed by *Introduction* to the topic of the unit. The detailed content is then presented in simple language, interspersed with *Check Your Progress* questions to enable the student to test his understanding as and when he goes through each unit. *Summary* provided at the end of each unit helps in quick recollection. *Questions and Exercises* section is also provided for further practice.

## NOTES

## UNIT 1 MAX WEBER

### Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Unit Objectives
- 5.2 Max Weber's Contribution to Sociological Theories
  - 5.2.1 Types of Social Action
- 5.3 Power and Authority
- 5.4 The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism
  - 5.4.1 Religion and Social Change
  - 5.4.2 The Religion of China
  - 5.4.3 The Religion of India
- 5.5 Summary
- 5.6 Key Terms
- 5.7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 5.8 Questions and Exercises
- 5.9 Further Reading

### NOTES

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Max Weber, often referred to as the 'bourgeois Marx', became a sociologist 'in a long and intense debate with the ghost of Marx'. His work *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (*Economy and Society*) and his concern with the Protestant ethic showed that throughout his life he was engaged in the problems and issues raised by Marx. Though Weber was influenced by the German historical school—itsself engaged in a critical examination of Marx's (and Hegel's) conceptions—the main feature of Weber's overall work was shaped by his debate with Marx; and among those who took up the Marxian challenge, Weber was perhaps the most influential. His main interest, which became a lifelong preoccupation, was the origin and nature of modern capitalism. This eventually led him not only to a fastidious examination of the economic system of the West but all its major social and cultural institutions. Ultimately, his analysis gave him insights into the peculiar nature of Western civilization and allowed him to contrast it with the civilizations of the East. In working on this and other problems, he generalized and revised Marx's method. However, it is important to understand that Weber was not working to refute Marx; he accepted Marx's major methodological principles as extraordinarily fruitful.

Weber's refutation of Marx was limited to him showing the supposed inadequacy of some of Marx's revolutionary conclusions and of challenging the alleged human and moral superiority of socialism as compared with capitalism. Thus the American sociologist Talcott Parson's statement that Weber 'soon recoiled from this, becoming convinced of the indispensability of an important role of 'ideas' in the explanation of great historical processes', is quite incorrect and even has bizarre implications. For it implies that Marx, for whom class consciousness was fundamental in the transition from capitalism to socialism, did not know that ideas were important in history. But this allegation about Weber is also incorrect, for he retained throughout his life the greatest admiration for Marx as a thinker. If Weber 'recoiled', it was from vulgar and dogmatic Marxism—as, indeed, Marx himself had done. The position taken in the unit is that Weber's work must not be read as repudiation of Marx's methodological principles but rather as a 'rounding out' and supplementing of his method. The validity of this assertion can best be assessed by a re-examination of Weber's work.

## NOTES

Max Weber has had a more powerful positive impact on a wide range of sociological theories than any other sociological theorist. This influence is traceable to the sophistication, complexity and sometimes even confusion of Weberian theory. Despite its problems, Weber's work represents a remarkable fusion of historical research and sociological theorizing. We open this unit with a discussion of the theoretical roots and methodological orientation of Weberian theory. We see that Weber, over the course of his career, moved progressively towards a fusion of history and sociology, i.e., towards the development of historical sociology.

The heart of Weberian sociology lies in substantive sociology, not in methodological statements. Although Weber based his theories on his thoughts about social action and social relationships, his main interest was the large-scale structures and institutions of society. We deal especially with his analysis of the three structures of authority—legal, ideal—typical bureaucratic—and show how he used that tool to analyse traditional and charismatic authority. Of particular interest is Weber's work on charisma. Not only did he have a clear sense of it as a structure of authority, but he was also interested in the processes by which such a structure is produced. Although his work on social structures—such as authority—is important, it is at the cultural level, in his work on the rationalization of the world, that Weber's most important insights lie.

Weber's thoughts on rationalization and various other issues are illustrated in his work on the relationship between religion and capitalism. At one level, this comprises a series of studies of the relationship between ideas (religious ideas) and the development of the spirit of capitalism and, ultimately, capitalism itself. At another level, it is a study of how the West developed a distinctive rational religious system (for example, Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism) that inhibits the growth of a rational economic system. It is this kind of majestic sweep over the history of many sectors of the world that helps give Weberian theory its enduring significance.

## 1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss Weber's opinion about traditionalism and rationality
- Explain Weber's theories of authority, power and religion
- Summarise the important parameters of the religious systems in India and China
- Evaluate the sociological perspective of Weber's works
- Assess Weber's concept of social action

## 1.2 MAX WEBER'S CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES

Max Weber was born in Erfurt, Germany, on 21 April 1864, in a typical middle-class family. The differences between his parents left a deep impression on both his intellectual orientation and psychological development. His father was a bureaucrat who acquired a comparatively significant political position. Weber's father was clearly a part of the political establishment and as a result eschewed any activity or idealism that would require personal sacrifice or threaten his position within the system. In addition, the

senior Weber was a man who enjoyed earthly pleasures and in this and many other ways he stood in sharp contrast to his wife. Max Weber's mother was a devout Calvinist, a woman who sought to lead an ascetic life largely devoid of the pleasure craved by her husband. Her concerns were more otherworldly; she was disturbed by the signs of imperfection which made her insecure that she was not destined for salvation. These deep differences between the parents led to marital tension, and left an immense impact on Weber.

Since it was impossible to emulate both parents, Weber was presented with a clear choice as a child (Marianne Weber 1975, 62). He first seemed to opt for his father's orientation to life, but later he drew close to his mother's approach. Whatever the choice, the tension produced by the need to choose between such polar opposites negatively affected Max Weber's psyche. At the age of eighteen, Max Weber left home for a short time to attend the University of Heidelberg. He had already demonstrated intellectual precocity, but on a social level he entered Heidelberg as a shy and underdeveloped boy. However, it quickly changed after he gravitated towards his father's way of life and joined his father's old dueling fraternity. There he developed socially, at least in part because of the huge quantities of beer he consumed with his peers. In addition, he proudly displayed the dueling scars that were the trademarks of such fraternities.

After three terms, Weber left Heidelberg for military service, and in 1884 he returned to Berlin to his parent's home to take courses at the University of Berlin. He remained there for most of the next eight years as he completed his studies, earned his Ph. D., became a lawyer and started teaching at the University of Berlin. In the process, his interests shifted more towards his lifelong concerns—economics, history and sociology. During his eight years in Berlin, Weber was financially dependent on his father, the circumstances he progressively grew to dislike. At the same time, he moved closer to his mother's values. For example, during one semester as a student, his work habits were described as follows: 'He continues the rigid work discipline, regulates his life by the clock, divides the daily routine into exact section for the various subjects, saves in his way, by feeding himself evenings in his room with a pound of raw chopped beef and four fried eggs' (Mizman 1970, 48; Marianne Weber 1975, 105). Thus Weber, following his mother, had become ascetic and diligent, a compulsive worker—in contemporary terms a 'workaholic'.

This compulsion for work led in 1896 to a position as professor of economics at Heidelberg. But in 1897, with Weber's academic career blossoming, his father died following a violent argument between them. Shortly thereafter Weber began to manifest symptoms that were to culminate in a nervous breakdown. Often unable to sleep or to work, Weber spent the next six or seven years in near total collapse. After a long hiatus, some of his powers began to return in 1903, but it was not until 1904, when he delivered (in the United States) his first lecture in six and half years, that Weber was able to begin to return to active academic life. In 1904 and 1905, he published one of his best known works, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

After 1904, although he continued to be plagued by psychological problems, Weber was able to function, indeed to produce some of his most important works. During these years, Weber published his studies of the world's religions in a historical perspective (for example China, India and ancient Judaism). At the time of his demise (14 June 1920), he was working on his most significant work, *Economy and Society*. *Economy and Society* was published by his wife after Weber's death and was translated in numerous languages.

## NOTES



## NOTES

Apart from producing voluminous writings during this period, Weber was engaged in various other activities as well. He helped in founding the German Sociological Society in 1910. In addition, Weber was politically very active and wrote essays on the important contemporary issues. We have to accept that there was a strife in Weber's life and, more significantly, in his work. He was perpetually torn between the bureaucratic mind, as represented by his father, and his mother's religiosity. This unresolved tension pervades through Weber's work as it permeated his personal life.

## 1.2. Types of Social Action

Weber's entire sociology, if we accept his words at face value, was based on his conception of social action (Turner, 1983). He differentiated between action and purely reactive behaviour. The concept of behaviour is reserved, then as now (Ritzer, 1975a), to automatic behaviour that involves no thought processes—a stimulus and response. Such behaviour was not of interest in Weber's sociology. He was bothered about action which clearly involved the intervention of thought processes (and the consequent meaningful action) between the happening of a stimulus and the eventual response. To put it another way, action was said to occur when individuals attached subjective meanings to their action. To Weber, the task of sociological analysis involved 'the interpretation of action in terms of its subjective meaning' (1921/1968:8). A good, and more specific example of Weber's thinking on action is found in his discussion of economic action, which he defined as 'a conscious, primary orientation to economic provision, but the belief that it is necessary' (1921/1968:64).

In embedding his analysis in mental processes and the resulting meaningful action, Weber (1921/1968) was careful to point out that it is erroneous to regard psychology as the foundation of the interpretation of action in sociology. Weber seemed to be making essentially the same point made by Durkheim in discussing at least some nonmaterial social facts. That is, sociologists are interested in mental processes, but this is not the same as psychologists' interest in the mind, personality and so forth. Although Weber implied that he had a great concern with mental processes, he actually spent little time on them. The sociologists Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills have called attention to Weber's lack of concern with mental processes: 'Weber sees in the concept of personality a much abused notion referring to a profoundly irrational center of creativity, a center before which analytical inquiry come to a halt' (1958:55). Schutz (1932/1967) was quite correct when he pointed out that although Weber's work on mental processes is suggestive, it is hardly the basis for a systematic micro-sociology. However, it was the suggestiveness of his work that made him relevant to those who developed the theories of individuals and their behaviour—symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and so forth.

In this action theory, Weber's clear intent was to focus on individuals and patterns and regularities of action and not on the collectivity. According to Weber, 'Action in the sense of subjectively understandable orientation of behaviour exists only as the behaviour of one or more individual human beings'. Weber was prepared to admit that for some purposes, we may have to treat collectivities as individuals 'but for the subjective interpretation of action in sociological work these collectivities must be treated as solely the resultants and modes of organization of the particular acts of individual persons, since, these alone can be treated as agents in a course of subjectively understandable action'. It would seem that Weber could hardly be more explicit; the sociology of action is ultimately concerned with individuals, not collectivities.

## NOTES

All kinds of action, even the ones that are explicit, are not 'social' in nature. Overt action that is geared just towards the behavior of inert action is non-social. The subjective attitudes of individuals comprise social action only when it is oriented to others' behaviour. For example, religious behaviour is not social if it is just a matter of meditation or private prayer. The economic activity of an individual becomes social only when it takes into account the behavior of others. Thus, it can be stated that an action becomes social only when the actor's real control over economic goods is respected by others.

It is accepted that the individual's actions are strongly influenced just by the fact that he is a part of a crowd confined in a limited space. Further, it is also possible for huge numbers, though scattered, to be influenced simultaneously or successively by a source of influence operating likewise on all the individuals, e.g., by means of press. Here also the behaviour of an individual is affected by his membership of the crowd and by the fact that he is by the mere fact that the individual acts as the part of a gathering.

For Weber, there are four ideal types of action which he considered the basic building blocks for sociology. These four ideal actions are as follows:

- Traditional action
- Value-rational action
- Affectional action
- Instrumentally rational action

It is only when people accept completely technical means for realising their goals that action becomes *instrumentally rational*. Here, the means to achieve the most efficient way of reaching a goal or objective is chosen. For example, a businessman looks towards the most efficient way of maximizing profit, a politician tries to find the most feasible way to maximize his party's vote, etc. According to Weber, those economic, political and scientific actions that involve cautious choices and decision-making can be said to be instrumentally rational action. On the other hand, *value-rational action* can be described as that action which is based on reason in relation to some illogical or arbitrarily chosen value. A religious person who prays and gives alms to poor people can be said to be behaving in a value-rational manner. The religious person is acts in this manner for his own sake and because he considers it an absolute duty. Here instrumental considerations are not taken into account at all. In value-rational action usually there is no objective that that can be discerned easily, even though a religious person in the example may think that his or her action may lead to salvation. Moreover, in such actions, there is no suggestion that actions are technically suitable in cause-effect terms. However, they are rational in the means that they take up for expressing specific values. According to Weber, *traditional action* is that type of action which is a result of habit and thus is an unthinking action. Such action involves only some degree of logic and is routine in nature. As the name suggests in traditional action people act in the way like they have usually done in similar situations in the past. *Affectional action* is that action which is a result of a direct expression of emotion that does not take into account goals or objectives. An example of an Affectional action is a violent angry outburst.

Since the four types of action are idea; in nature, such actions do not distinctly appear in reality. Rather, all the substantial patterns of action are expected to be interpretable in terms of more than one type of action. To take an example, the actions of a manager of a company who needs to set the wage level for his employees may encompass various aspects of all the four types of Weber's ideal action. In this case, the manager may work out instrumentally the financial outcomes for the company for setting

## NOTES

a certain rate of pay. The manager may also without thinking respond to the proposals of the employee union during the wage negotiations taking a reactive stance against them. Finally, a breakdown in the wage negotiation process might result in angry outbursts as one side or the other walks away from negotiations.

To figure out how an action corresponds to the four ideal actions Weber suggested a technique which he considered was central to sociology — the technique of understanding (*Verstehen* in German). According to Webber, the goal of a social science is to use ideal types as the means of comprehending the meanings which people give to their actions. These meanings encompass their intentions and motives, their expectations about the behaviour of others, and their insights of the situation in which they find themselves. Weber believes that sociologists should infer these meanings by scrutinizing people's actions, and then endeavor for an interpretative comprehension of the same. This for Weber would involve emphasising with those that are being studied, although it does not mean sympathising with them. To take an example, any sane person will not approve of a serial killer but the only way one can hope to explain his or her actions is if one starts looking at the world the way a serial killer sees it. A sociologist may employ empathy by trying to identify with the serial killer up to the point so that the sociologist may comprehend the reasons for the serial killer's actions. However, we do not sympathize with them or condone their actions. To go beyond empathy to sympathy is to make the same mistake as those who go beyond factual judgements to value judgements.

## Traditionalism and Rationality

Weber rejected the deterministic system of explanation as a result of his philosophy of science. The fundamental explanations formed by sociologists should always be based on an interpretative comprehension of the subjective meanings which individuals provide to their actions. In his theories Weber emphasized the free will of individuals and thus believed that any study of social development has to acknowledge the part played by individual action. Unlike Marx, Weber believed that individuals have the power to act independently and are not just as the occupants of a social role or a class position. For Weber then the future is open and undecided and cannot be predicted through analysis. Thus, Weber considers the critique of capitalism by Marx to be incorrect.

Weber assessed the change from feudalism to capitalism as a result of the rise of the characteristic meanings of the new system.

Weber assessed the change from feudalism to capitalism in terms of a change in the characteristic meanings which individuals provided to their actions. For Weber, this transition in Europe was a result of a process of rationalization. This process involved a transition from value-rational actions to instrumentally rational actions. In Weber's view, people's actions were shaped by absolute religious and political values in the feudal era. However, in modern societies, people employ logical calculations of the probable effects of various courses of action that they may take. To take an example, in the modern era of political authority is based on legal procedures while in the feudal era it was based on religious values like the concept of the divine right of a king. Moreover, in the feudal era actions that took place every day were based on traditions. On the other hand, in modern societies most of the areas of social life are open up to rational and reflective considerations. For example, decisions relating to the economic action are based on market calculations in capitalist societies rather than traditional life styles.

Weber does not mean to suggest that modern societies have completely rejected traditional actions, on the contrary, we still can see that in character everyday actions to an extent remains traditional. In modern society, the traditional forms of action may

## NOTES

attain a new significance. This can be ascertained from Weber's considerations of modern day economic actions. Weber states that religious values motivated the actions of those who became the first generations of calculating capitalists. The later generations of individuals who became capitalist carried on with their business activities like it had become a routine matter. For Weber, as such capitalist entrepreneurs become mere cogs in the massive bureaucratic machine, their work becomes a 'dull compulsion' about which they possess no real choice. Finally they might remain free, but in practice they are constrained.

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. State the four types of ideal actions stated by Weber.
2. What is traditional action?
3. When was *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* published?

### 1.3 POWER AND AUTHORITY

It was Weber's interest in politics that motivated his sociological interest in the structures of authority. Weber was no political radical; he was almost as critical of modern capitalism as Marx but he was not an advocate for revolution. He wanted to change society gradually, not overthrow it. He had little faith in the ability of the masses to accrete 'better' society. Moreover, Weber also saw little hope in the middle classes, who he felt were dominated by shortsighted, petty bureaucrats. For Weber the hope—if indeed he had any hope—lay with the great political leaders rather than with the masses or the bureaucrats. Along with his faith in political leaders went his unswerving nationalism. He placed the nation above all else: 'The vital interests of the nation stand, of course, above democracy and parliamentarianism' (Weber, 1921/1968:1383). Weber preferred democracy as a political form not because he believed in the masses but because it offered maximum dynamism and the best milieu to generate political leaders (Mommisen, 1974). Weber noted that authority structures exist in every social institution, and his political views were related to his analysis of these structures in all settings. Of course, they were most relevant to his views on the polity.

Weber began his analysis of authority structures in a way that was consistent with his assumptions about the nature of action. He defined domination as the 'probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons' (Weber, 1921/1968:212). Domination interested Weber and these were the legitimate forms of domination, or what he called authority. What concerned Weber, and what played a central role in much of his theories, were the three bases on which authority is made legitimate to followers—the rational, traditional and charismatic bases. In defining these three bases, Weber remained fairly close to his ideas on individual action, but Weber rapidly moved to the large-scale structures of authority. Authority legitimized on rational grounds rests 'on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands' (Weber, 1921/1968:215). Authority legitimized on traditional grounds is based on 'an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them' (Weber, 1921/1968:215). Lastly, authority legitimized by charm is supported on the loyalty of followers to the exceptional inviolability, heroism or commendable



## NOTES

character of leaders as well as on the normative order sanctioned by them. All these means of legitimizing authority plainly imply individual actors, through processes (beliefs), and actions.

**Legal Authority**

Legal authority can take a variety of structural forms, but the one that interested Weber most was the bureaucracy, which he considered as 'the purest type of exercise of legal authority' (1921/1968:220).

**Ideal-Typical Bureaucracy**

Weber depicted bureaucracies in ideal-typical terms. Although he was well aware of their failings, Weber portrayed bureaucracies in a highly positive way.

Despite his discussion of the positive characteristics of bureaucracies, here and elsewhere in his work, there is a fundamental ambivalence in his attitude towards them. Although he detailed their advantages, he was well aware of their problems. Weber expressed various reservations about bureaucratic organizations. For example, he was cognizant of the 'red tape' that often makes dealing with bureaucracies so trying and so difficult. However, his major fear was that the rationalization which dominates all aspects of bureaucratic life was a threat to individual liberty.

Weber was appalled by the effects of bureaucratization and, more generally, of the rationalization of the world of which bureaucratization is but one component, but he saw no way out. He discussed bureaucracies as 'escape proof', 'practically unshatterable', and among the same lines, he felt that the institutions tend to destroy once they are established. Similarly, he felt that individual bureaucrats could not 'squirm out' of the bureaucracy after getting 'harnessed' in it. Weber summarized that 'the future belongs to bureaucratization' (1921/1968:1401), and since then, time has borne out his forecast.

Given below are what Weber believed to be the key characteristics of the ideal-typical bureaucracy:

1. It comprises a continuous organization of official functions (offices) constrained by rules.
  2. Each office has a particular and defined sphere of competence and capability. The office carries with it a set of obligations and duties to perform different functions, the authority to fulfill these functions, and the modes of compulsion needed to accomplish the job.
  3. The offices are organized into a hierarchical system.
  4. The offices may involve technical qualifications with them that require that the participants get suitable training.
  5. The staff which fills these offices does not own the production means associated with them. The staff members are allowed the use of those things which they require to finish the job.
  6. The incumbent is not allowed to appropriate the position; it always remains part of the organization.
  7. Administrative acts, decisions and rules are formulated and recorded in writing.
- Bureaucracy is one of the rational structures which is playing an ever-increasing role in modern society, but one may wonder whether there is any alternative to the bureaucratic structure. Weber's clear and unequivocal answer was that there is no

possible alternative: 'The needs of mass administration make it today completely indispensable. The choice is only between bureaucracy and dilettantism in the field of administration.'

Although we might admit that bureaucracy is an intrinsic part of modern capitalism, we might ask whether a socialist society might be different. Is it possible to create a socialist system without bureaucracies and bureaucrats?

Weber believed that in the case of socialism we would see an increase, not a decrease, in bureaucratization. If socialism were to achieve a level of efficiency comparable to capitalism, 'it would mean a tremendous increase in the importance of professional bureaucrats' (Weber 1921/1968:224). In capitalism, at least the owners are not bureaucrats, but in socialism even the top-level leaders would be bureaucrats. Weber thus believed that even with its problems 'capitalism presented the best chances for the preservation of individual freedom and creative leadership in a bureaucratic world' (Mommensen, 1974: xv). We are once again at a key theme in Weber's work: his view that there is really no hope for a better world. Socialists can, in Weber's view, only make things worse by expanding the degree of bureaucratization in society.

A ray of hope in Weber's work—and it is a small one—is that professionals who stand outside the bureaucratic system can control it to some degree. In this category, Weber included professional politicians, scientists and even capitalists, as well as the supreme heads of the bureaucracies. For example, Weber said that politicians 'must be the countervailing force against bureaucratic domination' (1921/1964:1417). His famous essay '*Politics as a Vocation*' is basically a plea for the development of political leaders with a calling to oppose the rule of bureaucracies and of bureaucrats. Similarly, in '*Science as a Vocation*' Weber made a plea for professional scientists who can counteract the increasing bureaucratization and rationalization of science. However, in the end these professionals are simply another aspect of the rationalization process and that their development only serves to accelerate that process.

**Traditional Authority**

In his thinking about traditional authority structures, Weber used his ideal-typical bureaucracy as a methodological tool. His objective was to pinpoint the differences between a traditional authority structure and the ideal-typical bureaucracy. According to Weber, while legal authority stems from the legitimacy of a rational-legal system, the traditional authority is based on a claim by the leaders, and a belief on the part of the followers that there is virtue in the sanctity of age-old rule and powers. The leader in such a system is not a superior but a personal master. The administrative staff consists not of officials but mainly of person retainers. Although the bureaucratic staff owes its allegiance and obedience to enacted rules and to the leader, who acts in their name, the staff of the traditional leader obeys because the leader carries the weight of tradition—he or she has been chosen for that position in the traditional manner.

What interested Weber was the staff of the traditional leader and how it measured up to the ideal-typical bureaucratic staff. He concluded that it was lacking on a number of counts. The traditional staff lacks offices with clearly defined sphere of competence which is subject to impersonal rules. It also does not have rational ordering of relations of superiority and inferiority. Further, it lacks a clear hierarchy. There is no regular system of appointment and promotion on the basis of free contacts. Technical training is not a regular requirement or obtaining a position or an appointment. Appointments do not carry with them fixed salaries paid in money.

## NOTES



## NOTES

Weber used his ideal-type methodology not only to compare traditional to rational-legal authority and to underscore the most salient characteristics of traditional authority but also to analyse historically the different forms of traditional authority. A gerontocracy involves rule by elders, whereas primary patriarchy involves leaders who inherit their positions. Both of these forms have a supreme chief but lack an administrative staff. They therefore lack a bureaucracy. A more modern form is patrimonialism, which is traditional domination with an administration and a military force that are purely personal instruments of the master. Still more modern is feudalism, which limits the discretion of the master through the development of more routinized, even contractual, relationships between leader and subordinate. This, in turn, leads to more stabilized power positions that exist in patrimonialism. All four of these forms differ significantly from rational-legal authority.

Weber saw structures of traditional authority, in any form, as barriers to the development of rationality. Weber argued that the structures and practices of traditional authority constitute a barrier to the rise of rational economic structures—in particular, capitalism—as well as to various other components of a rational society. Even patrimonialism—a more modern form of traditionalism—while permitting the development of certain forms of ‘primitive’ capitalism, does not allow for the rise of the highly rational type of capitalism characteristic of the modern West.

### Charismatic Authority

The concept of charisma plays an important role in Weber’s theories, but he had a conception of it very different from that held by most lay people today. Even though Weber did accept that a charismatic leader may possess exceptional characteristics, his sense of charisma was more dependent on the group of followers and the manner in which they defined the charismatic leader. To put Weber’s position straightforwardly, if the followers define a leader as charismatic, then he or she is likely to be a charismatic leader irrespective of whether he or she really possesses any outstanding characteristics. In this manner a leader is set apart from the ordinary people and respected as if endowed with supernatural, superhuman or at least exceptional powers or qualities which are not available to the common people.

To Weber, charisma was a revolutionary force, one of the most important revolutionary forces in the social world. Whereas traditional authority clearly is inherently conservative, the rise of a charismatic leader may well pose a threat to that system (as well as to a rational-legal system) and lead to a dramatic change in that system. What distinguishes charisma as a revolutionary force is that it leads to changes in the minds of actors; it causes a ‘subjective or internal reorientation’. Such changes may lead to ‘a radical alteration of the central attitudes toward different problems of the World’. Although Weber was here addressing changes in the thoughts and actions of individuals, such changes are clearly reduced to the status of dependent variables. Weber focused on changes in the structure of authority, i.e., the rise of charismatic authority. When such a new authority structure emerges, it is likely to change people’s thoughts and actions dramatically.

The other major revolutionary force in Weber’s theoretical system, and the one with which he was much more concerned, is (formal) rationality. Whereas charisma is an internal revolutionary force that changes the minds of actors, Weber saw (formal) rationality as an external revolutionary force changing the structures of society first and then ultimately the thoughts and actions of individuals. Weber was interested in the

## NOTES

revolutionary character of charisma as well as its structure and the necessity that its basic character be transformed and routinized in order for it to survive as a system of authority.

In his analysis of charisma, Weber began, as he did with traditional authority, with the ideal-typical bureaucracy. He sought to determine to what degree the structure of charismatic authority, with its disciples and staff, differs from the bureaucratic system. Compared to that of the ideal-typical bureaucracy the staff of the charismatic leader is lacking on virtually all counts. The staff members are not technically trained but are chosen instead for their possession of charismatic qualities or, at least, of qualities similar to those possessed by the charismatic leader. The offices they occupy form no clear hierarchy. Their work does not constitute a career, and there are no promotions, clear appointments or dismissals. The charismatic leader is free to intervene whenever he or she feels that the staff cannot handle a situation. The organization has no formal rules, no established administrative organs, and no precedents to guide new judgements. In these and other ways, Weber found the staff of the charismatic leader to be ‘greatly inferior’ to the staff in a bureaucratic form of organization.

Weber’s interest in the organization behind the charismatic leader and the staff that inhabits it led him to the question of what happens to charismatic authority when the leader dies. After all, a charismatic system is inherently fragile; it would seem to be able to survive only as long as the charismatic leader lives. But is it possible for such an organization to live after the leader dies? The answer to this question is of greatest consequence to the staff members of the charismatic leader, for they are likely to live on after the leader dies. They are also likely to have a vested interest in the continued existence of the organization: if the organization ceases to exist, they are out of work. Thus the challenge for the staff is to create a situation in which charisma in some adulterated form persists even after the leader’s death. It is a difficult struggle because, for Weber, charisma is by its nature unstable; it exists in its pure form only as long as the charismatic leader lives.

According to Weber, in order to cope with the departure of the charismatic leader, the staff (as well as the followers) may adopt a variety of strategies to create a more lasting organization. The staff may search out a new charismatic leader, but even if the search is successful, the new leader is unlikely to achieve the same aura as his or her predecessor. A set of rules also may be developed that allows the group to identify future charismatic leaders. But such rules rapidly become tradition, and what was future charismatic leadership is on the way towards becoming traditional authority. In any case, the nature of leadership is radically changed as the purely personal character of charisma is eliminated. Still another technique is to allow the charismatic leader to designate his or her successor and thereby to transfer charisma symbolically to the next in line. Again it is questionable whether this is ever very successful or whether it can be successful in the long run. Another strategy is having the staff designate a successor and having its choice accepted by the larger community. The staff could also create ritual tests, with the new charismatic leader being the one who successfully undergoes the tests. However, all these efforts are doomed to failure.

### Theory of Power

According to Weber, power in a social relationship is the ability of an individual to achieve his or her will even against the opposition of others. Weber, to make his idea of power more useful for the study of history and society, gave domination as an alternative, or a

## NOTES

more carefully defined concept. Domination for Weber is 'the probability that certain specific command (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons' (Weber, 212). According to Weber, the characteristics associated with domination are:

- Obedience
- Interest
- Belief
- Regularity

He believed that 'every genuine form of domination implies a minimum of voluntary compliance, i.e., an interest (based on ulterior motives or genuine acceptance) in obedience' (Weber, 212). A dominant relationship can be a parent-child relationship, employer-employee relationship, teacher-student issues, etc. According to Weber, a dominant power relation can comprise of the following four features:

1. In a dominant power relation, there is voluntary compliance or obedience. Individuals are not forced to obey, rather they obey voluntarily.
  2. The people who obey voluntarily in a dominant power relation do so because they have an interest in obeying or at least believe that they have such an interest.
  3. In a dominant power relation, there is a conviction in the legitimacy of the actions of the dominant individual or group (although it is defined by Weber as authority). As Weber states, 'The particular claim to legitimacy is to a significant degree and according to its type treated as valid'.
  4. Obedience in a dominant power relation is not accidental or linked with a short-term social relationship. Rather, it is a continued relationship of dominance and subordination so that regular patterns of inequality are set up.
- According to Weber, when dominance is present, the following four features:

According to Weber, when dominance works for a significant period of time, it becomes a structured phenomenon. As a result of which the forms of dominance become the social structures of society. In Weber's understanding, temporary or transient types of power are not taken to be dominant. Weber's definition of domination thus does away with those types of power which are based on force, because force may not result in the recognition of the dominant group or voluntary obedience with its orders. In Weber's definition, the circumstances of open conflict and force are also comparatively unusual. To give an example, Weber believes that the explicit forms of class conflict are uncommon. Weber construct of domination helps gives us a proper understanding of structured relationships in the modern era. For example the employer-employee relationship can be analysed properly through Weber's notion. Using Weber's notion we find that while in employer-employee or other types of relationships characterized by domination and subordination usually consists of conflict, however, in such relationships the use of force is not a normal feature. We find that subordinates unreservedly obey and accept this subordination.

The British sociologist Giddens explained different levels of legitimacy, and how these may become established over a period of time. For Weber, when people start developing homogeneous types of conduct, it becomes usage. Long-established usages become customs. These may materialize within a group or society due to continued interaction, and need little or no enforcement by any particular group. Weber believes that convention is a stronger degree of conformity. Here obedience is not merely voluntary or customary; rather if someone does not conform to the convention, some kind of sanction may be the result. These sanctions may be mild in nature, like a disapproval, or

## NOTES

they may be serious, for example discipline or ostracism. To give an example, in a workplace what is considered office attire may become the norm, or be even enforced as a rule. Rules come to be enforced as a result of usage and custom and their violation may lead to sanctions being applied. A law comes into effect when a particular norm is taken up by an individual or a group which has the legal capacity and duty to enforce sanctions.

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

4. What form of legal authority interested Weber the most?
5. State any two characteristics of ideal bureaucracy.
6. State the characteristics associated with domination.

## 1.4 THE PROTESTANT ETHIC AND THE SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM

According to Weber, capitalism was a modern phenomenon: a very sophisticated system of institutions, extremely rational in character, and the product of various developments atypical of Western civilization. In these terms, capitalism was unique—both in the sense that such a system never emerged spontaneously in the East. Capitalism is not as old as history and should not be confused with the various forms of capitalistic activity (speculative, commercial, adventurous, political, etc.) which were indeed known in previous periods of Western history and in the civilizations of the East as well. The emergence of the new socioeconomic system in the West could not be taken for granted as an automatic consequence of the growing rationalization of all aspects of life. According to Weber, capitalism had fought its way to supremacy ‘against a whole world of hostile forces’, and its victory over the traditional forces of the Middle Ages was not ‘historically inevitable’ or ‘historically necessary’.

Weber stated, 'In the last resort the factor which produced capitalism is the rational permanent enterprise, rational accounting, rational technology, and rational law, but again not these alone. Necessary complementary factors were the rational spirit, the rationalization of the conduct of life in general, and a rationalistic economic ethic.' In his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* Weber explored in a provisional way the source of the rational spirit and conduct. Although he was not altogether clear on this score, Weber does treat ethics as a 'necessary complementary factor'. What this really means, as it becomes clearer from his later essays, is not that capitalism would not have arisen without it—indeed he himself acknowledged that it had in some places—but rather that the peculiarly energetic form it assumed in a certain historical period might be attributed to the 'elective affinity' between the ethical injunctions of ascetic Protestantism and the spirit of capitalism. The emphasis here being on spirit; there was such great congruence between the two, that they mutually reinforced each other to produce a methodical devotion to work and business activity and thus to a vigorous development of capitalism.

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber starts by drawing attention to what he considers important differences between Protestants and Catholics in terms of their inclinations towards technical, industrial, and commercial studies and

## NOTES

occupations. Protestants were much more inclined to pursue these studies and to be engaged in capitalistic enterprise while Catholics seem to prefer the more traditional humanistic studies. Among workers too, it appeared that Catholics remained in the more traditional occupations, for example crafts, while Protestants acquired industrial skills and even filled administrative positions. These differences could not be accounted for in terms of advantages of inherited wealth but rather had to be explained by the character of the religious education and values which the two groups received and communities. What seemed all the more striking to Weber about the smaller representation of Catholics in 'modern business life' was that as a minority, suffering certain political disabilities, they should have sought all the more forcefully to engage in economic activity (as had other minorities, notably the Jews).

Weber looked, in particular, at the Calvinist forms of Protestantism that developed from the ideas of John Calvin. Calvinists believed that only a small minority were destined by God for salvation and would join Him in heaven. The remainders were destined for eternal damnation. Nothing that people did during their lives could make any difference to their destiny, which reflected God's choice, and there was no way in which any individual believer could know whether he or she was destined for salvation or damnation. As a result, Calvinists experienced what Weber called 'inner loneliness'. They were completely on their own, having no one to whom they could turn for authoritative guidance on their eternal destiny. This extreme anxiety about their fate caused great uncertainty about how they should behave. Protestant ministers and teachers responded to this by stressing those other aspects of Calvinism that might help to resolve the anxieties of their parishioners. Calvin had said that success in a person's calling might be seen as a sign that he or she was destined for salvation. A calling or vocation was the particular way of life to which one had been called by God. Calvin's followers concluded that God would hardly allow worldly success to those whom he had damned. The Puritan sects of the 17th century—especially the Quakers and the Baptists—developed an ethic that saw success in an occupation, business or profession as giving people some indication of whether they were saved or damned. They began to encourage their members to be diligent and hard-working in their work and disciplined in all aspects of their lives. Those who worked hard found that they were, indeed, likely to be successful, and this helped to lessen their sense of anxiety about their destiny (Marshall, 1982).

Weber described this lifestyle as one of asceticism. The ascetic lifestyle involved hard work, discipline, the avoidance of waste, and the rigorous and systematic use of time. This rational and calculative attitude was applied in all aspects of life. In the Puritan world-view, eating and sexuality were seen as stimulating the bodily appetites and, therefore, as things to be controlled. Fasting, the avoidance of non-reproductive sex, and, outside marriage, a life of chastity and celibacy were all seen as means of self-control through which a mastery of the body could be attained.

The pursuit of these values by 17th-century merchants in the Puritan sects led them to greater business success than their counterparts in other religions. Their ascetic way of life stressed the avoidance of excessive income and wasteful or luxurious consumption, and this led them to plough back their profits into their businesses and so to expand their scale of operations. Asceticism gave a new meaning to practical economic life. A distinctively modern view of commercial activity and an ethic of hard work were encouraged, and it was this new outlook and orientation that allowed capitalist business enterprises to expand on an unprecedented scale in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Protestant ethic, Weber argued, had given birth to the spirit of modern capitalism.

## NOTES

In the favourable conditions provided by the nation states of western Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, this spirit helped to produce modern capitalist system of production. This system rapidly spread across Europe and into the wider world. In the longer term, however, the success of the capitalist system undermined sacred, religious meanings. In expanding capitalist societies, Weber argued that individuals are forced to work by economic necessity, and not by any spiritual commitment to it as a calling. For most people there is simply no alternative to capitalist economic activity: if employers do not make a profit, then the pressures of competition will force them out of business; and if employees do not work hard, they will be sacked and replaced by those who will. The spirit of modern capitalism disappears, and modern life becomes increasingly empty and meaningless.

## 1.4.1 Religion and Social Change

In Weber's opinion, social structures could be changed by encouraging religious belief. His social action approach was connected with interpretive sociology, where the interpretation of beliefs leads on to action. In his work *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism* Weber stated that the faith that Calvinists had regarding their lifestyle and attitude for work blended perfectly with the need for capitalism in a stage of dynamic early growth. In a time where mass poverty and depravation was common, one means of surviving was through self-reliance; A Calvinist would invest whatever money he had made back into his trade, would not indulge in overconsumption and live a simple life. Thus Calvinists survived by combining the wealth they made with a godly lifestyle. For example, some Calvinists like Leonard Chamberlain became very wealthy and set up Trusts to fund social, educational and religious causes. Thus, Weber argues that as a result of such religious beliefs and resulting action, there was a direct effect on capitalist growth.

In his works Weber analysed religions from all over the world like Hinduism, Buddhism and Ancient Judaism. His argument was that a change of attitude and action might come from a continuing traditional stance to the one of change and investment. Weber tried to explain social change by looking at the forms of rationality in modern society. According to Weber, religion has no social function even under a developed society. Although Weber believes that religion does retain some social role, such as observance in state occasions, and perhaps this is to keep a level of enchantment at state level, he asserts that religion is itself a part of the social change. Weber considered collective conscience in modern organic society as fragile; indeed he proposed that eventually religion would become not the worship of society but of individuals. In modern society it would be individuals who would be sacred. Therefore, For Weber religion would have moved away from a conservative social role inhibiting social change to none. Weber began among social groups and only had a partial systemic view; he regarded religion to be encouraging social change.

## 1.4.2 The Religion of China

Students of economic development in the West had stressed two factors, which, among others, have contributed greatly to the rise of capitalism: the great influx of precious metals and a significant growth in population. However, Weber observes that in the case of China similar developments were evident.

A typical city in China was fundamentally different from the Occidental one: it did not become a centre in which capitalist relationships and institutions could germinate, for



## NOTES

it lacked political autonomy. Unlike the *polis* of antiquity and the commune of the Middle Ages, it had neither political privileges nor military power of its own. The Occidental city became sufficiently strong to repel an army of knights and was not dependent for its survival on any centralized bureaucracy. Political associations of merchant and craft guilds were nonexistent in the Chinese 'city', and legal contracts, either economic or political, could not be made. In short, there did not emerge a relatively independent bourgeois class centered in relatively autonomous towns (the fruit of prolonged struggle and revolts). Revolts were indeed common in Chinese cities but these were to remove specific officials or to change specific practices, not to guarantee the freedom of the city. These differences between the Occidental and Oriental cities can be traced to their different origins. The *polis* of antiquity was an overseas trading city, whereas in China trade was predominantly inland. And in order to preserve tradition, foreign trade and contact were limited to a single port, Canton. Furthermore, industrial development was not centered in the city where it could, as in the West, escape the control of traditional groups and interests. Thus the economic, political and formal-legal foundations of an autonomous and rational organization of industry and commerce were absent. Control of the rivers, in China as in Egypt and other ancient civilizations, led to some rationalization of the economy but was greatly limited due to religious and other conditions. River regulation, the basis of imperial authority, was assured not by empirical-rational means alone but by the conduct of the emperor who had to abide by the imperatives of the classical scriptures. If, for example, the dikes broke, this was evidence that he did not have the qualities of charisma demanded by heaven and therefore had to do public penitence for his sins. As in all large far-flung states with undeveloped systems of communication, administrative centralization remained negligible; nevertheless, this did not facilitate the growth of autonomous centres of power.

The dependence of the central government on its officials, and these in turn on provincial assistants, enhanced traditionalism; even the 'money economy contributed to the strengthening of traditional structures'. The officials became in effect 'tax farmers', who extracted what they could from their provincial subjects, gave as little as they dared to their superiors, and kept the rest. They were prebendaries who had a paramount interest in maintaining the existing socioeconomic conditions and hence the profits from their prebends. Thus as the money economy expanded so did prebendalization, a great obstacle to attempts at internal change. To become prebendaries they were dependent on the central government; once they became officials and received their assignments, however, they acquired only a very limited power, for they remained dependent on the indigenous elements of the provinces in which they were strangers.

The *sib* in China was so powerful that true alienation of land from it was impossible. Land was not unconditionally or permanently sold; rather, the *sib* always retained the right to repurchase. There were moneylenders and other forms of politically determined capitalism but these did not lead to modern rational, capitalistic enterprise. 'There was no rational depersonalization of business,' which for Weber is 'comparable to its unmistakable beginnings in the commercial law of Italian cities.' In China, the growth of wealth in the form of money led to different results. When officials retired, for instance, they invested their money in landholdings which enabled some of their sons to study so as to pass the state examination and thus become eligible for 'tax farming' careers of their own. In this way the whole familial community had a vested interest in the examination system and other traditional institutions. And this community was held together by powerful and rigid kinship bonds. The power of the *sib* rested to a large degree on the ancestor cult; ancestral spirits acted as mediators between their descendants and God.

Cities were mere urban settlements of farmers and 'there remained only a technical administrative difference between city and village'. A 'city' was the seat of the mandarin and was not self-governing; a 'village' was a self-governing settlement without a mandarin. And autonomous military power developed in contrast with the West, in the villages and not in the cities.

There were repeated power struggles between the *literati* and the priests, in which the former were always victorious. Yet, ironically, the *literati* constantly availed themselves of the Taoist's priestly and magical services, affording Taoist heterodoxy a recognized place in religious practice. Not only were magic and animism tolerated, they were systematized and rationalized so that they became a tremendous power in Chinese life. All sciences which had empirical and naturalistic beginnings were completely rationalized as magical and supernatural practices and rituals. The Chinese world, despite its secular and rational-empirical elements, remained enchanted with a magic garden. 'Demagnification' of religion, Weber believed, was carried out in the West most consistently and thoroughly by ascetic Protestantism; but the process had begun with the ancient Jewish prophets. Weber emphasised that this did not mean that the Puritans did not retain superstitious beliefs; it is obvious that they were superstitious looking at their history of witch trials. Rather, it means that Protestants came to regard 'all magic as devilish'. For Weber, then, one criterion of the rationalization of religion is the degree to which it has rid itself of magic. 'To be sure,' stated Weber, 'the basic characteristics of the "mentality", in this case the practical attitudes toward the world, were deeply codetermined by political and economic destinies.' Yet, in view of their autonomous laws, one can hardly fail to ascribe to these attitudes effects strongly counteractive to capitalist development.'

### 1.4.3 The Religion of India

Weber in India also saw many social and cultural conditions which, it would seem, should have given rise to modern rational capitalism. Warfare, finance and politics, for instance, had been rationalized, and the last of these even in quite 'Machiavellian' terms. Many of the older type of capitalist forms had at one time or another been in evidence: state creditors and contractors, tax farmers, etc. Urban development also seemed to parallel that of the West at many points. In addition, what Weber called rationality was prominent in many aspects of Indian cultural life: the rational number system, arithmetic, algebra, rational science and in general a rational consistency in many spheres, together with a high degree of tolerance towards philosophical and religious doctrines. The prevailing judicial forms appeared compatible with capitalist development; there existed an autonomous stratum of merchants; handicrafts as well as occupational specialization were developed; and, finally, the high degree of acquisitiveness and high evaluation of wealth were a notable aspect of Indian social life. He regards Indian religion as 'one factor among many' which, he states cautiously, 'may have prevented capitalistic development'. Since there was no way of quantifying or weighing the elements, all one could do was to make as strong and as cogent a case as possible. If Indian religion had taken another form—e.g., equivalent to that of ascetic Protestantism—then, perhaps, a modern, rational type of capitalism might have developed there too. Since economic, urban, scientific and other developments were somewhat equivalent in India and the West, and modern capitalism emerged autonomously only in the latter civilization, the different religious ethos which took shape there must have made a significant causal contribution to the origin of the modern economic system.

## NOTES



## NOTES

no emphasis was placed on 'this life'; Asiatic religion led to an otherworldliness. 'In Asia generally,' writes Weber, 'the power of a charismatic stratum grew.' The magical, anti-rational world had a profound impact on economic conduct and development could not be doubted.

The depth and tenacity of this magical mentality created conditions in which the 'lust for gain' never gave rise to the modern economic system which Weber called as 'rational capitalism'. What was notably absent from Asiatic religion therefore was the development which in the Occident ultimately broke the hold of magic over the minds of men and gave rise to a 'rational, inner worldly ethic'.

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

7. What according to Weber is 'rational capitalism'?
8. Which was the *polis* of antiquity?

## 1.5 SUMMARY

- Max Weber, often referred to as the 'bourgeois Marx', became a sociologist 'in a long and intense debate with the ghost of Marx'. His work *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (economy and society) and his concern with the protestant ethic showed that throughout his life he was engaged in the problems and issues raised by Marx.
- Weber's entire sociology, if we accept his words at face value, was based on his conception of social action (Turner, 1983). He differentiated between action and purely reactive behaviour. The concept of behaviour is reserved, then as now (Ritzer, 1975a), to automatic behaviour that involves no thought processes—a stimulus and response. Such behaviour was not of interest in Weber's sociology.
- Weber rejected the deterministic system of explanation as a result of his philosophy of science. The fundamental explanations formed by sociologists should always be based on an interpretative comprehension of the subjective meanings which individuals provide to their actions.
- Weber's sociological interest in the structures of authority was motivated, at least in part, by his political interests. Weber was no political radical; he was almost as critical of modern capitalism as Marx but he was not an advocate for revolution. He wanted to change society gradually, not overthrow it. He had little faith in the ability of the masses to accrete 'better' society. Moreover, Weber also saw little hope in the middle classes, who he felt were dominated by shortsighted, petty bureaucrats.
- Legal authority can take a variety of structural forms, but the one that interested Weber most was the bureaucracy, which he considered as 'the purest type of exercise of legal authority'.
- Weber depicted bureaucracies in ideal-typical terms. Although he was well aware of their failings, Weber portrayed bureaucracies in a highly positive way.
- In his thinking about traditional authority structures, Weber used his ideal-typical bureaucracy as a methodological tool. His objective was to pinpoint the differences between a traditional authority structure and the ideal-typical bureaucracy.

## NOTES

- The concept of charisma plays an important role in Weber's theories, but he had a conception of it very different from that held by most lay people today. Even though Weber did accept that a charismatic leader may possess exceptional characteristics, his sense of charisma was more dependent on the group of followers and the manner in which they defined the charismatic leader.
- According to Weber, power in a social relationship is the ability of an individual to achieve his or her will even against the opposition of others. Weber, to make his idea of power more useful for the study of history and society, gave domination as an alternative, or a more carefully defined concept. Domination for Weber is 'the probability that certain specific command (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons'.
- According to Weber, capitalism was a modern phenomenon: a very sophisticated system of institutions, extremely rational in character, and the product of various developments atypical of western civilization. In these terms, capitalism was unique—both in the sense that such a system never emerged spontaneously in the East.
- Weber concluded that the general character of Asiatic religion was a particular form of gnosis, i.e., positive knowledge in the spiritual realm, mystically acquired. Gnosis was the single path to the 'highest holiness' and the 'highest practice'. This 'knowledge far from becoming a rational and empirical means by which man sought with increasing success to dominate nature became instead the means of mystical and magical domination over the self and the world by an intensive training of body and spirit either through asceticism or, as a rule, through strict, methodological ruled meditation'.
- Weber wrote that 'In Asia generally, the power of a charismatic stratum grew.' Thus, that the magical, anti-rational world had a profound impact on economic conduct and development in Asia cannot be doubted.
- According to Weber, the depth and tenacity of this magical mentality created conditions in which the 'lust for gain' never gave rise to the modern economic system which Weber called as 'rational capitalism'.

## 1.6 KEY TERMS

- **Verstehen:** Verstehen essentially means understanding the meaning of action from the actor's point of view. To put it another way, it means to enter into the shoes of the other, and adopt a research stance that requires treating the actor as a subject, rather than an object of one's observations.
- **Patrimonialism:** A form of government where all the power flows directly from a leader is called patrimonialism. Such types of governments are autocratic or oligarchic in nature and keep out the upper and middle classes from power.
- **Historical sociology:** Sociological analysis based on historical sources—either primary (such as original documents in archives) or secondary (the written history produced by historians themselves).
- **Social action:** According to Max Weber, an action is 'social' if the acting individual takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course.



## NOTES

## 1.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

- The four ideal actions as stated by Weber are as follows:
  - Traditional action
  - Value-rational action
  - Affectional action
  - Instrumentally rational action
- According to Weber, traditional action is that type of action which is a result of habit and thus is an unthinking action. Such action involves only some degree of logic and is routine in nature. As the name suggests in traditional action people act in the way like they have usually done in similar situations in the past.
- In 1904 and 1905, Weber published one of his best known works, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.
- Legal authority can take a variety of structural forms, but the one that interested Weber the most was bureaucracy, which he considered as 'the purest type of exercise of legal authority'.
- Two characteristics of ideal bureaucracy are:
  - It comprises a continuous organization of official functions (offices) constrained by rules.
  - Each office has a particular and defined sphere of competence and capability. The office carries with it a set of obligations and duties to perform different functions, the authority to fulfill these functions, and the modes of compulsion needed to accomplish the job.
- According to Weber, the characteristics associated with domination are:
  - Obedience
  - Interest
  - Belief
  - Regularity
- The depth and tenacity of this magical mentality created conditions in which the 'lust for gain' never gave rise to the modern economic system which Weber called as 'rational capitalism'.
- The polis of antiquity was an overseas trading city, whereas in China trade was predominantly inland. And in order to preserve tradition, foreign trade and contact were limited to a single port, Canton.

## 1.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

## Short-Answer Questions

- Write a short note on traditionalism and rationality.
- How has Weber defined 'charisma' in his analysis of charismatic authority?
- State the features of a dominant power relation.
- Write a short note on Weber's concept of religion in India.

## Long-Answer Questions

- Compare and contrast the four types of social action given by Weber.
- Compare and contrast different types of authority propounded by Weber.
- Give a broad overview of the connection between religion and the rise of modern capitalism.
- Discuss the salient features of Weber's theory of power.
- Analyse the basic characteristics of Weberian bureaucracy.
- Elucidate the differences between charismatic authority and legal rational authority.

## 1.9 FURTHER READING

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## NOTES

## UNIT 2 KARL MARX

### Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Unit Objectives
- 2.2 Influence of Karl Marx on Sociological Theory
  - 2.3.1 Dialectical Materialism
  - 2.3.2 Historical Materialism
- 2.3 Alienation and Capitalism
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 Key Terms
- 2.6 Answer to 'Check Your Progress'
- 2.7 Questions and Exercise

### NOTES

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will learn about the Marxian discussion on the dialectical approach which he derived from Hegel and which in fact shaped all of Marx's work. Much of sociological thinking was dominated by the contrast of dialect with causal logic. The dialectic emphasizes that among the elements of social world there are no simple cause and effect relationships; fact and value do not seem to be divided clearly between a line; and there are no hard and fast dividing lines among phenomena in the social world. Marx devoted his attention to dialectical and critical analyses of capitalist society, despite his political orientation towards the creation of a communist society. His insights into actors and structure should be viewed in the context of his opinions on human nature, which is the basis for his critical analysis of the contradictions of capitalism. According to him, a disagreement exists between our human nature and work in the capitalist system. Workers get alienated from their labour because it does not belong to them, but rather to the capitalist. Marx put forward most of his opinions in response to the quick changes taking place in Europe as a result of industrialization, primarily in Germany. He also studied the nature of the structures of capitalism and their adverse effects on the actors. He also elaborated on the pivotal role played by commodities in capitalism. Marx used the term 'rectification' to explain the process whereby social structure becomes naturalized, absolute and independent of human action. In this context, it can be said that capital is the most reified components in a capitalist society.

## 2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the contribution of Marx's works towards the evolution and growth of sociological theory

- Discuss the concept of dialectical materialism
- Analyse the various aspects of capitalism and its important constituents
- Explain the sociological elements involved in the process of commodity production

## NOTES

## 2.2 INFLUENCE OF KARL MARX ON SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Karl Marx was born in Trier, Prussia, on 15 May 1818. His father, a lawyer, provided the family with a fairly typical middle class existence. Both parents were from rabbinical families. But for business reasons the father had converted to Lutheranism.

In 1841 Marx received his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Berlin, a school heavily influenced by Hegel and the Young Hegelians, supportive, yet critical, of their master. Marx's doctorate was a dry philosophical treatise that bore little resemblance to his later, more radical and more pragmatic work. After graduation he became a writer for liberal-radical newspaper and within 10 months became its editor-in-chief. However, because of its political position, the paper was closed shortly thereafter by the government. The early essays published in this period began to reflect a number of standpoints that would guide Marx throughout his life. They were liberally sprinkled with democratic principles, humanism and idealism. He rejected the abstractness of Hegelian philosophy, the naïve and dreaming of utopian communists, and those activists who were urging what he considered to be premature political action. In rejecting these activists, Marx laid the groundwork for his own life's work:

Practical attempts, even by the masses, can be answered with cannon as soon as they become dangerous, but ideas that overcome our conviction, ideas to which reason has riveted our conscience, are chains from which one cannot break loose without breaking one's heart; they are demons that one can only overcome by submitting to them. (Marx, 1842/1977:20)

Marx married in 1843 and soon thereafter left Germany for the more liberal atmosphere of Paris. There he continued to grapple with the ideas of Hegel and the young Hegelians, but he also encountered two new sets of ideas—French socialism and English political economy. It was the unique way in which he combined Hegelianism, socialism and political economy that shaped his intellectual orientation. Also of great importance at this point was meeting the man who was to become his lifelong friend, benefactor and collaborator—Freidrich Engels (Carver, 1983). The son of a textile manufacturer, Engels had become a socialist critical of the conditions facing the working class. Much of Marx compassion for the misery of the working class came from his exposure to Engels and his ideas. In 1844 Engels and Marx had a lengthy conversation in a famous café. Engels said, 'Our complete agreement in all theoretical field became obvious ... and our joint work dates from that time (Mc Lellan, 1973:31) ... during this period Marx produced academic works (many unpublished in his lifetime) that were mainly concerned with sorting out his link to the Hegelian tradition (for example, *The Holy Family* and *The German ideology*), but he also produced *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of 1844, which better integrated all of the intellectual tradition in which he was immersed and which foreshadowed his increasing preoccupation with the economic domain.

While Marx and Engels shared a theoretical orientation, there were many differences between the two men. Marx tended to be a highly abstract thinker, a disorderly

## NOTES

intellectual and very oriented to his family. Engels was a practical thinker, a neat and tidy businessman. They collaborated on books and articles and worked together in radical organization. Engels even helped and supported Marx throughout the rest of his life so that Marx could devote himself to his intellectual and political endeavours.

In spite of the close association of the names of Marx and Engels, Engels made it clear that he was the junior partner:

Marx could very well have done without me. What Marx accomplished I would not have achieved. Marx stood higher, saw farther and took a wider and quicker view than the rest of us. Marx was a genius.

(Engels, cited in McLellan, 1973:131-132)

In fact, many believe that Engels failed to understand many of the subtleties of Marx's work. After Marx's death, Engels became the leading spokesperson for Marxian theory and in various ways distorted and oversimplified it.

Since some of his writings had upset the Prussian government, the French government (at the request of the Prussians) expelled Marx in 1845, and he moved to Brussels. His radicalism was growing, and he had become an active member of the international revolutionary movement. He was also associated with the Communist League and was asked to write a document (with Engels) expounding its aims and beliefs. The result was the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, a work that was characterized by ringing political slogans (for example, 'working men of all countries, unite!').

In 1849, Marx moved to London, and, in light of the failure of the political revolutions of 1848, he began to withdraw from active revolutionary activity and to move into serious and detailed research on the working conditions under capitalism. These studies ultimately resulted in the three volumes of *Capital*, the first of which was published in 1867 while the other two were published posthumously. He lived in poverty during these years, barely managing to survive on a small income from his writings and the support of Engels. In 1863 Marx became re-involved in political activity by joining the *International*, an international movement of workers. He soon gained dominance within the movement and devoted a number of years to it. He began to gain fame both as a leader of the *International* and as the author of *Capital*. But the disintegration of the *International* by 1876, the failure of various revolutionary movements, and personal illness took their toll on Marx. His wife died in 1881, daughter died in 1882, and Marx himself expired on 14 March 1883.

### 2.2.1 Dialectical Materialism

Many Marxists considered *Dialects Materialism* as the theoretical source of several types of Marxism. Marx never used this name which refers to the societal and economic transformation born of the material forces. Usually it is seen as the mix of Historical transformation (or the 'materialist conception of history') a name specified to Marx style in materialism (the study of society, economics and history. It is usually defined by the two declarations made by Marx: firstly he 'put Hegel's dialectics back on its feet' and secondly 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle' (The communist Manifest, 1848). Fundamentally it is described by the principle that history is the creation of class struggle and follows the universal Hegelian principle of philosophy of history, which is the growth of thesis into anti-thesis which is sustained by the 'Aufheben' which preserves the thesis and the anti-thesis whereas simultaneously bringing it to an end.



## NOTES

Hegel's dialect focuses on the explanation of the growth and development of human history. For him truth was the product of history which passed through various moments including the moment of error or negativity which is the part of the development of truth. Compared to Hegel's idealism, Marxian dialectical materialism considers that history is not the result of spirit but consequence of material class conflict of the social order. Therefore, this presumption has basis in the materiality of societal survival. Dialectical materialism is also known as Diamat (short form for 'dialectical materialism') most likely used in 1887 by Joseph Dietzgen, a socialist tanner who was in touch with Marx. A formal reference to the phrase is also found in Kautsky's *Fredrick Engel* written in the same year, 1887. Georgi Plekhanov, the father of Russian communalism, afterwards used the term and therefore it came into usage in Marxist theory. Marx had stated on the subject of the 'materialistic conception of history' which has afterwards condensed to history materialism by Engels. He uncovered the 'materialist dialectic' not 'dialectical materialism' in his work *Dialectics of Nature* (1883). Diamat was discussed and analysed by a lot of Marxist thinkers, which resulted in a mixture of political and theoretical conflicts in the Marxist faction in universal and in the Comintern specifically.

## Foreword

Marxism is a fundamentally materialist philosophy because the foundation of it is the belief that the overall account of everything is matter which is characteristic of reality. If empirical study is able to identify the whole aspects of matter, therefore, matter is accepted independence in forming the course of nature which detaches dialectical materialism (the Hegelian dialectical method).

Marxism sticks to the triple laws of motion (originally proposed by the Greek thinkers and coded by Hegel). By means of these laws, Marxism tries to respond to the problems associated with both nature and humanity as well as tries to answer the query 'what is the beginning of energy or activity in nature?' Other such queries are:

- What is the basis of the continuous proration in the number of galaxies, solar system, planets, animals and all the realms of nature?
- What is the starting point of life, the beginning of species and the sources of awareness in the mind?
- What is the basis of regulation in society and the direction to which it is headed?
- Does the study of the past include an ending; if it is then what will it be?

By making use of triple laws of dialectics, Marx and Engels responded to all these queries. As an alternative of enforcing upon it, the laws were discovered inside the nature itself.

## Laws of Opposites

Marx and Engels began with the impression that everything in reality is a union of opposites. As a case in point, the main feature of electricity is a positive and negative charge. Also, the atoms are made up of protons and electrons united but are in essence opposing forces. So it is befitting to say that humans also have opposite qualities like humbleness and pride, selfishness and altruism and so forth. The Marxist conclusion is that everything 'contains two mutually incompatible and exclusive but nevertheless equally essential and indispensable parts or aspects'. The essential idea is that this union of opposites in natural world is the feature which makes every unit auto-dynamic in nature along with ensuring a continuous drive for movement and transformation. This motion

was analysed by George Wilhelm Hegel who stated that 'contradiction in nature is the root of all motion and of all life'.

More often than not this dichotomy exists in the natural world. A star is held collectively by the gravitational pull which is driving every molecule to the core, and an extremely high temperature is forcing the molecules to stay away as distant as feasible from the core. If either of any of the two pulls is totally successful the star cannot survive. If extremely high temperature is triumphant the star blows up into a supernova. Furthermore if gravitational pull is successful it implodes into a neutron star or black hole. Accordingly, live beings endeavour to stabilize inside and outside forces to sustain homeostatic, that is no more than a stabilization of contrasting powers, for example acidity and alkalinity.

## Law of Negation

Here is a predisposition in environment towards continuously raising the numerical amount of the entire things. The law of negation was formed to explain this predisposition of natural world. Accordingly, Marx and Engels state that to organize to move forward or replicate a superior number, creatures are inclined in the direction of negating themselves. To say that the nature of opposing forces is inclined to negate the thing itself, at the same time as resulting in divergence in every part and giving them movement. Consequently creatures progress because of this energetic course of beginning and obliteration. This rule is generally made simple as the sequence of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

Engels frequently referred to the example of the barley seed, which in natural process sprouts (which is the death of a seed or negation) and produces a plant, growing into ripeness and is negated after giving birth to barley seeds. So therefore, the natural world is continuously increasing from beginning to end in series.

In the social order, there is an example of class. The nobility, in this case, was wiped out by bourgeoisie and the proletariat was formed by means of bourgeoisie. This proletariat will eventually wipe out the bourgeoisie. This shows that never ending series of negation where every class produces its 'gravedigger', its heir, no sooner it finishes lying to rest its originator.

## Law of Transformation

It states that constant quantitative growth leads to changes in quality by 'leaps' in the environment, resulting in production of a totally new variety or creature. This is the way in which 'quantitative development becomes qualitative change'. In the process of transformation, the rendering null and void of quality affecting quantity is also permitted.

This has many similarities to the theory of evolution. Marxist thinkers accomplished that creatures in the course of quantitative growth are in addition essentially able to 'leap' to new appearances and stages of realism. The rule shows that in a long duration of time, natural world builds up conspicuous transformations in course, all the way through a procedure of minute, roughly insignificant growths.

It is shown by the example of volcano explosion after the process of years of pressure adding up. When the magma cools, it will turn into a productive land where till that point in time there was none. As a societal case, years of stress among the contrasting groups in society becomes the cause of an uprising. The rule also happens in reverse. For example, introduction of better agriculture tools (changing quality) to farmland and these tools will help in producing bigger amount (changing quantity) of agriculture output.

## NOTES

## History of Dialectical Materialism

## Lenin's Contribution

## NOTES

Lenin was the foremost to provide a detailed description of **dialectical materialism** in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1908). It involves approximately three axes: (i) the 'materialist invention' of Hegelian dialectics, (ii) the historicity of moral philosophy designed to class conflict and (iii) the junction of 'laws of evolution' in physics (Helmholtz), biology (Darwin) and in political economics (Marx). Lenin positioned himself among historicist Marxism (Labriola) and a determinist Marxism, close to 'Social Darwinism' (Kautsky). Preceding values of matter and materialism were confronted by new findings in physics (including x-rays, electrons and the initial stages of quantum mechanics). Matter looked as if to be vanishing. Lenin diverged:

'Matter disappears' means that the frontier within which we have until now known, matter vanishes, as our understanding is becoming insightful and deeper; the qualities of matter are fading compared to previously which looked total, not changeable, and basic, and which are at the moment exposed to be comparative and distinctive only at certain levels of matter. For the sole 'property' of matter with whose recognition philosophical materialism is bound up is the property of being an objective reality of existing outside of the mind.

Friedrich Engels was next, whose contribution was followed by Lenin, who had noted that 'with each epoch-making discovery even in the sphere of natural science, materialism has to change its form (*Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*). Lenin's major effort was to place materialism as a practical philosophical viewpoint away from what he considered as the 'regular materialism' uttered in declarations like 'the brain secretes thought in the same way as the liver secretes bile' (attributed to 18th century physician Pieve Jean Georges Cabanis 1757-1808); 'metaphysical materialism' (matter is composed of immutable, unchanging particles); and 19th century 'mechanical materialism' (matter was akin to tiny molecular billiard balls intermingling according to uncomplicated laws of mechanics). The explanations of Lenin and Engels to these arguments were 'dialectical materialism' in which matter was implicitly considered in the wider logic of 'objective reality' and which was constant with new progress in science. Soviet philosophy in itself was separated among 'dialecticians' (Deborin) and 'mechanists' (Bukharin).

## Georg Lukacs Additions

*History and Class Consciousness* was published in 1923 by Georg Lukacs who was a Minister of Culture in short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic (1919). It had the explanation of dialectical materialism as the comprehension of society as a sum total and this explanation in itself was directly the consciousness of the proletariat. In the opening chapter, 'What is Orthodox Marxism?', the explanation of orthodoxy by Lukacs is specified as the faithfulness to the 'Marxist method' and not to the 'dogmas'. 'Orthodox Marxism, therefore, does not imply the uncritical acceptance of the results of Marx's investigations; it is not the "belief" in this or that thesis, nor the exegesis of a "sacred" book. On the contrary, orthodoxy refers exclusively to method. It is scientific conviction that dialectical materialism is the road to truth and that its method can be developed, expanded and deepened only along the lives laid down by its founders.'

Lukacs condemned Revisionist effort to go back to this Marxist method. Similarly Althusser described Marxism and psychoanalysis as 'conflictual sciences'. Lukacs

## NOTES

visualizes 'Revisionism' and political splits as intrinsic to Marxist premise and praxis, and for him dialectical materialism is the result of class struggle. 'For this reason the task of orthodox Marxism, its victory over revisionism and utopianism can never mean the defeat, once and for all, of false tendencies. It is an ever-renewed struggle against the insidious effects of bourgeois ideology on the thought of the proletariat Marxist orthodoxy is no guardian of traditions, it is the eternally vigilant prophet proclaiming the relation between the tasks of the immediate present and the totality of the historical process.'

He furthermore affirmed that 'the premise of dialectical materialism is, we recall, not men's consciousness that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness... only when the core of existence stands revealed as a social process can existence be seen as the product, the hitherto unconscious revealed as a social process can existence be seen as the product, the hitherto unconscious product, of human activity'. Agreeing with Marx's views, the individualist bourgeois viewpoint of the theme was disapproved by him, which has been established on the voluntary and conscious topic. The importance of the societal relationships was emphasized by him. Survival and therefore, the whole world, is the result of human being's action; however, it can be perceived only if the dominance of societal progression on a person's awareness is acknowledged. The awareness of a person was cataloged as a result of philosophical spiritualism by him. Lukacs, in his thesis, does not control man's independence, on behalf of various types of sociological determinism to the contrary; this creation of survival is the likelihood of praxis. In July 1924, during the fifth Comintern Congress, this unorthodox explanation, nevertheless, which was preserved by him with affirming that 'orthodox Marxism' is faithful to the Marxist 'method', and not to 'dogmas', was criticized, beside with Karl Korsch's work by Grigory Zinoviev.

## Stalin's Codification of Diamat

Stalin, in 1931, after his takeover, published a decree for deciding the issue of the debate between dialecticians and mechanists, which acknowledged dialectical materialism as related exclusively to Marxism-Leninism. It was encoded in *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* (1938) by specifying the 'Laws of Dialectics', which is the basis of specific subjects and especially of the science of history upholding the promise of compliance to the 'proletarian conception of the world'. So, Diamat turned into the authorized thinking of Stalinism and nearly attained the rank of state religious conviction.

## Materialism in Dialectical Materialism

The argument of Marx talked about Epicurus and Democritus atomism, which is regarded at the same time as the founder, along with stoicism, of materialist viewpoint. Lucretius theory was well known to him. Dominance of material word is emphasized and matter-lead thinking is the focal point of materialism. Also materialism affirms that the world is material, and all occurrences in the creation are due to 'matter in motion'. Further, all things are interdependent and interconnected and develop in accordance with natural laws. It also holds that the world exists outside us which is independent of our perception of it, and the content we think is the reflection of the materialism in our mind; and that the world is in principle predictable. 'The ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into forms of thought,' Karl Marx stated in *Das Kapital* (Vol 1). Against Hegel's idealism, Marx endorsed a materialist philosophy; he 'turned Hegel's dialectics upside down'.

Therefore, Marx approved materialist values in opposition to Hegel's idealism. One should not be perplexed with straightforward materialism as Marx's materialist

## NOTES

thinking; in reality Marx disapproved of classic materialism as an additional idealist thinking. According to the famous *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845), thinking had to discontinue 'interpreting' the humanity in never-ending metaphysical arguments, for 'transforming' the earth. This 'transforming' of the humankind was occurring because of the increase in the workforce activity as perceived by Engels in England (Chartist movement) and by Marx in France and Germany. Therefore, the dominance of class struggle lies in historical materialism. The wisdom of Marx's materialism thinking is that the philosophy must take position in the class struggle, or it will get reduced to religious idealism (such as Kant or Hegel's philosophies) which in fact comprises just principles, i.e., the material result of societal survival. Therefore, Marx's materialism made the way for Frankfurt School's critical theory, resulting in the combination of the values with the social sciences in an attempt to analyse the disorders of society. Nevertheless, dialectical materialism may be summarized to the Diamat conventional theory.

## Dialectics in Dialectical Materialism

As a prescribed approach, the foremost notion of 'dialectical opposition or contradiction' has to be appreciated as 'some sense' disagreement between the objects involved in an openly related context. 'Dialectical contradiction' is not reduced to simple 'opposites' or 'negation'. This is the discipline of the common and theoretical rules of growth of nature, society and thought. The major traits are:

1. Interdependences of the things as the creation is not a detached combination of things isolated from each other but a vital whole.
  2. Cosmos, nature and the natural world is in a condition of continued movement.  
All nature, from the smallest thing to the biggest, from a grain of sand to the sun, from the protozoa to man, is in a constant state of coming into being and going out of being, in a constant flux, in a ceaseless state of movement and change.  
Friedrich Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*.
  3. Irrelevant and unnoticeable quantitative changes lead to essential, qualitative changes in the process of development. The qualitative changes occur not gradually, but rapidly and abruptly in the form, rising from one state to another. For example water becomes steam at 100 degree (qualitative change) with a one degree increase in temperature (quantitative change). 'Merely qualitative differences, beyond a certain point, pass into qualitative changes,' Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1
  4. Everything has within it the inner dialectical negations, which are the crucial source of activity, transformation and growth in the world.
- Engels' Laws of Dialectics

## Engels' Laws of Dialectics

**Engels deduced the three laws of dialectics with his study of Hegel's Science of Logic. These are:**

- The rule of the harmony and disagreement of opposites
- The rule of the course of quantitative transformations into qualitative transformations
- The rule of the reversal of the reversal

## NOTES

For both Hegel and Lenin the first of Engels laws was considered the indispensable trait of a dialectical knowledge of matter which began with the early Ionian thinker Heraclitus.

It was Aristotle, from which second law was used by Hegel, and was compared to the phrase scientist label “phase transitions”. The idea was inherited by Aristotle, also by Hegel and Engels, from ancient Ionian academics and “phase transition” of water to steam is one of the major examples of quantity, into quality change.

The last and the third law is the special expression of Hegel. With this terminology (along with additional things) Hegel's dialect became well known throughout his lifetime.

## Lenin's Elements of Dialectics

After reading Hegel's *Science of Logic* in 1914, Lenin made concise notes outlining three 'elements' of Logic in *Summary of Dialectics*.

1. The determination of the concept out of itself (the thing itself must be considered in its relations and in its development);
2. The contradictory nature of the thing itself (the other of itself); the contradictory forces and tendencies in each phenomenon;
3. The union of analysis and synthesis.

In additional progression of explanations, Lenin developed and argued that ‘the transition of quantity into quality and vice versa’ is a case in point of the union and the separation of opposites articulated cautiously as ‘not only the unity of opposites, but the transitions of every determination, quality, feature, side, property into every other (into its opposite?)’. The relevance of the dialectic to history is taken up in Historical Materialism.

## Marxist Criticism of Dialectical Materialism

Dialectical materialism was criticized by many Marxist academicians including Marxist thinkers like Louis Althusser or Antonio Gramsci who propounded a Marxist 'philosophy of praxis' in its place. Rest of the scholars in Marxist thinking returned to the original manuscripts of Marx and Engels and produced new Marxist theoretical proposals and ideas substituting dialectical materialism. In 1937, Mao Zedong propounded one more explanation in his essay *On Contradiction*, in which he discarded the 'laws of dialectics' and persisted on the complication of the negation. His manuscript motivated Althusser's effort on negation and it was a motivating subject matter for his famous essay *For Marx* (1965). Althusser tried to tone the Marxist thought of 'contradiction' by making use of the notion of 'overdetermination' from psychoanalysis. The teleological interpretation of Marx compared to Hegel's idealism was disapproved by him. Althusser built the notion of 'random materialism' (*matérialisme aléatoire*) compared to dialectical materialism, a shift which came from Althusser's scheme of 'anti-humanism', or the 'philosophy of the subject'. In an effort to solve the dilemma in a different way, Italian thinker Ludovico Geymonat made a historical epistemology from dialectical materialism. Althusser shortly supported the epistemological method and focused on the denial of the division among subject and object which resulted in making Marx's theory mismatched with its antecedents.



## 2.2.2 Historical Materialism

### NOTES

While dialectical materialism represents the philosophical bases of Marxism, historical materialism represents its scientific basis. It implies that in any given epoch, the economic relations of society – the means whereby men and women undertake production, distribution and exchange of material goods for the satisfaction of their needs – play an important role, in shaping their social, political, intellectual and ethical relationships. Marx applied dialectics to the material or social world consisting of economic production and exchange. A study of the productive process explained all other historical phenomena. Marx noted that each generation inherited a mass of productive forces, an accumulation of capital and a set of social relations which reflected these productive forces. The new generation modified these forces, but at the same time, these forces prescribed certain forms of life, and shaped human character and thought in distinct ways. The mode of production and exchange was the final cause of all social changes and political revolutions. Marx considered matter as being active, capable of changing from within. It was not passive, needing an external stimulus for change, a conception found in Hobbes.

The theory begins with the 'simple truth, which is the clue to the meaning of history that man must eat to live'. His very survival depends upon the success with which he can produce what he wants from nature. Production is, therefore, the most important of all human activities. Men in association produce more than men in isolation, and society is thus the result of an attempt to secure the necessities of life. But society has never accomplished that to the satisfaction of all its members, and has in consequence, always been subject to internal stresses and strains. The Marxian interpretation of human history is economic. Marx saw evolutionary changes in the ethical, religious, social, and ideas, and therefore, action are subject to endless change. The chief motive force which brings about this change in human beings is not the Hegelian idea but the material conditions of life. Human history, therefore, has a material basis.

The Marxist perspective postulates that the structure of society may be understood in terms of its base (the foundation) and superstructure (the external build-up). The base consists of the mode of production while the superstructure is represented by its legal and political structure, religion, morals, social practices, literature, art and culture etc. The mode of production has two components—forces of production and relations of production. Forces of production cannot remain static; they have an inherent tendency of development in the direction of achieving the perfect society. Forces of production have two components—means of production (tools and equipments) and labour power (human knowledge and skills). Men and women constantly endeavour to devise better ways of production. Improvement in the means of production is manifested in the development of technology. This is matched by development of human knowledge and skills as required to operate the new technology. Hence, there is the corresponding development of labour power. On the other hand, relations of production in any given epoch are given by the pattern of ownership of means of social production. This gives rise to two containing classes – haves and have-nots.

Marx talked of four stages of human history—ancient times, medieval times, modern times and future society based on communism. In earlier stages of historical development, development of the forces of production fails to make any dent in the pattern of ownership. In other words, changes in the mode of production bring about changes in the nature of contending classes but they do not bring about an end of the class conflict. Change in the nature of contending classes is itself brought about by a

social revolution. When material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, these relations turn into their fetters. The new social class which comes to own new means of production, feels constrained by these fetters and overthrows the old dominant class in a revolution. As a result of social revolution, an old social formation is replaced by a new social formation. In this process, world contending classes are replaced by new contending classes but class conflict continuous on a new plan. This has been the case still the rise of capitalism, which will be overthrown by a socialist revolution leading to the eventual emergence of classless society.

Marx, in his analysis of history, mentioned the important role of ideology in perpetuating false consciousness among people, and demarcated the stages which were necessary for reaching the goal of communism. In that sense both the 'bourgeoisie' (the capitalist wealth owning class) and the proletariat (the working class) were performing their historically destined roles. In spite of the deterministic interpretation of history, the individual had to play a very important role within the historical limits of his time, and actively hasten the process.

Marx had a very powerful moral content in his analysis, and asserted that the progress was not merely inevitable, but would usher in a perfect society free of alienation, exploitation and deprivation. His materialistic conception of history emphasis the practical side of human activity, rather than speculative thought as the moving force of history. In the famous speech, Engels claimed that Marx made two major discoveries—the law of development of human history and the law of capitalist development.

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. State the three laws of dialectics as developed by Engels.
2. Who provided a detailed description of dialectical materialism?
3. What does the Marxist perspective say about the structure of society?

## 2.3 ALIENATION AND CAPITALISM

Marx's thinking on this topic is rich and resists neat systematization. According to Marx, what is vital for the self-worth of human beings and the meaningfulness of their lives is the development and exercise of their essential human powers, whose focus is labour or production. Since these powers are historical in character, varying from society to society and (on the whole) expanding in the course of history, the degree to which alienation is a systematic social phenomenon also varies, as a function both of what society's productive capacities are and of the extent to which the human potentialities they represent have been incorporated into the lives of actual men and women. Generally speaking, the degree of systematic, socially caused alienation in a society will be proportional to the gap which exists in that society between the human potentialities contained virtually in society's productive powers and the actualization of these members. Thus the possibilities for alienation increase along with the productive powers of society. For as these powers expand, there is more and more room for a discrepancy between what human life is and what it might be. There is more and more pressure on social arrangements to allow for the lives of individual human beings to share the wealth of human capacities which belong to social labour. Marx's criticism of capitalism make it clear that he regards it as a social system in which social arrangements have failed utterly to accommodate the

### NOTES



potentialities for self-actualization which the social powers of production have put within people's reach.

According to the *Communist Manifesto*:

## NOTES

The bourgeoisie during scarcely a hundred years of its rule has created productive powers more massive and colossal than all past generations together. The subjection of nature's powers, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam navigation, railways ... what earlier century dreamed that such productive powers slumbered in the womb of social labor? (1) In contrast to this unprecedented progress at the level of social production, capitalism has utterly failed to translate its expanded powers into expanded opportunities for individual self-actualization. It has diminished rather than increased the extent to which individual laborers, their intelligence, skills and powers, participate in the potentialities of social production, as well as sharply limiting the extent to which the laboring masses share in its fruits. As Marx puts it in *Capital*: Within the capitalist system all methods of raising the productive power of labor are effected at the cost of the individual laborer ... they mutilate the laborer into a fragment of a human being, degrade him to an appendage of a machine, annihilate the content of this labor by turning it into torture; they alienate from him the mental and spiritual potentialities of the labor process in the same measure as science is incorporated into it as an independent power. (2) How do capitalist social relations frustrate the human need for self-actualization? Self-actualization and spiritual fulfillment usually do not mean much to people whose more basic physical needs are still unsatisfied. And it is an important tenet of Marx's theory that capitalism cannot exist without imposing a brutalizing poverty on a sizeable proportion of the human race. There are a number of passages in which Marx appears to be saying that the downfall of capitalism is inevitable not because under capitalism people are alienated or spiritually unfulfilled, but simply because beyond a certain point capitalism will prove incapable of supplying the working population with the basic conditions for physical survival. The bourgeoisie, he says, becomes 'incapable of ruling because it is incapable of securing its slaves even their existence within their slavery'. The proletariat will overthrow capitalism (and with it alienation) not in order to lead more fulfilling lives but merely in order to be certain of survival. Marx does, however, identify some features of capitalist social relations which lead specifically to the crippling of people's powers and the frustration of their needs for self-actualization. One principal theme in Marx's account of the way capitalism 'robs workers of all life content' is the special manner in which it accentuates the division of labor. Modern capitalist manufacture, says Marx, is carried on increasingly by a 'collective laborer', whose actions are the carefully engineered result of the activities of many men, women and children. The labor process is carefully analyzed, its various operations are 'separated', 'isolated', 'rendered independent', and then 'laborers are classified and grouped according to their predominant properties. If their natural specificities are the basis for grafting them onto the division of labor, manufacture, once it is introduced, develops labor powers which are by nature fitted only to a one-sided special functioning.' In this way, 'the individual laborers are appropriated by a one-sided function and annexed to it for life ... The habit of a one-sided function transforms them into its unfailing organ, while their connection with the collective mechanism compels them to operate with the regularity of the parts of a machine.' Yet 'the one-sidedness and even the imperfection of the detail laborer comes to be his perfection as a member of his collective laborer'. But the process of capitalist manufacture not on of the well-rounded variety of powers and activities which they need to be full human beings; it also tends to render their specialties themselves more and more mechanical, dehumanizing in nature, less and less a matter of developed skills or powers: 'Every process of production is conditioned by certain simple manipulations of which every human being who stands and walks is capable. They too are cut off from their fluid connection with the content-

possessing moments of activity and ossified into exclusive functions.' Consequently, capitalist manufacture creates a positive need for mechanical, 'unskilled' labor, a need unknown to pre-capitalist handicraft manufacture: 'If it develops a one-sided specialty into virtuosity at the cost of the whole laboring faculty, (capitalist manufacture) also makes the absence of development into a specialty ... In (capitalist) manufacture the enrichment of the collective laborer, and hence of capital, is conditioned by the impoverishment of the laborer in his individual productive powers.' It is plain that Marx blames capitalist social relations, and not the technical requirements of modern industry, for the fragmentation of human beings and the impoverishment of their individual powers.

Capitalist society is characterized fundamentally by the fact that the means of production are privately owned by a minority of the members of society who, acting largely independently of one another, tend to employ these means in such a way as to maximize the profit each earns on the investment. The nature of the means of production, moreover, is to a considerable extent at the discretion of this capitalist class, since their investment choices ultimately determine the selection of these means from the range of possibilities afforded by the technical capabilities of society, and even exercise a certain influence on the rate and direction of technical developments. These choices, moreover, are in the long run not arbitrary or at the mercy of individual capitalists, but are tightly constrained through or at the mercy of individual capitalists, but are tightly constrained through competition with other capitalists by the requirement of profit maximization. Those capitalists who choose methods of production which maximize profits will survive and flourish; those who make different choices will lose their capital and the social power it represents. But the division of labor and the nature of individual laboring activity are largely determined by the means and techniques labor must employ. Hence under capitalism the factors which determine the life activities of the laboring majority are not in its hands but in the hands of a minority whose interests are opposed to its own; and the choices made by this minority are constrained by a principle (profit maximization) which deprives people of the well-rounded variety of powers and activities which they need to be full human beings; it also tends to render their specialties themselves more and more mechanical, dehumanizing in nature, less and less a matter of developed skills or powers. Consequently, capitalist manufacture creates a positive need for mechanical, 'unskilled' labor, a need unknown to pre-capitalist handicraft manufacture. It is plain that Marx blames capitalist social relations, and not the technical requirements of modern industry, for the fragmentation of human beings and the impoverishment of their individual powers.

In *Capital*, Marx argues in detail that there is no such happy coincidence, that it is just the kind of production dictated by profit maximization which has led to the alienating division of labor he describes. Marx believes that far from being incompatible with the technical requirements of modern industry, the potentiality for varied, well rounded human activity is inherent in modern scientific manufacture itself, and will begin to appear naturally as soon as production comes to be regulated consciously by the workers instead of being driven blindly by dead capital's vampire-like thirst for profit at the expense of human life. 'The nature of large industry', he says, 'conditions change of labor, fluidity of function, all-sided mobility of the laborer'. Every step in technical progress demonstrates this fact by changing the laboring function required for manufacture, thus rendering whole categories of detail laborers (who have been trained only for one function) productively superfluous, and (under capitalist conditions) doing away with their only marketable skill. 'Change of labor' and 'fluidity of function' are not, however, inherently destructive or crippling. On the contrary, they represent precisely the potentiality for all-sided human development whose suppression under capitalism is a chief cause of alienation: But if change of labor now imposes itself as an overpowering natural law ... large industry through its catastrophes makes it a question of life or death to recognize the change of labor and hence the greatest

## NOTES



## NOTES

possible many-sidedness of the laborer as a universal law of social production, and adapt its relation to the normal actuality of this law; ... to replace the partial individual, the mere carrier of a detail function, with the totally developed individual, fit for the changing demands of labor, for whom different social functions are only so many modes of activity relieving one another.

**Capitalism and Freedom**

Marx's adherence to this notion of freedom is explicit: to be free 'in the materialistic sense' is to be 'free not through the negative power of avoiding this and that, but through the positive might of making one's true individuality count'.

In most modern thinkers before Marx, however, the conception of positive freedom is given a predominantly individualistic and moralistic interpretation. To be sure, they note that the exercise of this freedom requires the satisfaction of certain social (especially political) conditions. But they conceive self-determination itself chiefly as the inner volitional disposition of individual human agents, their mastery over their impulses and passions through rational self-knowledge and moral fortitude. Given Marx's materialist conception of human beings as socially productive beings, he cannot be content with an introverted, spiritualistic sort of self-determination. For Marx, true self-determination must rather consist in the imposition of human control on the social conditions of human production.

Marx insisted that social institutions and relations of production are not facts of nature but historically transient social forms which are the products of human activity every bit as much as wheat, cloth or machinery. He does so in part to give the lie to those who would defend existing institutions by declaring them unalterable; but his purpose is also to make clear how much is required if human beings are to have genuine freedom or self-determination. If social relations are human products, then people cannot be accounted free until they create these relations with full consciousness of what they be (as Locke says) subject to the arbitrary will of others; it requires also that the social relations in which they stand should be products of their own will. To recognize this fully is already to see through the sophistry which represents capitalist society as free because its relationships result not from coercive laws or the will of rulers but (apparently) by accident, from unregulated economic decisions made by individuals.

Freedom for Marx requires the conscious production of people's social relations, it is something which can be achieved only in community with others, and cannot be attained by retreating into oneself or by the exercise of one's self-determination within the confines of a jealously guarded 'private domain' in which society does not interfere. Yet Marx does not neglect to emphasize the complementary point that no society can be free unless it 'gives to each the social room for his essential life expression'. There can be no genuine freedom unless men and women have the opportunity to exercise choice over their own lives and develop their individuality fully and freely. Marx is the consistent foe of political repression, press censorship and other such measures which curb the free development and expression of individuals. He has only contempt for any brand of communism which would turn the state or community into 'the universal capitalist' by imposing a uniform, impoverished mode of life on all members of society alike. There can be no doubt that for Marx individual liberty is necessary to a free society. But it is equally evident, to Marx at least, that the liberty proclaimed by bourgeois liberalism is not sufficient for genuine (that is, positive) freedom. Human freedom can be attained only when people's social relations are subject to conscious human control.

## NOTES

Therefore, it is only in communist society that people can be truly free, because human control over social relations can only be collective control, and only in communist society can this control be exercised by and for all members of society: Communism, says Marx, 'consciously treats all natural (*naturwüchsig*) presuppositions as creations of earlier human beings, divesting them of their natural character (*Naturwüchsigkeit*) and subjecting them to the might of the united individuals'. Only communist society can do this, because communist society will be a classless society, in it people will 'participate in society just as individuals'.

Further, because individual self-expression and self-actualization are possible only through the capitalist division of labour, even individual freedom will become possible only with the collective human control over people's conditions of life. Only within the community has each individual the means of cultivating his abilities on all sides; hence personal freedom becomes possible only within the community. Marx does not conceive of social control over the means of production as the exclusion of individuals from ownership of what they produce and use. On the contrary, it is capitalism which involves such exclusion, since it delivers the means and objects of production over to a class of non-workers. Communism, as Marx sees it, will be a system of 'individual property for the producer', based on 'cooperation and the possession in common of land and the means of production'. The means of production must be owned collectively, because in modern industry labour is directly social, and the disposition of the means of production is always an act affecting society as a whole. Such acts, in Marx's communism, will be performed consciously. Decisions about them will be made democratically, by society as a whole, and not by a privileged class, acting contrary to the interests of the labouring majority and subject to the alien constraint of profit-maximization. Marx's critique of capitalism is based on some familiar philosophical value conceptions such as self-actualization and positive freedom.

Most of these issues are empirical ones, but this does not mean that they are clear cut or easily resolved. Any assessment seasoned with the proper scholarly caution would probably be inconclusive. It is unlikely that anyone, in Marx's time or today, knows enough to be entitled to a strong opinion for or against what Marx says about alienation and its social causes. If many people do hold strong opinions, this is largely because the only alternative to committing oneself in practice for or against Marx would be to take no effective stand whatever on the social reality around us.

Marx's account of alienation in capitalist society aims at substantiating three principal theses:

1. The vast majority of people living under capitalism are alienated.
2. The chief causes of this alienation cannot be removed so long as the capitalist mode of production prevails.
3. Alienation as a pervasive social phenomenon can and will be abolished in a post capitalist (socialist or communist) mode of production.

These three theses are obviously interrelated. Here, (1) is more or less presupposed by both (2) and (3). But (1) itself, as Marx understands it, is also dependent on (2) and (3), and on his grounds for holding them. In support of (1), a Marxist might cite widespread feelings of disorientation and dissatisfaction among people living in capitalist societies, or he might point to the preoccupation of philosophers, artists, social thinkers and popular consciousness with the problem of alienation, whether in an overtly Marxian or in various non-Marxian forms. But these considerations, however well substantiated, would not strictly show that alienation, as Marx understands it, exists in capitalist society.



## NOTES

By the same token, a critic of Marx cannot successfully rebut (1) merely by arguing that people in capitalist societies are on the whole satisfied with their lives, even if a convincing case for this could be made out. Alienation, as Marx conceives of it, is not fundamentally a matter of consciousness or of how people in fact feel about themselves or their lives. Alienation is rather a state of objective unfulfillment of the frustration of really existing human needs and potentialities. The consciousness people have of this unfulfillment is merely a reflection of alienation, at most a symptom or evidence of it. Marx's real grounds for believing that people in capitalist society are alienated is not that they are conscious of being alienated, but rather the objective existence of potentialities for human fulfillment that must be frustrated as long as the capitalist mode of production prevails. Marx has no very definite conception of post-capitalist society or of the possibilities for fulfillment which he believes will be actualized in it. Hence Marx does not believe (3) because he has some clear idea of the ways in which socialism or communism will provide people with opportunities for self-actualization. Rather, he seems to believe because he is confident that people can achieve a fulfilling life when the main obstacles to it are removed, and because he thinks he has identified these obstacles: they are the outmoded social relations of the bourgeois society.

Marx's confidence in the human potential of modern science and technology is initially plausible. To reject it is to embrace the paradox that increasing people's powers, their self-understanding and their interdependence has no tendency to enrich their lives, their freedom and their community. The burden of proof seems to be on anyone who would defend such paradoxes. It is not obvious that events in our century have rendered them more defensible than they were in Marx's time. Especially important for Marx's conception of our potentialities for freedom is his belief that the values of individuality and community are reconcilable, that post-capitalist society can simultaneously achieve greater individual autonomy and greater social unity than people's productive powers and social relations have hitherto permitted.

Marx's critics have been particularly suspicious of his silence concerning the social decision procedures through which free individuals are to achieve the rational and collective regulation of their associated labour. At least since Rousseau, philosophers and political theorists have set themselves the problem of finding a form of human association which could unite individuals, putting the common might of society at the disposal of each while at the same time leaving all completely free to follow a self-chosen plan of life.

Marx does say very little about the political or administrative structure of post-capitalist society, beyond insisting that it will be democratic, and will involve control by 'society itself' rather than by a separate political mechanism or state bureaucracy. Fundamentally, nonetheless, he does not view the problem as a procedural one. For Marx, the main impediment both to individual freedom and social unity is the division of society into oppressed and oppressing classes. Evidently, as long as we tacitly assume a class society, the objectives of freedom and community will look both disjointedly unattainable and diametrically antagonistic. In a society where one individual's freedom is not essentially another's slavery, and where people have no objectives to use community as an excuse for advancing some people's interests at the expense of others, questions of social decision-making will not appear to people in the form of theoretical paradoxes or unsolvable technical problems.

## NOTES

Marx also refuses to address himself to procedural questions because he regards them as premature. Such questions presuppose that we who ask them are all people of good will, pursuing a disinterested search for the right way to live together. They presuppose also that the object of such a search is, at least in its fundamentals, something which can be determined independently of detailed information about the technical resources available to society as regards its material production. Both presuppositions, in Marx's view, are false. As long as class society persists, the viability of any political mechanism will necessarily be a function not of its suitability for promoting genuine liberty or community, but only of the class interests it serves. Only after the abolition of class society can people begin to decide, on the basis of the productive capacities then at their disposal, how they will live together as free individuals. We have been considering challenges to Marx's account of capitalist alienation based on the denial that people in capitalist society are really alienated. But many of Marx's critics might be prepared to admit that alienation is a serious problem of modern society. The question remains whether it is capitalist social relations as such which are responsible for it.

Marx does believe that alienation can be overcome in a modern, complex and industrialized society. But he is not necessarily committed to denying that there might be other causes of alienation than those specifically identified by his theory. The main burden of Marx's message is that capitalist social relations are the most pervasive and obvious cause of alienation, which must be abolished first, before lesser or more hidden causes can be dealt with. But there is no reason why Marx might not grant that such traditional social ills as religious fanaticism, racism and sexual oppression also contribute to alienation, and would have to be fought against even under socialism. Marx's explanation of alienation might also be challenged in some of its details. It is arguable, for instance, that Marx's views about the capitalist division of labour, whatever truth they might have had in his own century, are now obsolete.

Certainly it would be difficult to maintain that capitalism still exhibits a tendency to turn all labour into the unskilled mechanical sort, to 'make the absence of development into a specialty'. But even if this point is no longer defensible, Marx's explanation of alienation in terms of the capitalist division of labour may still be tenable. For the constraint of profit-maximization may still exercise a powerful (and harmful) effect on the nature of labouring activity, and inhibit the development of a well-rounded humanity on the part of workers. If this is so, then Marx's explanation of alienation in terms of the capitalist division of labour may still be essentially correct, even if the specific details of his account are not. Marx is always the first to insist that capitalism is not an immutable system, but one which is undergoing constant change. It would not be inconsistent with his views to recognize that his account of alienation in 19th century capitalist society might not be applicable in detail to its descendants in later centuries.

### Commodity Production

The basis of all of Marx's work on social structures, and the place in which that work is most clearly tied to his views on human potential, is in his analysis of commodities. As Georg Lukacs put it, 'the problem of commodities ... central, structural problem of capitalist society' (1922/1968:83).

Marx's conception of commodity was rooted in his materialist orientation with its focus on the productive activities of actors. As we saw earlier, it was Marx's view that in their interaction with nature and with other actors, people always produce the objects

## NOTES

that they need in order to survive; objectifications is a necessary and universal aspect of human life. These objects are produced for use by oneself or by others in the immediate environment—they are use values. The objects are the products of human labour and cannot achieve an independent existence because they are controlled by the actors.

However, in capitalism this process of objectification takes on a new and dangerous form. Instead of producing for themselves or their immediate associates, the actors produce for someone else (the capitalist). The products, instead of being used immediately, are exchanges in the open market for money (exchange values). While people produce objects in capitalism, their role in producing commodities, and their control over them, becomes mystified. Initially they are led to assume that these objects and the market for them possess an independent existence. Thereafter this belief changes into reality as the objects and their market become real and independent phenomena. 'The commodity becomes an independent, almost mystical external reality' (Marx/1967:35).

### Fetishism of Commodities

With the development of commodities, arrives the process labelled by Marx as the fetishism of commodities. The basis of this process is the labour which gives commodities their value. The fetishism of commodities comprises the process by which actors forget that it is their labour which provides the commodities their value. They start believing that value is generated by the natural properties of the things themselves or that the impersonal operation of the market is the source of commodities value. Thus the market takes on a function in the eyes of the actors that in Marx's terms, 'A definite social relation between men ... assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things' (1867/1967:72). Granting reality to commodities and the market, the individual in capitalism progressively loses control over them.

Therefore, a commodity possesses a mysterious nature, just because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character imprinted on the product of that labour. It is because the relations of the producers to the sum total of their own labour are presented to them in the form of social relations that do not exist between themselves, but between the products of their labour.

The beauty of Marx's discussion of commodities and their fetishism is that it takes us from the level of the individual actor and action to the level of large-scale social structures. That is, people endowed with creative minds interact with other people and nature to produce objects, but this natural process results in something grotesque in capitalism. The fetishism of commodities imparts to them and to the marketplace an independent objective reality that is external to, and coercive of, the actor.

### Reification

The concepts of commodities and fetishism of commodities would appear to be of limited sociopolitical use. The concepts seem to be restricted to the economic realm, i.e., to the end result of productive activity. Yet productive activity can—indeed must—be looked at more broadly if we are to grasp the whole of Marx's meaning as well as its application to sociology. We need to understand that people produce not only economic objects (food, clothing, shelters) but also social relationships and, ultimately, social structures. Looked at in this way, the fetishism of commodities is translated into the broad concept of reification (Lukacs, 1922/1968). Reification can be thought of as the process of coming to believe that humanly created social forms are natural, universal and absolute and, as a result, those social forms do in fact acquire these characteristics. The concept of

## NOTES

reification implies that people believe that social structures are beyond their control and unchangeable. This belief often comes to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Then the structures actually do acquire the character people endowed them with. By using this concept, we can see that people reify not only commodities but also the whole range of social structures.

We can find the groundwork for a broader concept of reification in Marx's own discussion of labour. Basically Marx argued that as a social phenomenon, labour becomes a commodity under the peculiar circumstances of capitalism. 'Labor-power can appear in the market as a commodity, only if and so far as, its processor, the individual whose labor-power it is, offers it for sale, or sells it, as a commodity' (1867/1967:168). Once we admit the possibility of one social phenomenon (labour) becoming reified, it becomes possible for a wide range of other social phenomena to take on the same characteristic (Lefebvre, 1968:16). Just as people reify commodities and other economic phenomena (for example, the division of labour (Rattansi, 1982; Walliman, 1981) they also reify religious (Barbalet, 1983:47), political and organization structures. Marx made this point in reference to the state: 'And out of this very contradiction between the individual and the community the latter takes and independent form as the State, divorced from the real interest individual and community' (cited in Bender, 1970:176).

Marx had a few things to say about the range of reified social structures but he focused primarily on the structural components of the economy. It is these economic structures that Marx saw as causing alienation by breaking down the natural interconnectedness of people and nature.

### Capital

The most general economic structural element in Marx's work is capital or the capitalist system. As an independent structure, capital (through the actors who operate on his behalf, the bourgeoisie) exploits the workers, who were and are responsible for its creation. Marx talked of the power of capital appearing a power endowed by Nature—a productive power that is immanent in 'Capital' (1867/1967). Thus people tend to reify capital by believing that it is natural for the capitalist system that they have forgotten they produced through their labour and have the capacity to change 'by means of its conversion into an automation, the instrument of labor confronts the laborer, during the labor process, in the shape of capital, of dead labor, that dominates, and pump away, living labor-power' (Marx, 1867/1967:423). This is what led Marx to conclude that capitalism is an inverted world.

Before we get to a discussion of some of Marx's economic ideas, the reader should be reminded that this is a book in sociological, not economic, theory. Thus, the economic ideas are introduced in order to illustrate underlying and more basic sociological ideas.

### Circulation of Commodities

Marx discussed not only the character of capital in general but also the character of the more specific components of the capitalist system. For example, Marx examined the circulation of commodities, which he considered 'the starting-point of capital' (1867/1967:146). Marx discussed two types of circulation of commodities. Both represent the sum total of patterned economic relationships that are external to, and coercive of, the actor. One of these types of circulation—Money-Commodities-Money (M-C-M)—is characteristic of capital; the other—Commodities-Money-Commodities (C-M-C)—is not.

## NOTES

In the simple circulation of commodities, the circuit C-M-C predominates. An example of C-M-C would be the fisherman who sells his catch and then uses the money to buy bread. In a society characterized by the simple circulation of commodities, exchange is accomplished by 'the conversion of the commodity into money, and the re-conversion of the money into a commodity' (Marx, 1867/1967:105). This circuit, however, does not exist in isolation; it is inextricably interrelated to similar circuits involving other commodities. This type of exchange process 'develops a whole network of social relations spontaneous in their growth and entirely beyond the control of the actors' (Marx, 1867/1967:112).

The simple circulation of commodities that is characterized by the circuit C-M-C can be considered the second historical type of circulation of commodities. Barter is the first historical form. Both of these circuits eventually lead to the circulation of commodities under capitalism, which is characterized by the circuit M-C-M.

In the capitalist circuit, referred to by Marx as 'buying in order to sell' (1867/1967:147), the individual actor buys a commodity with money and in turn exchanges it for money. Here our hypothetical fisherman buys new nets with his profits in order to increase his future profits. This circuit, similar to the circuit under the simple circulation of commodities, is characterized by two antithetical yet complementary phases. At one and the same time, one person's purchase is another's sale. The circulation of commodities under capitalism begins with a purchase (new nets) and ends with a sale (a large catch of fish). Furthermore, the end of this circuit is not the consumption of the use value, as it is in the simple circulation of commodities. The end is money in an expanded form, money that is qualitatively identical to that at the beginning of the circuit but quantitatively different (Marx, 1867/1967:150).

The importance of the M-C-M circuit, from our point of view, is that it is an even more abstract process than C-M-C. The 'real' commodity declines in significance with the result that the essence of capital is reduced ultimately to the 'unreal' circulation of money. This greater abstractness makes reification easier, with the result that the system is even more likely to become external to and coercive of actors.

### Private Property

Marx also analysed the process by which private property becomes reified capitalism. In his view, of course private property, like the other structure components of capitalism, is derived from the labour of workers. 'Private property is thus the product, the result, the necessary consequences, of alienated labour of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself' (Marx, 1932/1964:117). However, workers lose sight of, ultimately control over, this fact instead of controlling private property; the workers are controlled by it. As with all other structural components of Marx's work, his conception of private property was directly related to his early work on human potential and action as well as to his political goals. In relating private property to his earlier work Marx made it clear that not only is private property the product of alienated labour but, once in existence, it in turn exacerbates alienation by imposing itself between people and the production process. If people are to realize their human potential, they must overthrow private property as well as all the other structural components of capitalist society: 'the positive transcendence of all estrangement—that is to say, the return of man to religion, family, state etc., to his human, i.e., social existence' (Marx, 1932/1964:136).

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

4. How does Marx define 'freedom'?
5. What do you mean by reification?
6. What are the two types of circulation of commodities?

## NOTES



## 2.4 SUMMARY

- While Marx and Engels shared a theoretical orientation, there were many differences between the two men. Marx tended to be a highly abstract thinker, a disorderly intellectual and very oriented to his family. Engels was a practical thinker, a neat and tidy businessman.
- Many Marxists considered Dialects Materialism as the theoretical source of several types of Marxism. Marx never used this name which refers to the societal and economic transformation born of the material forces. Usually it is seen as the mix of Historical materialism (or the 'materialist conception of history') a name specified to Marx style in the study of society, economics and history.
- Marxism is a fundamentally materialist philosophy because the foundation of it is the belief that the overall account of everything is matter which is characteristic of reality. If empirical study is able to identify the whole aspects of matter, therefore, matter is accepted as the beginning and ending of all reality.
- The Marxist conclusion is that everything 'contains two mutually incompatible and exclusive but nevertheless equally essential and indispensable parts or aspects'. The essential idea is that this union of opposites in natural world is the feature which makes every unit auto-dynamic in nature along with ensuring a continuous drive for movement and transformation.
- The law of negation was formed to explain this predisposition of natural world. Accordingly, Marx and Engels state that to organize to move forward or replicate a superior number, creatures are inclined in the direction of negating themselves.
- The law of transformation states that constant quantitative growth leads to changes in quality by 'leaps' in the environment, resulting in production of a totally new variety or creature. This is the way in which 'quantitative development becomes qualitative change'.
- Lenin was the foremost to provide a detailed description of dialectical materialism in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1908). It involves approximately three axes: (i) the 'materialist invention' of Hegelian dialectics, (ii) the historicity of moral philosophy designed to class conflict and (iii) the junction of 'laws of evolution' in physics (Helmholtz), biology (Darwin) and in political economics (Marx).
- Dialectical materialism was criticized by many Marxist academicians including Marxist thinkers like Louis Althusser or Antonio Gramsci who propounded a Marxist 'philosophy of praxis' in its place.
- Marx's thinking on this topic is rich and resists neat systematization. According to Marx, what is vital for the self-worth of human beings and the meaningfulness of their lives is the development and exercise of their essential human powers, whose focus is labour or production.
- One cause of alienation cited by Marx is the frustration or abortion of human potentialities by the capitalist division of labour. Another, perhaps even more prominent and fundamental in Marx's account, is the Alienation and Capitalism.
- The basis of all of Marx's work on social structures, and the place in which that work is most clearly tied to his views on human potential, is in his analysis of commodities.

## NOTES

## NOTES

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## UNIT 3 **KARL MARX**

### Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Unit Objectives
- 3.2 Class Conflict
- 3.3 Theory of Revolution and Other Concepts
  - 3.3.1 Transitional Proletarian State
  - 3.3.2 The Dictatorship of the Proletariat
  - 3.3.3 Surplus Value
- 3.4 Summary
- 3.5 Key Terms
- 3.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 3.7 Questions and Exercises
- 3.8 Further Reading

### NOTES

### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will learn about the Marxian discussion on the dialectical approach which he derived from Hegel and which in fact shaped all of Marx's work. Much of sociological thinking was dominated by the contrast of dialect with causal logic. The dialectic emphasizes that among the elements of social world there are no simple cause and effect relationships; fact and value do not seem to be divided clearly between a line; and there are no hard and fast dividing lines among phenomena in the social world. Marx devoted his attention to dialectical and critical analyses of capitalist society, despite his political orientation towards the creation of a communist society. His insights into actors and structure should be viewed in the context of his opinions on human nature, which is the basis for his critical analysis of the contradictions of capitalism. According to him, a disagreement exists between our human nature and work in the capitalist system. Workers get alienated from their labour because it does not belong to them, but rather to the capitalist. Marx put forward most of his opinions in response to the quick changes taking place in Europe as a result of industrialization, primarily in Germany. He also studied the nature of the structures of capitalism and their adverse affects on the actors. He also elaborated on the pivotal role played by commodities in capitalism. Marx used the term 'rectification' to explain the process whereby social structure becomes naturalized, absolute and independent of human action. In this context, it can be said that capital is the most reified components in a capitalist society.

### 3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the contribution of Marx's works towards the evolution and growth of sociological theory



*Karl Marx*

- Discuss the concept of dialectical materialism
- Analyse the various aspects of capitalism and its important constituents
- Explain the sociological elements involved in the process of commodity production

### 3.2 CLASS CONFLICT

According to Marxism, it can be easily stated that 'class is not' than to say what *class is*. A collection of persons having familiar characteristics is not a class. A case in point, the proletariat cannot be labelled as a collection of people 'as against capital'. In societal setting, class is not organizational or related to a particular 'place' (a position in society which a person may possibly 'occupy' or persons might be 'interpolated', etc.). The dissimilarity is insignificant one among 'empiricist' and 'structuralist' Marxism, which treat classes as crowds of persons or as 'places'. For the desire of an extra suitable expression we shall study the analysis which takes care of classes either as crowd of people or places as the 'sociological' formation of class.

For Marxists class was considered as a societal bonding 'like capital itself' (Marx 1965, 766). A bond is neither a collection of people even when there may be bonding in a specified collection of people or a position where a group may be formed or situated. Keeping away such ideas, it can be said that class is *the relation itself* (like the relationship between capital and labour) more particularly, *a relation of struggle*.

Therefore, classes as identified bodies in social context do not take part in the conflict. In fact the basic principle of *class* is *class struggle*. Even better, 'class struggle is class itself'. (This is the way Marx established 'class' in the beginning of *The Communist Manifesto*.) Marx noted that 'class struggle' is fundamental to 'class' by emphasizing that survival 'for itself'—which is the conflicting survival under pressure—is fundamental to the survival of 'class' (Marx 1969, 173).

Here we will talk about the origin of class as a bonding (a bonding of conflict) as the 'Marxist' origin of class: where, in addition to, it is easier to use this term. And on the other hand, disgracefully, the sociological origin of class comes up with the awkwardness that every person of bourgeois society is not clearly the integral part of the groups labelled 'capitalists' and 'proletarians'. The awkwardness is produced by the origin of classes as 'groups' or 'places' and to get away from this awkwardness sociological classes as 'middle strata', 'middle classes' and so on and Marxism has taken refuge in labels like 'middle strata', 'middle classes' and so on and these labels are residual or consisting of the collection of people and are academic fabrications created by poor theoretical system. On the other hand, Marxist origin of class comes across no such problems, which considers class-bonding (for example, capital-labour bonding) as organizing the lives of dissimilar persons in dissimilar ways.

What type of qualitative appearances can the composition of life take as a result of capital-labour bonding (which is again, a bond of conflict)? The type referred by Marx was that of 'exploitation/expropriation'. Additional varieties consist of 'inclusion/exclusion' (Foucault), along with 'incorporation/refusal', 'appropriation/expenditure' in addition to 'homogeneity/heterogeneity' (Bataille) and (Marcuse, Tronti). The listing is 'phenomenologically' long and indefinite.



## NOTES

There is a disparity among the Marxists and sociological analysis. As shown previously, Marxist observes the 'pure' labour (positioned at the farthest left-hand region), whose societal position (every one of dissimilar 'intermediate' forms) is not in any way at odds and in opposition to him, and he is by no means 'methodologically' advantaged; nor the 'pure' industrialist. Together they somewhat are viewed merely as forms fused together with each other in differently arranged multitude. Alternatively, the sociological observation takes care of the 'pure' labour in addition to the 'pure' industrialist like 'methodological pillars' suspended among the network of transitional classes.

According to Marx, this dissimilarity is significant as the 'pure' worker or labour does not exist. This is not for the reason of comparative reduction of the size of the 'traditional working class' (even if the particular hypothetically imagined collection of people is distinct). In fact, the opposite is true as the income bonding is a 'bourgeois and mystifying form' (Marx 1965 Part VI). And whosoever stays within its parameter, even and particularly the industrialist, who is a manufacturer of 'surplus value', lives a life separated with himself. His roots stay caught up in exploiting the labour while he dreams of idealist 'bourgeois' reality. Therefore, the series of class conflict goes all the way through the person who produces 'surplus-value'. Again, for the Marxist origin of class, bonding organizes in a hostile way. On the other hand, absence of the working class in its pristine form reduces the sociological origin of the class and brings it to the lowest level.

An additional marked divergence among the both formats of the Marxist view which states about a single class bonding (specifically, the capital-worker bonding) occurring in the present social order but the sociological proposal recognize numerous associations equal to the number of probable connections among societal space or collection of people. On this basis, the 'sociologists' lay blame on the 'Marxists' of decreasing societal divisions. In fact, sociologists have to be blamed of the charge of decreasing on these lines. The sociologists desire to place every person explicitly with no remnants in single or otherwise extra particular crowds or situations: a 'cross categorical' person is not capable of emerging within the depiction drawn by the sociologists.

The basis of sociologists' increase of societal divisions into various levels like 'middle class' 'new petty bourgeoisies', and so on is to search a clearly consigned slot for every person. Therefore, there exist specifically the patterns in which the expressions of class and the persons are alienated among themselves—the numerical complexity of the pattern system in which the 'geological fracture-line' of the conflict of class is present throughout is not just among person but casts a shadow on the hypothesis as well.

An associated position of Marxist origin is that class is not inter-

An associated position of Marxist origin is—different from that of sociologists—that class is not interpreted in the expression of attitude having anyone of various societal responsibilities. Since his earliest work '*On the Jewish Question*' and beyond, Marx criticized any societal environment where classification of the responsibilities is acquired as 'alienated' and not liberated. Far from marking the classification of responsibilities as a procedural theory, Marxian outlook of class portrays the person as a location of conflict; the individual conflict results in not merely as the 'universal' (attitude of responsibility and collectively alike), however in addition 'particular' (distinctive and in social context diverse) proportion of individualism participation. Neither theoretically nor practically has the classification of responsibilities liked 'proletarian' or 'bourgeois' (otherwise definitely 'man' or 'woman' or 'citizen') symbolizes the explanation of Marx; quite oppositely they form at the same time as one amongst the many tribulations which 'class' within its descriptions is proposed to solve.

## NOTES

While among the Marxist and the sociological origins of class, again one more spot of dissimilarity is, naturally, political. The sociological outlook promotes policy of coalitions among classes and portions of class: along with it gives emphasis to the 'pure labourer's class an advantaged—important and dominant—political character. In Marxist outlook, there is impossibility of these types of coalitions. The 'pure' labourer class (a person in a job as compared to jobless, the 'direct' manufacturers of 'surplus value' compared to the 'indirect' manufacturers, the 'proletariat' compared to the '*lumpen proletariat*') does not have politically a procedural advantaged position, as these 'places' do not subsist. There is no issue of assigning to 'rising' as compared to 'declining' classes to domination of radical significance or power: these terms only make sense as soon as classes are viewed as positions or as collectivity of people. Lastly, the entire idea of forefront political party (added with its watered down variations) is reversed as the dissimilarities among 'advanced' plus 'backward' class fundamentally fade away amid the sociological origin of class.

However, classes are not collectivity of people or positions except bonds of conflict, therefore radical struggle obtains the shape of struggle among the collectivity (for all times it happens improperly and contaminatedly) which is implicitly the result of class conflict. It is not implicitly sociological as in the case, the appearance of 'pre given' classes—next to very last—interested more in already known academic and opinionated 'truth'. The issue facing the person is not on *whose* region however relatively, on *which* region (which region of class bonding) he or she is situated; and yet this concluding query is not implicitly the collective preference among the surviving positions or responsibilities. Not merely, in terms of quantity as well as in terms of quality, the characteristic feature of conflict of class is natural inconsistency. The focal point of the Marxist origin of class penetrating the question of alternatives by means of which class conflict deals with us and in this procedure forbids plea to whichever responsibility or position or collectivity of people in which (according to sociology) we are by now situated *prior to* whatsoever our decisive promise we want to make.

One can obtain sociological knowledge from Marx's manuscripts if there is a desire. Marx was not at all times a socialist, positively and particularly in his political works. In the 'two great camps' origin of class promoted in *Communist Manifesto*, the consequences of building the Marxist origin of class lie in outrightly sociological logic. A long time before his detractors and 'revisionists' criticized, it was Marx who wrote that with the growth of capitalism it was expected that the 'middle classes' would numerically increase. Marx, nevertheless, wrote a book labelled *Capital*, which had a single class bonding (the capital-labour bonding) which was academically 'object' addressed. This mystery can be solved merely by focusing on his comment regarding the 'middle classes' to be sociological and by means of evaluating the major argument of *Capital* as Marxist in the above mentioned logic.

The sociological origin of class, every time it needs to set up Marxist identification, forever turns into 'economic-determinist'. This is for the reason that the single 'indicator' of class link ('class' at this point being viewed again as a position or collectivity of people) is, according to Marx's work, the universal bonding to the 'means of production'. In addition to being bonded to the 'means of production', nevertheless persons are part of a class, and locate themselves bonded to the state and to 'ideology' and also to the local church and so on. Therefore, the sociological origin of class produces a system of detached societal 'levels' or 'practices' or 'instances' (Althusser) and has to tackle the query of how these 'levels' are linked. The reply is familiar: in the last instance 'the economic movement asserts itself as necessary'. In additional terminology, sociological



## NOTES

Marxism totals to a fiscal conclusion with lengthy and intricate 'deterministic' series. To assert that, as Althusser did, such a premise is no longer fiscal is like maintaining that a machine is no longer machine due to the asset of number of cogwheels its motor drives.

The whole thing is dissimilar to the Marxist origin of class. Marx's difference among class 'in itself' and 'for itself' is in use as unique, not among the ranks of society but among the sociological and the Marxist origins of class itself: if a class turns out to be as soon as it is 'for itself' subsequently *political struggle* by means of all its erratic consequences and growth and expenses previously put together into what sociological Marxists identify as fiscal 'base'. While sociological Marxists try to unify ranks which it presumes to be separate and on the foundation of the threshold and difficulty can rely on the cause and effect and *external* associations nevertheless 'structural' (Althusser) variety; Marxist Marxism travels in the reverse direction and illustrates differences contained by an opposing entirety, i.e., inside an internally and destructively associated sum total: 'The concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence the unity of the diverse' (Marx 1973, 101). The *totality* of the class-relation which is specific to, for example, bourgeois society (the capital-labour relation) is present—wholly present, though in qualitatively different ways—in each of the individuals who form that society's *moments* or part. The essential thing was said long ago by the early Lukács: 'It is not the primacy of the economic motives in historical explanation that constitutes the decisive difference between Marxism and bourgeois thought, but the point of view of totality' (Lukács 1971, 27).

Alongside with 'the point of view of the totality', a completely new origin of *class politics* is initiated. Previously 'politics' is perceived as a separate societal rank; the confirming assessment of the survival of class 'for itself' develops into creation of a political association of almost traditional—meaning to say: 'a bourgeois'-type. It is viewed that still a forefront party is perceived to different 'bourgeois' idea. Nevertheless, the 'bourgeois' social order, not Marx differentiates among the ranks of political state and general social order—'On the Jewish Question'—and recommends the previous as the ground where the societal collection of people in their readiness may participate. In the added terms, Marxist origin of class, 'the point of view of totality' discards specifically the *narrowness* of the formation of politics which the sociological origin of class necessitates. On top of the Marxist perception, the classification of politics develops into extensive variety in which class conflicts erratically take place. Not only no subject is disqualified from the political program; the idea of political program is itself disqualified as this type of program disqualifies and brings to periphery all that which is not part of some tentatively conventional political sphere of influence.

The already mentioned explanations do not assert to the wholeness or to the condition of a justification of the origin of the class which have been tried systematically to be retold. They aspire to, somewhat, make it lucid about what the Marxist perception of class involves. As for the consideration of the assessment of this perception, the proposition may possibly be dangerous that the *only possible* way of analytical inquiry which appears to be productive that which enquires is the 'capital-labour relation' is the only and exclusive such bonding of conflict which, in every part of its fulfillment, constitutes our lives. And at this point there can be no doubt of replacing Marx: additional types of bonding (sexual and racial bonds, for example) are arbitrated all the way through the 'capital relation' just as for its fractions; it subsists as arbitrated all the way through them.

## NOTES

The first and foremost sociologist and economist of the capitalist regime was Marx. He had a certain notion of that regime, of the fate it imposed upon men, and of the progression it would go through. As sociologist-economist of the system, he had the capitalist view of the sociological issues; he had no exact image of what the socialist system would be, and he repeatedly said that man cannot know the future in advance.

From 1848 until the end of his life, Marx apparently ceased to be a philosopher and became a sociologist and, more of, an economist. He had received an excellent economic education and knew the economic thinking of his time a few men did. He was, and wanted to be, an economist in the strict and precise sense of the word.

*The Communist Manifesto* is a propaganda pamphlet in which Marx and Engels presented some of their scientific thoughts in combined form. The vital theme is the class struggle. They maintain that all history is the history of the class struggle: free men and slaves, patricians and plebeians, barons and serfs, master artisans and journeymen. In short, the oppressors and oppressed have been in perpetual conflict with one another and have carried on a relentless struggle, at times covert, at times open. It has always ended with a revolutionary change of the whole society or with the mutual devastation of the warring classes. Human history is characterized by the struggle of human groups called 'social classes', which are characterized in the first place by an antagonism between oppressors and oppressed and in the second place by an inclination towards a polarization into two blocs. All societies having been divided into warring classes, contemporary capitalist society does not vary from those that preceded it. However, the ruling and exploiting class of contemporary society, namely the bourgeoisie, presents certain characteristics which are without precedent.

The bourgeoisie is unable to maintain its superiority without permanently revolutionizing the instruments of production. According to Marx, the bourgeoisie has developed the forces of production more in a few decades than previous societies have done in many centuries. Engaged in heartless competition, the capitalists have revolutionized the means of production. The bourgeoisie is creating a global market; it is destroying the leftovers of the feudal system and the traditional communities. But just as the forces of production which gave birth to the capitalist regime had developed in the heart of feudal society, so the forces of production which will give birth to the socialist regime are ripening in the heart of modern society.

Marx did not deny that among capitalist and proletarians there are presently various in-between groups—artisans, petite bourgeoisie, merchants and peasant landowners. However, he made two statements. First, along with the development of the capitalist regime there will be an inclination towards crystallization of social relations into two groups: the capitalists on the one hand, and the proletarians on the other. Two classes, and only two, represent the possibility for a political system and an idea of a social system. On the day of the decisive conflict, everyone will be indebted to join either the capitalists or the proletarians. On the day when the proletarian class seizes power, there will be a final split with the course of all previous history. In fact, the hostile nature of all known societies will disappear.

Marx regarded politics and the state as phenomena less important to what is occurring within the society itself. He presented political power as the appearance of social conflicts. Political power is the means by which the ruling class, the exploiting class, maintains its control and its exploitation. The abolition of class contradictions must logically entail the disappearance of politics and of the state, because politics and the state are seemingly the by-products or the expressions of social conflicts.



## NOTES

The idea is that men enter into specific relations that are independent of their will; in other words, we can follow the progress of history by analysing the structure of societies, the forces of productions and the relations of production, and not by basing our explanation on men's ways of thinking about themselves.

In every society there can be a notable economic base, or infrastructure, as it has come to be called, and the superstructure. The infrastructure consists basically of the forces and relations of production, while within the superstructure there are the legal and political institutions as well as ways of thinking, ideologies and philosophies. The instrument of the historical movement is the opposition between the forces and the relations of production. The forces of production seem to be basically a given society's capability to produce, a capability which is a function of scientific knowledge, technological equipment and the organization of combined labour. The relations of production seem to be basically distinguished by relation of property. However, relations of production need not be known with relations of property; or at any rate relations of production may contain, in addition to property relations and distribution of national income (which is itself more or less strictly determined by property relations).

Now, let us turn from these conceptual formulas to the understanding of capitalism. In capitalist society, the bourgeoisie is attached to personal ownership of the means of production and therefore to a certain allotment of national income. On the other hand, the proletariat, which constitutes the opposite pole of society and represents another association of the collectivity, becomes, at certain moment in history, the representative of a new social organization which will be more progressive than the capitalist organization. This new organization will mark a later phase of the historical process, a more development of the forces of production, a stage in the path of a progressive history. This dialectic of the forces and relations to production also implies a theory of revolution. Revolutions are not political accidents, but the expressions of a historical necessity. Revolutions carry out crucial functions. They take place when the conditions for them are ripe.

Capitalist associations of production were first developed in the womb of feudal society. The French Revolution occurred when the new capitalist relations of production had achieved a certain level of maturity. And, at least in this passage, Marx foresaw an analogous course for the change from capitalism to socialism. The forces of production must be developed in the womb of capitalist society; socialist relations of production mature in the womb of the present society before the revolution which will mark the end of 'prehistory' is to take place. Mankind said Marx always takes up only such problem as it can solve. Marx not only distinguished infrastructure and superstructure; he also opposed social reality to consciousness. It is not men's consciousness that determines truth; on the contrary, it is the social reality that determines their consciousness. It results in an overall beginning in which men's ways of thinking must be explained in terms of social relations which they are a part of.

Finally Marx outlines

Finally Marx outlined the stages of human history. Like Auguste Comte differentiated stages of human growth on the basis of ways of thinking, so also Marx distinguished four of these or, in his expressions, four modes of production which he labelled as the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal and the bourgeois. The ancient, feudal and bourgeois modes of production have been realized in the history of the West. The ancient mode of production is characterized by slavery; the feudal mode of production is characterized by slavery and the serfdom; and the bourgeois mode of production by

## NOTES

income earning. They form their different modes of man's exploitation by man. The bourgeois mode of production constitutes the last opposed social formation because, or rather to the level that, the socialist mode of production, i.e., the connection of producer, no longer involves man's exploitation by man or the subordination of manual labourers to a class wielding both possession of the means of production and political power.

On the other hand, the Asiatic mode of production does not seem to form a period in Western history. The Asiatic mode of production characterizes a civilization different from the West. The Asiatic mode of production does not seem to be distinguished by the subordination of slaves, serfs or wage earners to a class possessing the means of production, but by the subordination of all the workers to the State. If this understanding of the Asiatic mode of production is accurate, the social organization would be characterized not by class struggle in the Western sense of the term, but by the exploitation of the whole society by the state or the bureaucratic class. We must accept the fact that according to Marx, in view of that each society is characterized by its infrastructure or mode of production, distinguished four modes of production, or four stages in the history of the mankind, preceding to the socialist mode of production, which is situated beyond prehistory.

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

7. What is the *Communist Manifesto*?
8. State the characteristics of the Asiatic mode of production.

### 3.3 THEORY OF REVOLUTION AND OTHER CONCEPTS

Marx knew that revolutionaries needed a new theory of history. So he took the best theory of history available, that of Hegel, and he stood it on its head. The result was a new theory of history as summarized by Marx in his preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* written in 1859. These ideas were all expressed in one of the great literary documents of the nineteenth century, *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848.

1948.

The manifesto declares that 'the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy'. The normal way for the proletariat to win the battle of democracy in a democratic state would be for the workers to form a political party, appeal to the electorate, and by ordinary electioneering method, to secure a majority in the national parliament. Political supremacy thus gained should be used to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organised as a ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible. This clearly shows that the process of socialising capital is bound to be gradual; capitalism cannot be destroyed in one stroke. In this gradual process, some despotic inroads on the rights of property recognised and protected in bourgeois states, as also on the conditions of bourgeois production, would have to be made. Without such inroads the mode of production cannot be revolutionised. The measures for affecting the revolution would of



## NOTES

course vary from state to state according to their circumstances, but the following are laid down as essential prerequisites for a communist society:

- Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
- Progressive or graduated income tax.
- Abolition of all rights of inheritance.
- Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.
- Centralisation of credit in the hands of the state by means of national banks with state capitals and an exclusive monopoly.
- Centralisation of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the states.
- Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the state.
- Equal liability of all to labour. Establishments of Industrial armies especially for agriculture.
- Combination of agriculture with industry.
- Free education for all children in public schools.
- Abolition of all children's labour in factories in all its present forms.

These measures of social reform are to be taken only after the workers have been able to acquire control of the state through political methods. Until that happens, the workers and their sympathisers could easily support the measures adopted by non-socialists towards ameliorating the condition of factory-workers; e.g. reducing hours of work, fixing minimum wages, factory acts, etc. Marx described the 'British Ten-Hours Act' of 1847, as a measure of great moral and economic benefit to the workers.

All this goes to show that the Manifesto contemplates a gradual though rapid transition from capitalist to the new socialist order. This transition is to be effected by the state which represents the power of the workers. It is likely that the strongly entrenched bourgeoisie may not allow the proletariat to win the battle of democracy peaceably and constitutionally and may place serious obstacles in the way of the proletarian government enacting and enforcing measures which hit it hard. Marx held that under such circumstances the workers would have to resort to organised force. The resistance of the bourgeoisie to the revolutionary proletariat which is bound to be stiff makes revolution inevitable. Marx could not find in history any instance where a major social or economic group freely abdicated in favour of its rival. On the assumption that the future will resemble the past, the Manifesto declares that the proletariat can achieve their ends only 'by the forcible overthrow of all existing social condition'.

Marx's programme is thus both evolutionary and revolutionary. It is evolutionary in so far as Marx held that the new socialist society would emerge gradually out of the capitalist society and as a result of the natural and progressive decay of the latter. It is evolutionary also in the sense that he held that the workers could attain their objectives by peaceful means in countries like England, USA and possibly Holland where democratic traditions exist. In the other countries where conditions are not so favourable, fundamental, social and economic change is impossible except by class war, violence and revolution. In so far as it holds that resort to violence and revolution is necessary for superseding the present system by a new one, it is definitely revolutionary. It should be remembered that it was the mission of Marx to make the working-class conscious of its miserable plight and exploitation under the capitalist system and to regard it as the inevitable

## NOTES

effect of the system and to tell the workers that their emancipation lay in their own hands. The programme of Marx is revolutionary in as much as it insists upon the irreconcilable antagonism between the interests of capitalist and labour and regards class war as an inexorable historic necessity. It is revolutionary also in the sense that it has 'no respect for vested interest incompatible with its ideal, and is ready to take any steps towards its goal when considerations of formal or traditional legitimacy'.

## Stages

The vital place which revolution occupies in the entire process by which the bourgeois system of production is to be replaced by the socialist in which the means of production are in the control and possession of the state would be better appreciated if we remember that Marx divides it into two stages.

The first stage is marked by the political revolution wrought by the middle class. Its purpose is to destroy the political superiority of the nobility and the clergy and win political power, first for the middle class and next for the mass of people. The political revolution tends to equalise civil liberties and destroy privilege. It is not its purpose to equalise economic difference or put power in the hands of the proletariat. For this purpose another revolution, namely, the proletarian, is needed. England had the first revolution in the seventeenth century which is known as the Bloodless Revolution of 1688. The Reform Act of 1832 also brought about a similar revolution. This revolution may be peaceful, but need not be so. The other type of revolution took place in Russia in 1918. It was accompanied by violence and force. According to Marx, real socialism cannot be established unless the proletarian revolution has taken place. We may say that his method is definitely revolutionary in the sense that it involves violence and force. It must however be remembered that the violent revolution which puts the proletariat in power and which ushers a new system of production is the final phase of the continuous struggle between the two classes. According to Marx, it can take place only when the way for it has been prepared by the development of the contraction inherent in capitalism, and the existing system of production has its vitality. It is unwise to force its phase in countries where the conditions are not ripe for it.

We may therefore conclude that whatever Marx might have said about the necessity of winning the battle of democracy as a part of the proletarian revolution, the entire trend of his argument is definitely revolutionary. He was convinced of the impossibility of reforming capitalism and of the inevitability of its violent overthrow.

## 3.3.1 Transitional Proletarian State

The working classes cannot simply seize the available ready machinery of the existing state and set in going for their own ends. The bureaucratic and military machine erected by the bourgeois must be completely smashed, and a new order must be set up in its place. This obviously takes time. Marx, therefore, contemplated a transitional stage between the conquest of power by the proletariat and the establishment of the new social order.

He writes: "Between Capitalist and Communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."



## NOTES

Unfortunately, Marx is reticent in regard to the organisation of the proletariat state which is to replace the capitalist order. Beyond laying down that the proletariat would organise itself as the ruling power after the capitalist state has been smashed, the *Manifesto* says nothing. But one thing is clear. The dictatorship of the proletariat would be as much a class organisation as the capitalist state, which it seeks to supplant; it would not be a free society and would retain certain features of the old order. It would preserve the coercive machinery of its predecessor. There are, however, two vital differences between it and the old regime. Whereas in the old capitalist state, the minority used political power to exploit and suppress the majority, in the new state it would be the majority which would expropriate the minority. In the second place, whereas the old capitalist state aimed at the maintenance of class distinctions and security of the owning class, the dictatorship of the proletariat would be as much a class organisation as the capitalist state, which it seeks to supplant; it would not be a free society and would retain certain features of the old order. It would preserve the coercive machinery of its predecessor.

In *Civil War in France* Marx gives us some details about the organisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletariat would set up its own centralised apparatus of force in order to complete the defeat of the capitalist class and defend the new order against attacks from enemies within and without. It would set up a totally new legislative authority, a proletarian judiciary and code of law, a new proletarian police and military force and the authority would remain with the proletarian party. In short, the bourgeois parliament, civil service, police, etc. would all be demolished and something new would take their place. What the Communists did in Soviet Russia after having wrested power was wholly in accordance with the Marxian view; they had to maintain the state organisation in order to defend themselves and preserve the new state against its enemies.

*In place of the old bourgeois society, with classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. (Mazlish, p.105)*

### 3.3.2 The Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The controversial and ambiguous concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat emerged in the writings of Marx and Engels as a result of a debate with the German Social Democrats, the Anarchists and more significantly from the practical experience of the Paris Commune of 1871. These observations had to be put together from the remarks solely made en passant and from different sources. The two major texts, however, were the *Civil War in France* and the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.

The concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat held the key to the understanding of Marx's theory on the nature of Communist society and the role of the proletarian state. It was a concept that divided the Marxists and Leninists from the Anarchists on the one hand and the Social Democrats on the other.

#### The Communist Manifesto

The phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" was not used in the *Manifesto*. Nor was there any mention of the complete elimination of the state power and the state machinery. Marx and Engels spoke about the "political rule of the proletariat", advising the workers to capture the state, destroy all privileges of the old class, and prepare for eventual disappearance of the state.

*We have seen above that first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class, to win the battle of*

*democracy.... The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of the production in the hands of the state, i.e. of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive force as rapidly as possible. (Marx 1975)*

## NOTES

Marx and Engels were convinced that the existing states, whether as instruments of class domination and oppression or rule by bureaucratic parasites on the whole society, would grow inherently strong and would remain minority states representing the interests of the small, dominating and powerful possessing class. It was only when the proletarian majority seized the state structure that the state assumed that it was powerful machinery which the proletariat had to contend with while preparing its revolution. In the later part of his life, Marx was convinced of the imperative need to destroy the state and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the initial stage, bearing in the example of the French Revolution of 1789, he anticipated a seizure of the existing state machine by the revolutionary proletariat; for he believed that political centralization would assist the revolutionary progress.

The initial "capture" thesis of the state, however, yielded to the "smash" thesis subsequently. The former viewpoint was articulated in the *Manifesto*, where the existing state structures would be used for revolutionizing the mode of production. The "smash" thesis was articulated in response to the experience of the Parisian Communards, as evident in the *Civil War in France* and the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. In a book review written around 1848-1849, Marx observed that the destruction of the state had only one implication for the suppression of the another Class. (Draper 1977)

In March 1850, the phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" replaced the habitually used phrase "rule of the proletariat". Marx and Engels stressed the notion of extraordinary power during an emergency for a limited period of time. Marx did not define, in any specific way, what the dictatorship of the proletariat entailed and what its relationship with the state was. It was "a social description, a statement of the class character of the political power. It did not indicate a statement about the forms of government authority" (Draper 1975). But for some scholars, the concept was both a statement of the class character of political power and a description of political power itself. "It is in fact the nature of political power which guarantees its class character". (Miliband 1965)

To Marx and Engels, the dictatorship of the proletariat was by the entire class, for revolution would be made by the masses themselves. In a series of articles written in *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, which were subsequently compiled under the title *The Class Struggles in France (1848-1850)* Marx contended that

*...The declaration of the permanence of the revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat as the necessary transit point to the abolition of the class distinctions generally to the abolition of all relations of production on which they rest, to the abolition of all social relations that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionizing of all the ideas that result from these social relations.*

Marx wanted to get rid of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. He saw the need to replace it with a dictatorship of the proletariat. And he saw this form of state as a necessary transition to the abolition of all classes into a classless society. Like the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the dictatorship of the proletariat could assume a myriad of political forms. It could be very democratic. The dictatorship of the proletariat is in its essence the use of state power to defend the interests of the working class, the poor, and the formerly oppressed. It defends collective ownership of property as a right. It defends the right to a job, the right to universal health care.



### 3.3.3 Surplus Value

#### NOTES

In a capitalist society, the ruling class acquires surplus value as a kind of profit. Since the ruling class owns the land and the factory machinery as private property, the worker is forced to sell the labour power to the capitalist to earn their livelihood. So, in this way, the capitalist becomes the owner of not just the means of production, but also a worker's labour power which he has acquired by paying wages, to use in production, as well as the final product. Once the owner-capitalist pays a worker's wages, he owns the surplus value, in addition to the value of the worker's labour value. In a capitalist society, the surplus value is a kind of capital and the surplus value takes the form of the essence of production in capitalism. Thus, the only productive work is work which creates surplus value and all other surplus work is done away with. A capitalist may raise the amount of surplus value obtained from the workers in two ways:

- Through the absolute surplus value method: by making the working day as long as possible.
- Through the relative surplus value method: by reducing wages.

A capitalist may try to increase profits by bringing in new techniques or new machinery which would help speed up production. However, these techniques become useless as soon the new techniques are copied by their competitors. The final outcome of these enhancements in production may be to increase the productivity of labour, but if the rate of surplus value is not increased simultaneously, the rate of profit will actually decrease.

#### Different Kinds of Surplus Value

Marx says that a thing has two different kinds of Surplus Value:

- Use-value
- Exchange-value

A person wants to buy bread, butter and cloth because of the use-value these things have for him. The use-value differs from man to man. While wine and meat have great use-value for some persons it has none at all for others. At one time cloth may have more use-value than bread while at other times it has less value for the same individual. The exchange-value of a commodity is generally expressed in terms of price, and is usually the same for all persons at a given time. According to Marx, it is determined by the amount of necessary labour required to produce it, and its amount is determined by the process of exchange. If the supply of a commodity is limited and the demand for it is great, its exchange-value rises. The difference between it and the value of the socially useful labour needed to produce it represents the surplus value which is appropriated by the capitalist. Even if the demand and supply of a commodity are balanced, it has a surplus value. The position may be represented thus: a worker works for ten hours and produces a commodity. Marx held that he does not receive wages for all the value he has created through his labour during the period. According to the Iron Law of Wages, a worker receives just the amount sufficient to maintain him. If we suppose that six hours of work each day are sufficient to produce enough for the worker to keep himself and his family alive, then the value produced by him during the remaining four hours represents the surplus value. It goes to his employer because the worker is working for more wealth than what he receives from his employers in the shape of wages. Because of the inherent viciousness of the capitalist system which separates the worker from the

tools, this difference is taken away by the capitalist who provides the tools and the raw materials.

#### Production of Absolute Surplus Value

With the growth of the capitalist economy production, for local consumption gave way to production for profit. Production for profit is thus an essential feature of the capitalist system. On the one hand, it required persons with enough resources to build workshop and factories and equip them with tools, machinery, etc. and on the other hand, a number of people who can be engaged to work in them because they do not own the means of production. The workers produce things, not for themselves, but for their employer who sell them for money and thereby makes profits. According to Marx, those who can own the material means of production and employs labour to work up the raw material make profits because they appropriate what he calls 'surplus value' (it consists of the difference between the exchange value of the product created by labour and the value of 'labour power'). Marx contends that in each factory or enterprise 'the wages paid to the workers are not equivalent of the full value they produce, even very less. The rest of the value produced by the worker during his working day is taken outright by his employer'. This excess value taken by the employer constitutes the 'surplus value'. It is the constant effort of the employer to increase its amount. These extra hours will create surplus value for the capitalist. This is the central point of Marx's theory of surplus value.

#### Production of Relative Surplus Value

As per Marx, the additional labour time that the worker spends to earn back for the capitalist the value for which the capitalist does not pay wages to the worker is translated into surplus value. The rate of surplus value is raised by increasing the length of the working day in order to extract surplus-labour on top of the specific amount of required labour. Conversely, surplus value can also be increased by cutting down the necessary labour time for a given day, which would mean that the value of the labour power would also fall. The surplus value derived from this method is known as relative surplus value, and is obviously different from absolute surplus value, which is an outcome of extending the working day.

#### Some Issues Concerning Surplus Value

It is called the theory of surplus labour and surplus value. In very simplified terms, surplus labour is profit. Things like rent, bills, wages, and other expenses are paid for through constant and variable capital (the two forms of capital described by Adam Smith). Marx took it one step further and described surplus value. When a worker spends say eight hours a day expressing himself through labour, he can produce large quantities of goods which lead to profit. However, the worker does not see any benefit of his labour; his wage has already been taken into account through constant capital. This inability to use, express, or see the benefit of labour leads to alienation, which causes the worker to stop seeing himself as a human being and he begins to see himself as merely an object.

It is not necessary to examine in any detail the Marxian theory of value and surplus value which 'has rather the significance of a political and social slogan than of an economic truth' (Max Beer quoted by Laski in his *Communism*, p.102). From the point of view of economists, the theory is unsound. And the assumptions on which it rests are false. It is not true that labour (by which Marx must mean wage labour, if the fact of

#### NOTES



## NOTES

exploitation is to be deduced from it) is the only value producing agency. There is no doubt that without labour capital remains unproductive; it produces value only when labour is applied to it. But it is equally true that labour would remain unproductive without capital. The labour of the entrepreneur, factory-manager and other people who work with their brains is as necessary as that of the manual labourer, skilled and unskilled. Laski points out that for Marx, the economist, all effort 'Whether of manager, financier, worker by hand or brain, which is socially necessary in the production of an article, goes to make up its exchange value', but he admits that Marx, the agitator, sometimes used sentences 'which seem to make his analysis more narrow than this'. But if we include in 'the socially necessary labour' which is required to create value the contribution of the manager, the financier, etc the injustice and exploitative character of capitalism disappears and Marx 'the agitator' is left with no stick with which to beat the capitalist. In the second place, the Iron Law of Wages which he borrowed from Ricardo is not valid. The 'labour power' of a worker is not a commodity like an article of furniture or a piece of cloth whose price is determined by the cost of producing it. Speaking of the 'labour power' in this way, Marx may be said to have treated value and surplus value in a highly abstract way. In his hand they do not remain concrete things but become pure abstractions. It is possible for one to reject Marx's theory of value and yet to hold that the labourer does not get his fair share under capitalism. It is this idea which constitutes the core of Marxism and not the theory of value.

## Conclusion

Marx created a theoretical system in which workers were paid based on the quantity of their labour, as well as the quality of their labour. Marx also took into account social necessity and the amount of schooling a person had received when determining wages.

Criticism of Marx is often done from a very ignorant position. The complaints of communism (or what people believe is communism) is often true of capitalism. Say I am a labourer working for minimum wage in the United States. No matter how I perform my job, I will only make minimum wage, so why should I work hard? Marx recognized this fault of capitalism in the 19th century. Hence the reason behind his theory of surplus value and social necessity which would help encourage people to work hard so they could see the full benefit of their labour. Most capitalists who fail to understand Marxism can be summed up in this statement: "A moralizing philistine's favourite method is the lumping of reaction's conduct (Stalin, for example) with that of revolution (Marx, Lenin, Trotsky...)." What philistines fail to understand is that capitalism was (and still is, but has revived a bit, as I will describe shortly) a dying system and it is thanks to bourgeois opportunists, claiming to be Marxists (Kautsky, Bernstein, etc.) taking Marxist principles, and using those ideas to prop up capitalism by being nothing more than traitors to the working class. Capitalism would have collapsed years ago if not for this treacherous use of Marxism.

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

9. When does the exchange value rise?
10. Who gets the surplus value in a capitalist society?
11. What is relative surplus value?

## 3.4 SUMMARY

- While Marx and Engels shared a theoretical orientation, there were many differences between the two men. Marx tended to be a highly abstract thinker, a disorderly intellectual and very oriented to his family. Engels was a practical thinker, a neat and tidy businessman.
- Many Marxists considered Dialects Materialism as the theoretical source of several types of Marxism. Marx never used this name which refers to the societal and economic transformation born of the material forces. Usually it is seen as the mix of Historical materialism (or the 'materialist conception of history') a name specified to Marx style in the study of society, economics and history.
- Marxism is a fundamentally materialist philosophy because the foundation of it is the belief that the overall account of everything is matter which is characteristic of reality. If empirical study is able to identify the whole aspects of matter, therefore, matter is accepted as the beginning and ending of all reality.
- The Marxist conclusion is that everything 'contains two mutually incompatible and exclusive but nevertheless equally essential and indispensable parts or aspects'. The essential idea is that this union of opposites in natural world is the feature which makes every unit auto-dynamic in nature along with ensuring a continuous drive for movement and transformation.
- The law of negation was formed to explain this predisposition of natural world. Accordingly, Marx and Engels state that to organize to move forward or replicate a superior number, creatures are inclined in the direction of negating themselves.
- The law of transformation states that constant quantitative growth leads to changes in quality by 'leaps' in the environment, resulting in production of a totally new variety or creature. This is the way in which 'quantitative development becomes qualitative change'.
- Lenin was the foremost to provide a detailed description of dialectical materialism in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1908). It involves approximately three axes: (i) the 'materialist invention' of Hegelian dialectics, (ii) the historicity of moral philosophy designed to class conflict and (iii) the junction of 'laws of evolution' in physics (Helmholtz), biology (Darwin) and in political economics (Marx).
- Dialectical materialism was criticized by many Marxist academicians including Marxist thinkers like Louis Althusser or Antonio Gramsci who propounded a Marxist 'philosophy of praxis' in its place.
- Marx's thinking on this topic is rich and resists neat systematization. According to Marx, what is vital for the self-worth of human beings and the meaningfulness of their lives is the development and exercise of their essential human powers, whose focus is labour or production.
- One cause of alienation cited by Marx is the frustration or abortion of human potentialities by the capitalist division of labour. Another, perhaps even more prominent and fundamental in Marx's account, is the Alienation and Capitalism.
- The basis of all of Marx's work on social structures, and the place in which that work is most clearly tied to his views on human potential, is in his analysis of commodities.

## NOTES



## NOTES

- The most general economic structural element in Marx's work is capital or the capitalist system. As an independent structure, capital (through the actors who operate on his behalf, the bourgeoisie) exploits the workers, who were and are responsible for its creation.

## 3.5 KEY TERMS

- **Dialectical materialism:** Dialectical materialism (sometimes abbreviated diamat) is a philosophy of science and nature, based on the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and developed largely in Russia and the Soviet Union.
- **Historical materialism:** Historical materialism is a methodological approach to the study of human societies and their development over time that was first articulated by Karl Marx (1818–1883) as the materialist conception of history.
- **Iron law of wage:** A law of economics which states that the real wages always run in the long run, toward the minimum wage necessary to sustain the life of the worker.

## 3.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Engels deduced the three laws of dialectics with his study of Hegel's Science of Logic. These are:
  - The rule of the harmony and disagreement of opposites
  - The rule of the course of quantitative transformations into qualitative transformations
  - The rule of the reversal of the reversal
2. Lenin was the foremost to provide a detailed description of dialectical materialism in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1908).
3. The Marxist perspective postulates that the structure of society may be understood in terms of its base (the foundation) and superstructure (the external build-up). The base consists of the mode of production while the superstructure is represented by its legal and political structure, religion, morals, social practices, literature, art and culture etc.
4. Freedom for Marx requires the conscious production of people's social relations, it is something which can be achieved only in community with others, and cannot be attained by retreating into oneself or by the exercise of one's self-determination within the confines of a jealously guarded 'private domain' in which society does not interfere.
5. Reification can be thought of as the process of coming to believe that humanly created social forms are natural, universal and absolute and, as a result, those social forms do in fact acquire these characteristics. The concept of reification implies that people believe that social structures are beyond their control and unchangeable.
6. Marx discussed two types of circulation of commodities. Both represent the sum total of patterned economic relationships that are external to, and coercive of, the actor. One of these types of circulation—Money-Commodities-Money (M-C-

M)—is characteristic of capital; the other—Commodities-Money-Commodities (C-M-C)—is not.

7. *The Communist Manifesto* is a propaganda pamphlet in which Marx and Engels presented some of their scientific thoughts in combined form. The vital theme is the class struggle. They maintain that all history is the history of the class struggle: free men and slaves, patricians and plebeians, barons and serfs, master artisans and journeymen.
8. The Asiatic mode of production does not seem to be distinguished by the subordination of slaves, serfs or wage earners to a class possessing the means of production, but by the subordination of all the workers to the State. If this understanding of the Asiatic mode of production is accurate, the social organization would be characterized not by class struggle in the Western sense of the term, but by the exploitation of the whole society by the state or the bureaucratic class.
9. The exchange-value rises when the supply of a commodity is limited and the demand for it is great.
10. The employer or the owner receives the surplus value in a capitalist society.
11. Surplus value that derives from a reduction in necessary labour-time is called relative surplus value.

## 3.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

## Short-Answer Questions

1. Give a brief note on the early life of Marx that shaped his overall approach in life.
2. State the basic elements of dialectical materialism.
3. State the 'Law of Transformation' in Marxist theory.
4. What do you mean by the Engels' law of dialectics?
5. Give the basic features of Asiatic mode of production.

## Long-Answer Questions

1. Define and discuss dialectics as a philosophical perspective, including how it differs from other approaches.
2. Define and discuss the notion of dialectical materialism.
3. What is the negation of negation?
4. What does Marx mean by the term 'alienation' and in what sense are workers alienated?
5. Discuss Marx's concept of labour and its role in capitalism.
6. What is a 'commodity'? How does it differ from an ordinary object?

## 3.8 FURTHER READING

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## NOTES



## NOTES

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## UNIT 4 VILFREDO PARETO

## NOTES

## Structure

- 7.0 Introduction
- 7.1 Unit Objectives
- 7.2 Life of Pareto
  - 7.2.1 Pareto's Economic Concepts
  - 7.2.2 Circulation of Elites
- 7.3 Residues and Derivations
- 7.4 Logical and Non-Logical Actions
- 7.5 Summary
- 7.6 Key Terms
- 7.7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 7.8 Questions and Exercises
- 7.9 Further Reading

## 4.0 INTRODUCTION

Pareto was an Italian economist and sociologist. He introduced several concepts in sociology that are used even today to explain the social movements, the structure of the society and also the societal history. His study of sociology developed the concept of Circulation of Elites which is a continuous process and is witnessed in every society.

Pareto also studied about human behaviour and the underlying factors which governed it. On the basis of his study, he further divided the human actions into logical and non-logical actions. These concepts are used even today and are helpful in studying how the society functions.

## 4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of elites and their circulation
- Analyse the meaning of residues and derivations
- Describe the concept of logical actions
- Explain the functioning of non-logical actions performed by humans

## 4.2 LIFE OF PARETO

Vilfredo Federico Damaso Pareto (1848- 1923) was an Italian engineer, economist, sociologist, philosopher and political scientist. Pareto was born in 1848 in Paris. He lived in middle class environment receiving high quality education. Pareto earned a doctor's degree from now what is called the Polytechnic University of Turin in the year 1869. After his graduation, Pareto worked as a civil engineer for some years for Italian Railway Company and later for a private company. During his career as a civil engineer, he worked as a manager for Iron Works of San Giovanni Valdarno and also as the general manager of Italian Iron Works. Pareto was a fiery liberal and most of the times attacked any form of government intervention in the free market. He showed interest in economics



## NOTES

in his mid forties. In 1886, he became a lecturer in economics and management at the University of Florence. During his stay in Florence, he attacked the government regulators and there was much political activity that kept him busy during his stay here. In 1893, Pareto became the chairperson of Political Economy at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland. In 1906, he made the discovery of the 80-20 rule according to which 20 percent of the population owned 80 per cent of property of Italy. This discovery was later generalized into the Pareto Principle. Though Pareto maintained cordial relationships with socialists, he believed that their economic ideas were flawed. He denounced the socialist leaders and believed that they wanted to despoil the country. He also launched labour in Italy. He was the first to realize that cardinal utility could be dispensed with and also introduced the notion of Pareto optimality. According to this notion, a system enjoys worse off.

Pareto studied sociology holding to the fact that much of social actions were non-logical and most person actions were designed to give spurious logic to the non-rational theories. He turned to sociology to understand why his abstract mathematical economic theories did not work out in practice and believed that one of the reasons for their failure was the intervention of social factors that were uncontrollable and unforeseen. According to Pareto, everyone is driven by certain residues and derivations from these residues. Pareto's sociology was introduced in the United States and had considerable influence on several sociologists who later developed many theories based on Pareto's findings.

#### 4.2.1 Pareto's Economic Concepts

Pareto as an economist made several important observations and introduced concepts that built a strong foundation for micro-economics that we study today. Pareto's concepts can be used successfully in several economic calculations and observations. Some economic concepts that were conceptualized by Pareto are used currently as well. These include:

- **Pareto's principle or Pareto's law:** In 1906, Pareto made an observation that twenty per cent of people owned eight per cent of wealth. Based on this observation he created a mathematical formula that described the unequal distribution of wealth in his country. The 80/20 Rule or Pareto's Principle means that in anything a few (20 per cent) are vital and the many (80 percent) are trivial. In 1940s, Dr. Joseph Juran working on a universal principle that he called 'vital few and trivial many' could not make precise conclusions and used Pareto's principle as a base to write his research and findings. The 80/20 Rule in Pareto's case meant 20 per cent of people owned 80 per cent of wealth. In Juran's initial findings, the 80/20 Rule meant that 20 per cent of defects caused 80 per cent of problems. The 80/20 rule can be applied to almost anything. It is today used as an effective tool to manage efficiently. Pareto's Principle reminds one to focus on the 20 per cent matters as these 20 per cent matters produce 80 per cent of the results. Currently, there is a management theory floating around Pareto's Principle to produce what is called Superstar Management. According to this theory, since 20 per cent people produce 80 per cent results, the focus should be on managing only the 20 per cent. The theory looks and sounds flawed because it overlooks the fact that 80 per cent of the time should be spent doing what is really important.

- **Pareto index:** The Pareto index is a measure of inequality of income distribution. Pareto believed that in all countries and time, the distribution of income and wealth is highly skewed with only a few holding most of the wealth. According to him all observed societies followed a regular logarithmic pattern:  $\log N = \log A + m \log x$ ; where N is the number of people who have wealth higher than x and A and m are constants.
- **Pareto's chart:** Pareto chart is a type of chart that has bars as well as lines. The individual values are represented in descending order by bars and the cumulative total is represented by a line. The purpose of Pareto's chart is to view the causes of a problem in severity from largest to smallest. The chart is used to statistically demonstrate and represent the 80/20 Rule.
- **Pareto distribution:** Pareto distribution is probability distribution used to describe social, scientific, actuarial and geo-physical phenomenon. It is used to mathematically realize Pareto's principle.
- **Ophelimity:** Ophelimity is an economic concept introduced by Pareto and is a measure of economic satisfaction. Pareto used this concept to use utility as a measure of broad based satisfaction that encompassed other dimensions as well. These included ethical, moral, religious and political dimensions. Pareto thus used utility in economic calculations.

#### 4.2.2 Circulation of Elites

Circulation of Elites is a theory of regime change. The theory was introduced by Pareto and is by far one of the most interesting concepts of his sociology. According to Pareto, and is by far one of the most interesting concepts of his sociology. According to Pareto, regime change or revolution took place when one elite was replaced by another and not when rulers were overthrown. Pareto believed that every individual was born with different abilities and so acquires different concepts, skills, aptitudes and attitudes. According to Pareto, classes existed in every society and so each society was heterogeneous. Pareto also believed that the heterogeneity in the society was achieved on the account of moral, mental, physical and cultural reasons. Heterogeneity was important in the society to maintain social balance and organization in the society. Pareto also believed that people were different morally as well as intellectually. He believed that some people were more gifted than others and those most capable in a group were called the elite. Pareto defines elite as "a class of people who had highest indices in their branch of activity". Examples of elite according to Pareto are successful business men, professors, artists and successful writers. Pareto divided the elite class of people into two broad categories. These were:

- Governing elite was an individual who directly or indirectly played some considerable part in the government and its functioning.
- Non-governing elite were the rest of individuals.

Pareto's discussion was mainly based on the governing elite and he developed his theory of Circulation of Elites based on the governing elite. According to Pareto, governing elites were concerned with administration directly or indirectly. They played an important role in the society and even held prestigious places and positions in the government but governing elites did not participate in the administration or running of the government but held a position that in some manner did influence the administration and how it functioned.

Pareto enlisted the following characteristics of elites:

- The class of elite is a universal concept and a continuous process

## NOTES



## NOTES

- The individuals who did not belong to the governing elite or the non-governing elite were called non-elites
- The elite had to power to manipulate political power overtly or covertly
- The elite also had the power to establish his superiority over others
- The elites always tried and ensured that the non-elites did not influence the society in any manner whether economically or politically
- The non-elites respected only those elites who had a liberal outlook and approach
- The elite and non-elite members always show circulation whether upward or downward.

Pareto also believed that every society had elite groups of different kinds and since these elites were best or excellent, their number was a few. Though a minority group, the elites could influence the development and progress of the society. Pareto concluded that Circulation of Elites was between elite and non-elite or between governing and non-governing elite. This meant that an individual could circulate between elite and non-elite. According to Pareto, this process of replacement was continuous and could take place in two ways; one way gradual process of infiltration while the other was by violent revolution. Pareto further explained the Circulation of Elites in terms of changes in the psychological characteristics of the elites as well as that of the non-elites. According to Pareto, when an elite no longer possessed the required power and characteristics essential for keeping it in power, the elite is replaced. This replacement can be done by the elite himself who chooses the next elite from amongst the non-elites who now possesses the power and the required characteristics. On the other hand, when an elite becomes weak, a non-elite who now possesses power can violently overthrow the elite to take control of the power.

According to Pareto, the circulation of elites can take place between different classes of elites as well. A few individuals may join the elite class from the non-elite class while elites may become non-elites as well. Pareto also stated that the number of the elite groups may decline. This can happen in either arithmetical terms or in the quality and significance of the elite group on account of the various factors. When this decline takes place, the elites cease to be elites and come down to the non-elite group. The reverse also holds true. When some members of the non-elite groups achieve excellence or acquire special powers, they tend to join one or the other elite group. Pareto also claimed the fact that the increase or decrease in the number and strength of elites as well as non-elites is a part of the society and one of the major foundations on which society runs. Pareto also observed that in a free society, the circulation of elites would be constant and free. But in a free and ideal society imperfections do exist and so circulation of elites is seldom free in the society that we live in. According to Pareto, upward or downward circulation of elites always. However, Pareto was also of the opinion that societies with aristocracies with governing elite at the top never last. To quote Pareto, 'History is the graveyards of Aristocracy'. According to Pareto, elite class emerges, dominates, falls into decadency and is finally replaced by non-decadent elites. This process has been going on in history for generations. Mortality of aristocracy is definite according to Pareto. This is because aristocrats were involved in historic wars leading to the degeneration of aristocracy. Pareto also believed that the inheritors of aristocracy do not necessarily possess all the qualities that their forefathers had to rule. They rule because of the inherited position but may not have the required skills, knowledge,

and ability to govern and thus fall in decadence and thus the kingdom or empire of the aristocrats finally falls.

According to Pareto, the governing elite are always in a state of continuous and slow transformation. During its rule, the governing elite may face some problems and violent disturbances and is replaced by a new elite group. This new elite group then resumes the process of transformation. Pareto's theory of Circulation of Elites, however, faces some criticism. The main criticism comes because of the fact that Pareto was unable to provide a method of measuring and defining superior qualities of the elite. Pareto simply assumes the fact that the qualities of the elite are superior than the non-elite which may not always be the case.

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is the 80/20 rule as observed by Pareto?
2. What is ophelimity?
3. What is Pareto distribution?
4. When did regime change take place according to Pareto?
5. What is the criticism for the theory of Circulation of Elites?

## 4.3 RESIDUES AND DERIVATIONS

In his study of sociology, Pareto always tried to unmask non-scientific theories and belief systems. In his attempt to do so, he made a distinction between the changing elements that somehow accounted for these theories and he called these derivations while the permanent elements were called residues.

According to Pareto, most of the human behaviour was illogical. However, the humans want to believe that their behaviour is logical and do not want to accept the fact that the behaviour is governed and determined by emotions. Thus, a human being tries to give logical reasons to rationalize his thoughts and behaviours. Thus, he observed two distinct elements to reach the theory. These were the constant elements of the phenomenon under consideration and the numerous ingenious theories that humans make use of to rationalize their actions. Pareto called the former residues and the latter derivations.

In order to prove that non-logical actions are more important in the society as compared to logical actions, Pareto developed the theory of residues and derivations. To arrive at the distinction between residues and derivations, Pareto used the following method. Pareto investigated doctrines that were associated with actions. From these theories, Pareto separated the elements that corresponded to logic and science. Pareto then separated the remaining non-scientific elements into constants and variables. He called the constants as residues and variables as derivatives. According to Pareto, derivations or variables arose only when there was reasoning, justification and arguments. Pareto also believed that in the presence of these derivations, it was possible to analyse the underlying constant elements called residues. Pareto also claims the fact that an infinite number of derivations are used by humans to prove their actions to be logical but the residues remain constant. Pareto listed six residues that he believed to have remained constant throughout in the Western World. Pareto also claims that these classes of residues are closely related to human instincts and propensities. These include:

## NOTES



## NOTES

- Instinct for combination
- Group persistence
- Ability to show sentiments through actions and outer expressions
- Power to impose power on society
- Residue of personal integrity
- Residue of sex

Pareto intended to show that the same set of residues could give rise to a wide variety of belief systems as well as derivations. He also claimed that men deceive themselves when they take some action on the basis of a theory that they believe in. However, the real cause of action or behaviour could be found in the underlying constancy of the residue. In most cases, the residue of personal integrity explains the behaviour of humans and the actions that they take.

Pareto has named four different classes of derivations. These include:

- Derivations of assertions include statements that are dogmatic in nature
- Derivations of authority include concepts that are held in high esteem in the society
- Derivations in agreement with common principles and sentiments
- Derivations of verbal proof that rely on verbal gymnastics, metaphors, etc.

According to Pareto it was the derivation that was the actual content and formed the ideology itself.

### Criticism of Residue and Derivations

Pareto's theory of residues and derivations has been subject to criticism. Pareto used the residues as drives but he never made clear the nature of the residues. Pareto was not able to say clearly whether the residues were natural or physical forces or facts or were they a result of some socio-historical process. Another criticism is that Pareto was never able to describe the actual nature of residues and the relationships that existed between the different residues. Another criticism that came from Bogardus states that the classification of the residues was vague and that these were just human instincts and sentiments named in a different manner. Another criticism is the fact that residues have not been defined well in the sense that these are seem to be a decorative name given to instincts. The theory is also criticised because it is believed that residues and derivations are not justifiable in all circumstances. According to Sorokin, derivations are just like a weather cock and these are changed according to the wind direction and not same even if the underlying residue is constant. The theory also comes into criticism because the use of residues and derivations may give rise to wrong notions sometimes.

Pareto's theory of residues and derivations is helpful in explaining social movements, the structure of the society and the history of the society.

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

6. How did Pareto arrive at the distinction between residues and derivations?
7. How is the theory of residues and derivations helpful?

## 4.4 LOGICAL AND NON-LOGICAL ACTIONS

While studying economics, Pareto concluded that economics was limited to only a single aspect of human action: the action that was rational and logical and was followed to acquire limited resources. Pareto, however, believed that human behaviours were logical subjectively as well as objectively. According to him an action was logical if the means employed to attain the resources are objectively united and the goal is achieved objectively. Pareto was also convinced of the fact that true logical action was very rarely performed. He turned to sociology when he was convinced of the fact that human affairs were guided by non-logical and non-rational actions.

Pareto broadly divided all actions into two broad categories: personal and social. He further said that all actions or social phenomenon had two aspects: form and reality. Form is the way in which the social phenomenon presents itself to the human mind and is something subjective. Reality, on the other hand, involves the actual existence of things and is completely objective. Pareto also claimed that all personal and social actions had two parts: ends and means. Using the basic traits of actions, Pareto finally divided actions as logical actions and non-logical actions.

Pareto said that every social or personal action of humans was based on either logical actions or non-logical actions. Logical actions are the actions that are based on logic and experiment. These actions are the ones in which the means and ends are connected.

### Logical Action

A logical action is the one in which the logical connection between the means and the ends exist both in the mind of the person who performs the action and the objective reality. Logical action is thus pure rational action. In a logical action, the logical connection between the means and the end must be approved by the person who performs the action and other people who have enough knowledge of the fact whether the action being performed is real or not. Thus, a logical action is both subjective and objective. Pareto said that a logical action is subjective because it is liked by certain people because of personal reasons. A logical action is objective because the end result obtained has been predicted on the basis of some observations. Thus, Pareto enlisted the following characteristics of logical actions.

- Logical actions are based on logic and experiment.
- All personal or social actions that have adjustment between means and ends are logical actions.
- Logical actions are real.
- Logical actions are objective.
- Logical action must be accepted by the actor and defined objectively.
- For logical actions, the ends and means must be scientific and justified.
- There is no place for logical actions in prejudices and imaginations.
- If logical actions are justified then there must be social sanctions behind the justification.
- For an action to be logical, there must be a logical connection between the means used and the end so attained.

## NOTES



- Logical actions must be motivated by reasoning.
- Logical actions must be rational.

## NOTES

**Non-Logical Actions**

Non logical actions are all those human actions that do not fall in the scope of logical actions. Pareto says that since these actions are non-logical it does not mean they are illogical. Non logical actions are guided by sentiments and other non-logical factors. Non logical actions are all those actions that do not show any logical connection between the means and ends either subjectively or objectively. The non-logical actions can be divided into four categories.

- The no- no category in which the actions are not logical. There is no connection between the ends and the means and the means applied do not give any result that is logical.
- The no- yes category is the category in which the result that an action will give is not logically connected to the act performed. However, in such actions, the actor wrongly believes that the means that he has applied will give the result that he desires.
- The yes- no category of actions does produce a logical result depending on the means applied but the actor does not have any logical connection between the ends and the means in his mind.
- The yes- yes category gives the logical results depending on the means applied and the ends and means are subjectively connected but the objective result does not follow the subjective sequence.

**Characteristics of non-logical actions**

- Non-logical actions are basically determined by subjective factors
- Non-logical actions cannot be proved either by objective experimentation or observation
- Non-logical actions are guided not by reasoning but by impulses
- Non-logical actions also cannot be determined by reality
- Non-logical actions are to some degree motivated by sentiments.

Logical and non-logical actions as discussed by Pareto do come under some criticism. One of the major criticisms that this theory faces is the fact that it is very difficult to distinguish between actions and tell which action is logical and which action is non-logical. Another criticism is that it is also difficult to distinguish between the means and the ends related with an action. Another criticism is that the number of non-logical actions is more than that of logical actions. This is because humans want to perform any action that is guided by imagination, sentiments and thinking. Also humans want to prove that non-logical actions are very logical because they think so and are somehow able to achieve the desired goal.

Pareto studied actions on the basis of their relation through logic. In other words, Pareto believed that every action was based on logic and humans tried to prove every action to be logical through their actions and in their own way. In other words, humans often fail to demonstrate logical action but they always want to make their thinking appear logical. This in turn helps humans attain the desired goal which may not be achieved objectively or as was desired by the action when it was performed.

**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

8. What is a logical action as defined by Pareto?
9. What is a non-logical action according to Pareto?
10. What is the criticism of logical and non-logical actions?

## NOTES

**4.5 SUMMARY**

- Pareto as a sociologist and economist gave several theories and principles that can be applied today as well to the society.
- Pareto's Law or the 80/20 Rule can be applied to anything and every action in the society. According to Pareto, the 80/20 Rule says that 20 percent of people possess 80 percent of wealth.
- This principle holds true for a wide range of activities in the present day as well. In addition to this, Pareto also gave several other economic concepts that are used today.
- Pareto developed the theory of Circulation of Elites in which he said that regime change or movement does take place in every society and is a continuous process. However, according to
- Pareto, regime change or a movement took place when one elite was replaced by another and not when rulers were overthrown.
- Pareto said that the governing elite are people who somehow affect the way the administration functions while the non-governing elite are the rest of the individuals.
- The non-governing elite though not powerful are in a position that can affect the decisions of the elite. The Circulation of Elites according to Pareto takes place between the governing and the non-governing elites.
- Pareto also developed the concept of residues and derivations. Residues according to Pareto were the constant factors that affected the way the humans behave while derivations are the underlying elements and keep changing.
- Pareto developed the concept of logical and non-logical actions to explain the behaviour of human. According to Pareto, logical actions were rational as well as based on experiment.
- But most of the actions that humans performed were non-logical and were guided by sentiments and non-logical factors.
- Pareto also concluded that the humans tried to prove that their actions were logical and helped them achieve their goals. The concepts developed by Pareto are used to study the various aspects of a society.

**4.6 KEY TERMS**

- **Logical action:** A logical action is the one in which the logical connection between the means and the ends exist both in the mind of the person who performs the action and the objective reality.



## NOTES

- **Residues:** Residues are intermediary between the sentiments, we cannot know directly and the belief systems and acts that can be known and analysed.

#### 4.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Pareto observed the fact that 20 per cent of people owned 80 per cent of wealth and mathematically described it. This later came to be known as Pareto's Rule.
2. Ophelimity is an economic concept that was introduced by Pareto and is a measure of economic satisfaction.
3. Pareto distribution is probability distribution that describes social, geo-physical, actuarial and scientific phenomenon.
4. According to Pareto, regime change took place when one elite was replaced by another and not when rulers were overthrown.
5. The criticism of theory of Circulation of Elites is that Pareto was unable to provide a method for measuring and defining the superior qualities of elites. Pareto just assumed that the elite would have superior qualities than the non-elites.
6. To arrive at a distinction between residues and derivations, Pareto investigated doctrines that were associated with actions. From these theories, Pareto separated the non-scientific elements into constants and variables. The constants were called residues and the variables derivations.
7. The theory of residues and derivations is helpful in explaining social movements, structure of the society and the history of the society.
8. Logical actions are rational actions based on experiments. In these actions, the means and the ends are logically connected.
9. Non-logical actions are those actions that do not fall in the scope of logical actions. They are guided by sentiments and non-logical factors. There is also no logical connection between the ends and the means of non-logical actions.
10. The criticism of logical and non-logical actions comes from the fact that it is not easy to distinguish which actions are logical and which are non-logical. Also it is not easy to distinguish between the means and the ends.

#### 4.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

##### Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the life sketch of Pareto.
2. State the different characteristics of elites.
3. How are the different classes of residues closely related to human instincts?
4. Write a short note on the criticism of residue and derivations.

##### Long-Answer Questions

1. 'Circulation of elites is a theory of regime change.' Discuss.
2. 'The circulation of elites can take place between different classes of elites as well. A few individuals may join the elite class from the non-elite class while elites may become non-elites as well.' Discuss.

## NOTES

3. Analyse the concept of logical and non-logical actions.
4. 'Pareto studied sociology holding to the fact that much of social actions were non-logical and most person actions were designed to give spurious logic to the non-rational actions.' Analyse the statement.

#### 4.9 FURTHER READING

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