

## **Social Theory 5305**

**I. There is a position that says that *without conflict* (no necessarily violence) *social change will not occur*. In other words, unless there are opposing forces that actually intersect nothing will happen.**

**Select an *example of change or no change that supports or refutes this claim*.  
Be sure to cite the appropriate authors.**

**Case (a). Conflict leads to social change** as a result of class confrontation (Marx) or the emergence of a charismatic leader (Weber). “Marx argued that the degree of inequality in the distribution of resources generates inherent conflicts of interest between those who have and those who do not have value resources” (Turner 2003, 132). Some examples of social change as a result of class confrontation are the Mexican Revolution (peasants against land owners), the Russian Revolution (workers and peasants against the Tsarist regime), or the Nicaraguan Revolution (Transnational Companies, local dominant classes and the people in general against Somoza’s dictatorship).

On the other hand, Weber suggested that social change might depend “on the emergence of ‘charismatic leaders’ who could mobilize subordinates” (Turner 2003, 134). A ‘charismatic leader’ puts together the resentments created in: (i) those excluded from power, wealth and prestige, (ii) those in the social low rank in societies of low rates of social mobility. Since the emergence of the charismatic leader is random, Weber saw social change subject to the historical chance rather than inevitably predetermined as Marx suggested. Some examples of emergent charismatic leaders that resulted in social change are Gandhi in India, Lenin in Russia, de Gaulle in France, and Hitler in Germany. In all cases, however, the charismatic leader had some support to ‘his divine grace’. Both Gandhi and Lenin received support from the party machine, de Gaulle had a police force and a complete apparatus of state at his disposal, Hitler has the back up of naked force.

**Case (b) Conflicts no necessarily leads to social change.** There are frequent conflicts of low intensity that help to “release tensions and become normatively regulated, thereby promoting stability in social systems. Further, with the increasing organization of the conflicting groups, and the formation of coalitions among conflicting groups, violence will decrease as their goals become better articulated” (Turner 2003, 138-9, in reference to Simmel’s perspective).

On the other hand, there are some variations of the Marxist posture accepting conflict as a process of re-accommodations of power without radical changes, such as those *within* dominant groups in the ‘historical block’ (*blocco storico*—Gramsci) or among *factions within* the dominant, middle or lower class (Bourdieu). Conflicts within dominant groups may help to establish unity or to re-establish unity and cohesion. When internal conflicts are based on disagreement in the basic values that provide legitimacy to the social system threaten to disrupt the structure (Coser 1956, 151).

**2. Culture is the social normative system. It is our language, religion, status model. How does something like the continuing *Industrial Revolution* affect culture? Use three examples and apply critical theory.**

The continuing Industrial Revolution changes social values and reinvents culture.

Fukuyama provides an example on how it changes social values.

The reason women started moving into the work place is not that they just decided it for ideological reasons; it has to do with the nature of labor markets, changes in the nature of work brought about by changes in technology. If you look at most jobs a hundred years ago, agriculture and industrial labor took a great deal of physical strength. It did not require educational skill; it is a little different today. Even the fundamental social relation between parents and children is pretty much disrupted by technological change (Treviño 1997).

The continuing Industrial Revolution creates and destroys traditions. It created the Scottish kilt as a symbol of national identity.

Kilts were product of the industrial revolution. The aim was not to preserve time-honoured customs, but the opposite—to bring the highlanders out of the heather and into the factory. The kilt didn't start life as the national dress of Scotland. The lowlanders, who made up the large of Scots, saw highland dress as a barbaric form of clothing, which most looked on with some contempt (Giddens 1999, Lecture on Tradition).

In reality all traditions are invented. Technological advances sooner or later alter current beliefs to make them functional to the new times. Commercialization destroys traditions: it drains their content to convert it in heritage for tourism or kitsch—trinkets we buy at the airport—(Giddens 1999, Lecture on Tradition).

Since Fukuyama and Giddens are not Critical Theory thinkers in our textbook (it is hard to classify sociological thought, specially if authors correct themselves or switch topics), next lines will provide three examples based on Turner's book.

**Example 1. A student in the discothèque and the factory of desires.** While exchanging diverse experiences, a student in the sociology class told me that she had gone to a discothèque. At certain point a man approached her, grabbed her arm, and told her: "you are so beautiful [incidentally she is], come with me and I will take you shopping." She was surprised by the argument "I will take you shopping." I knew a similar case. Years ago, a young German woman confidentially told me: "a man promised me to go to Damascus to buy anything I want if I accept his proposal of love." The postmodernist analysis of advertising helps us to understand this "rhetoric of love". An early postmodernist, John Berger (1972), puts it in these words:

Publicity increasingly uses sexuality to sell any product or service. But this sexuality is never free in itself; it is a symbol of something presumed to be larger than it: the good life in which you can buy whatever you want. *To be able to buy is the same thing as being sexually desirable*; occasionally this is the explicit message of publicity, usually it is the implicit message, *i.e. if you are able to buy this product you will be lovable. If you cannot but it, you will be less lovable* (emphasis added).

Turner's textbook presents a more recent and elaborated argument based on Jean Baudrillard's analysis of publicity:

Advertising eventually reduces objects from their use-value to their sign-value; the symbols of advertisements become commodities in and of themselves, image

more than information about commodity is communicated. Thus, advertisements typically juxtapose a commodity with a desirable image—for example, a watch showing one young male and two young females with their naked bodies overlapping one another—rather than providing information about the quality and durability of the commodity. So that what is being sold and purchased is the image rather than the commodity itself (Turner 2003, 241).

**Example 2. Defining identity: White teeth and odor free body (whitening toothpastes, Crest white strips, and antiperspirants).** In 1994, in their famous essay *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception*, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer wrote:

The most intimate reactions of human beings have been so thoroughly reified that the idea of anything specific to themselves now persists only as an utterly abstract notion: personality scarcely signifies anything more than shining white teeth and freedom from body odor and emotions. The triumph of advertising in the culture industry is that consumers feel compelled to buy and use its products even though they see through them.

David Harvey, as it is in Turner’s textbook, updates this idea:

Cultural images are market driven, emphasizing fashion and corporate logos as well as other markers of culture, lifestyle, group, membership, taste, status, and virtually anything that individuals can see as relevant to their identity. . . .

.....  
Given a culture that values instant gratification and easy disposability of commodities, people generally react with sensory block, denial, a *blasé* attitude, myopic specialization, increased nostalgia (for stable old ways), and a search for

eternal but simplified truths and collective or personal identity (Turner 2003, 237).

**Example 3. Printed mass media and the manufacture of confusion.** Manufacturers of culture offer to the public pre-packaged products. There is nothing left for the consumer to classify or analyze. Producers have done it for him. Producers of culture lodge people's minds with ordered but not coherent or connected information. The media destroys information by “presenting it in a pre-packed meaning form” (Baudrillard, as in Turner 2003, 241).

In the early forties, Adorno and Horkheimer (1944) observed that printed mass media distorts information and mix advertising with real facts:

Advertising becomes art and nothing else, just as Goebbels—with foresight—combines them: *l'art pour l'art*, advertising for its own sake, a pure representation of social power. In the most influential American magazines, *Life* and *Fortune*, a quick glance can now scarcely distinguish advertising from editorial picture and text. The latter features an enthusiastic and gratuitous account of the great man (with illustrations of his life and grooming habits), which will bring him new fans, while the advertisement pages use so many factual photographs and details that they represent the ideal of information which the editorial part has only begun to try to achieve.

Capitalism reproduces knowledge rather than produce it; this reproduction breaks down the signification chain from object to sign because it focuses more on the medium than on the message (Jameson, as in Turner 2003, 234-235). Considering that “the medium is the message” (Turner 2003, 241), advertising focuses on anything but style to

reveal its most intimate secret: obedience to the social hierarchy. Additionally, in this mix of facts and publicity, it seems that we are dumb and unable to understand the world. We do not understand the word not because of us, but because of the profuse and confused information we receive everyday. Berger updates similar idea to that previously presented by Adorno and Horkheimer (1944) in reference to color magazines that deal with new stories:

The contrast between publicity's interpretation of the world and the world's actual condition is a very stark one. Overleaf is the contents page of such a magazine. The shock of such contrast is considerable: not only because of the coexistence of the two worlds shown, but also because of the cynicism of the culture which shows them one above the other. It can be argued that the juxtaposition of images was not planned. Nevertheless the text, the photographs taken in Pakistan, the photographs taken for the advertisements, the editing of the magazine, the layout of the publicity, the printing of both, the fact that advertiser's pages and new pages cannot be coordinated all these are produced by the same culture (Berger 1972)

Individuals, informed with 'series of pure and unrelated presents in time', become disoriented or confuse so they turn into ease victims of advertising. This same argument can be extended to the TV analysis (Sartori 1998). Habermas says that this crisis of meaning and commitment is inevitable in capitalist societies where the power of money creates differentiated systems (Habermas, as in Turner 2003, 224).

### **3. Why is there urban decay? What are the social implications?**

**What is it?** Urban decay is a generic term in urban sociology to refer street crime, visible poverty, deteriorating infrastructure, decaying homes and boarded-up businesses.

**Why it occurs?** There is no a single explanation. One strong approach is that it occurs because the real state capital leads the urban sprawl/urban decay process. Although specific cases are diverse, it is possible illustrate the urban decay process in sequential stages: (i) A developer buys a plot of land twenty miles away from the city limits. Then, he buys advertising in the mass media to glorify the single-house family and pastoral delights close to city (the necessary evil. It represents urban violence, social disorder, dirt and tension). (ii) The developer makes “lobby” work in the City Council (including donation of land to the city, if necessary). The city annexes the plot of land. By law, the city must immediately provide fire, police and emergency medical services. In the next stage the city will improve the annexed area’s infrastructure with roads, water and sewer systems (Tinsley 2002). “New subdivisions are sold by purveying the image of a home in quasi-rural surroundings, but conveniently located near the city. The fact that these semi-rural paradises rapidly become urban areas distinguished from the city proper mainly by their monotony only serves as a basis for promoting a subsequent round of flight to the new urban fringe” (Leo 1997). (iii) The upper middle-class and wealthy people leave the inner city because they can afford it. Those in the ‘upper level class’ staying in downtown areas live in selected places (gentrified older neighborhoods or up-scale condominiums). (iv) The developer gets profits from the rent of the land and from the housing built in the annexed area. (v) The city has a higher base to levy taxes and a donation of land from the developer. (vi) Citizens in the annexed area have to add to the current home expenses a

higher property tax, and they have to follow city rules determined by the annexation act. (vii) Thus, areas of poor people dominate the inner city. People moving to the periphery create the need of resources that not longer flow to downtown, mostly occupied by poor people. This lack of resources creates lack of safety streets. The crime rate increases and it is more difficult to attract new residents and business. (viii) “Increasing crime and growing poverty lead to the decay of some downtown neighbourhoods. Houses are boarded up. Some neighbourhoods become so crime-ridden and decayed that they turn into no-go zones, and, hey presto. . . .” (Leo 1997).

It is true that real state developers play a central role in this process, but it also clear that they could not succeed without government subsidies responding to and feeding demand-side desires. This desire for the suburban lifestyle exists because people emulate the rich and dislike the inner city. “The desire for racial, class and religious exclusion also added to the complex of cultural factors contributing to the desire to suburbanize” (Gottdiener and Hutchinson 2000, 69). It is clear that this approach discards the classical explanation that the urban sprawl/urban decay process is the result of improvements in the transportation technology and the emergence of mass production of automobiles. This is to confuse means with causes.

**Social consequences?** Fragmentation of society into potentially or actually hostile camps, isolated from each other. Most visible problems are racial, class and religious exclusion, crime, drugs, street gangs, and fiscal crisis to finance the inner city.

**4. Marx says we are identified by our worth in the market place. However, *those in power tend to stay over time. Why?***

There are many explanations, depending on the theoretical approach adopted. The **cultural structuralist perspective** provides a good answer. If we put Marx and Weber together, as Bourdieu did it in his cultural conflict theory, capital (understood as a source of power) is more than economic and material resources (Turner 2003, 495). Those in power tend to stay over time because they are able to combine different sources of power (different forms of capital). They can do so because they are not inert molecules located in social contexts. Social actors, aware or unaware of their convergent or divergent interests, follow rules and use resources to create and reproduce social situations (and positions). These rules and resources that social actors use in place and time constitute the social structure (Giddens as in Turner 2003, 477).

Social structure is something used by actors, not as some external reality that pushes and shoves actors around. . . .[it is not] a mysterious system of codes, as Lévy-Strauss and other structural idealists imply, nor is it a set of determinative parameters and external constraints on actors, as Peter Blau and other macrostructuralists contend. . . .Social structure is transformative and flexible, it is part of actors in concrete situations, and they use it to create patterns of social relations across space and through time (Turner 2003, 480)

Thus, society is not a “happening” but a social creation of actors following rules and using resources. “A rule is a methodology or technique that actors know about, often only implicitly, and that provides a relevant formula for action” (*ibid*). On the other hand, “resources are facilities that actors use to get things done” (*ibid*). The use of resources generates power: “As actors interact, they use resources, and, as they use resources, they

mobilize power to shape the actions of others” (*ibid*). **Those in dominant positions tend to stay over time because they possess or control different sources of power**, classified in two main categories (I basically regroup Bourdieu’s “types of capital” following Joseph Nye’s typology as it is developed by Susan Strange 1988 and 1996): (i) *Soft power*. It includes social capital (positions and relations in groupings and social networks), cultural capital (scientific knowledge, values, beliefs, lifestyles), and symbolic capital (the use of symbols to legitimate and impose way of life, status, and diverse mechanisms to promote social permanence and preeminence). In the early 1930’s, Antonio Gramsci foresaw the need to reconceptualize relations of power in terms of production of signs and symbols: “A dominant material class rules. . . ., but it does so by cultural symbols” (Turner 2003, 205), and imposing life styles. In the international arena there is no better example for soft power than Churchill’s phrase in Harvard (September 6, 1943): “The empires of the future are the empires of the mind.” (ii) *Hard power*. It includes the access and eventual use of physical force, financial mechanisms (national and international use of speculative money and investment transactions), and production (economic production of goods and services). Marx’s explanation of people in power and their eventual defeat is mainly based on hard power. Except for his reference to religion as the opium of people, **Marx did not imagine that other forms of soft power, the same power to induce mass awareness (to transform “class *in* itself” in “class *for* itself”), could be more efficiently used by people in power to stay over time.**

The cultural structuralist approach may be good complement to other approaches, such as the world system theory. This position states that people perpetuate in power because they are able to exploit labor or appropriate the labor surplus at global scale.

They can do so because they expand their ideological, military and economical control to other nations (Turner 2003, 163 and 179).

**5. Urban theorists are now in a post-modern approach. Exactly what does this mean? Be sure to cite.**

This is not an easy question to answer since the term “post-modernism” is extremely flexible and it is not restricted to sociology, but it overlaps with other disciplines. Often the same authors are studied to analyze “post-modernism” in different disciplines, such as architecture and city planning. In sociology, it refers to:

(1) a critique of sociology as a science and (2) a decisive break with modernity in which cultural symbols, media-driven images, and other forces of symbolic signification have changed the nature of social organization and the relation of individuals to the social world (Turner 2003, 227).

As a previous reference, “modernism” was the faith in science and the confidence that scientific knowledge would help to create a better society. What do postmodernists say? In order to answer the question, let's take three main intersecting fields of study: sociology, architecture and city planning.

(a) *Sociology*. Postmodernists, specially Jean-François Lyotard, criticize the modernist use of ‘meta-narratives’.

Lyotard claimed that the problem about *meta-narratives* is that they ignore the *contextual nature of knowledge*, the fact that all statements gain their meaning only in specific contexts and ‘language games’ and if abstracted from these and grounded by general principles *they become totalitarian* (Savage and Warde 1993, 138, emphasis added).

Lyotard uses the term *narrative* as a form of expression close to real people and the social world; thus science should be a reality based *grand narrative*, rather than an abstract *meta-narrative* as modernists claim (Turner 2003, 229-230).

(b) *Architecture*. In architecture, one of the first areas to use the term ‘post-modern’, ‘post-modernism’ has, at least, two meanings: (i) As a reaction to the modernist architecture of ‘confusion’ that builds a boiler-house like a cathedral, for example, and (ii) As a reaction against modernist uniformity, univalence and functionality—the architecture of the warehouse, retail and factory unit and the shopping mall. These styles of building are “insensitive to context. . . .and hence seemed to perpetuate uniformity of urban cultures as all city centers came to be dominated by similar high-rise glass and concrete buildings” (Savage and Warde 1993, 139). So, architects have provided their context oriented constructive answer.

On the other hand, the English geographer David Harvey observes that post-modernism is a condition of overaccumulation of capital through ‘temporal’ [market of ‘futures’] and spatial displacement [worldwide relocation of production]. This phenomenon, driven by the new technologies and new financial instruments, requires a “placeless” urban space. The distinctive architecture in postmodernism is functional to overaccumulation: it dissolves the distinction between inside and outside and erases the sense of place. “Once inside a shopping mall, or on a motorway interchange, one could be almost anywhere in the world; links to other parts of the urban fabric seem tangential and haphazard” (Savage and Warde 1993, 140). The basic postmodernist idea in Harvey is that architecture (the “giants’ alphabet” would say Cherterton), the built form, is not only the product of an age. Rather, architectural forms of the same period, far from expressing the common values of the age, are the product of specific social groups struggling for cultural hegemony and social and political power. Therefore, “We have to learn to read the social and physical signs and codes of the urban milieu—to understand

the signals of status and power as written into physical landscapes, for example—in order to survive” (Harvey 1985, 265-66). For other authors, postmodernist architecture in cities is not only the product of capitalist economic forces, but also the search of the collective self: “The existential and social problems of the age [better grasped as high modernity rather than as post-modernity because there is no a qualitative break] are concerned with developing sufficient trust in others to ally the fears inspired by the ever-present risks of life in an uncertain world” (Giddens, as in Savage and Warde 1993, 145). Gate communities may be explained in this perspective.

(b) *City planning*. According to Savage and Warde (1993, 139), “Post modern architecture claims to be a rejection of the uniformity of modernist practice, which was held responsible for the creation of a bland uniform style of building characterized by high-rise flats, shopping centers, and standardised plans.” In the modernist approach to city planning, “the scientific urban planner is to the design and construction of the city as the entrepreneur-engineer is to the design and construction of the factory” (Scott 1998, 112). In modernist perspective, the city planner becomes “the philosopher-king who applies the truths of scientific understanding for the well-being of all” (Scott 1998, 112). “Once his [the scientific planner’s] calculations are finished, he is in a position to say—and he does say: *It shall be thus!*” (Scott 1998, 113). And at this magic moment the “impossible planning” begins because the planner has no power and the planned citizens are not inert molecules but they have convergent and divergent interests and have different sources of power. Le Corbusier’s arrogance has no limits, as Aristotle previously observed in his predecessor Hippodamus of Miletus (*cfr. Politics*). In plans prepared in only six weeks, he proposed a complete rebuilding of Moscow. Stalin

rejected the proposal as “too radical.” The postmodern answer in city planning came from a woman: Jane Jacobs.

Against the planners’ eye and formulas, Jacobs juxtaposes her own. Her aesthetic. . . .is pragmatic and street level, an aesthetic that has as its reference the experienced order of the city for the people who live there (Scott 1998, 142)

.....

Whereas Le Courbusier’s planner is concerned with the overall form of the cityscape and its efficiency in moving people from point to point, Jacob’s planner consciously makes room for the unexpected, small, informal, and even nonproductive human activities that constitute the vitality of the ‘lived city’ (Scott 1998, 143).

**6. Identify the *principal contributions* of each of the following and give and *illustration* for each.**

**a. Talcott Parsons (1902-1979). *Contribution:*** He attempted to construct a single theoretical framework to systematically classify societies based on their general and specific characteristics. In *The Social System* (1951), Parsons argued that the crucial feature of societies, as of biological organisms, is homeostasis (maintaining a stable state), and that their parts can be understood only in terms of the whole. Although this is clearly a Spencerian hypothesis he asked: Now who reads Spencer? Instead, he should say, “lets go back to read Spencer!” He was criticized for understating the importance of social conflict. Turner says that Parsons, after forty years, chose to ‘reexamine’ Spencer, so “he reintroduced Spencer’s and Durkheim evolutionary models back into functional theory” (Turner 2003, 50). He should quote them since the very beginning! There is no doubt that in his original studies in biology he had contact with Spencer. I found naïve the following opinion in our textbook:

It is ironic that Parson’s work increasingly resembled Spencer’s. Except for the opening line in *The Structure of Social Action*—“Who now reads Spencer?”—Parsons ignored Spencer. Indeed, *he may not have realized* how closely his analysis of societal evolution and his conceptualization of the “human condition” resembled Spencer’s effort of 100 years earlier (Turner 2003, 51, emphasis added).

I am sorry to have this opinion of this sociological myth or “holy cow” of sociology.

**Illustration.** How to illustrate Parsons when he was precisely criticized of being too abstract and breaking the American tradition of doing applied research? Additionally, name any **central** “contribution” in *The Structure of Social Action* or *The Social System* not having an equivalent idea in Spencer’s *Principles of Sociology*. I do not deny that Parsons may have some contributions in his own right (I found none in Turner’s book). I cannot avoid think of Parsons as a rhetorical and dishonest intellectual. Instead, I can mention Spencer examples on industry or the army to illustrate his evolutionist thesis: any mass growth implies greater differentiation of functions and higher coherence of its parts.

**b. Robert Merton (1910-2003). Contribution:** He suggested the idea of a “middle range theory” to provide the minimum set of concepts to operate an adequate functional analysis. In the examples he provides such as “the political machines in America,” he only illustrates part of the theory he proposes. In this specific case he tried to illustrate the distinction between manifest and latent functions. His studies on anomie, following Durkheim and Spencer, suffer similar limitations. One of his methodological contributions to social science is the “focused interview” to obtain responses of groups to radio programs and films. (“Focused interviews” in “focus groups” are a powerful means to evaluate services or test new ideas. Basically, focus groups are interviews, but of 6-10 people at the same time in the same group). Merton deploring its use by politicians and marketers said “I wish I’d get a royalty on it.” It is worth to mention as a footnote that this term has become a common use in social science; as an example, SUPA’s web page presents one of its professors as an expert in “focus groups.” The textbook homepage presents Merton’s contribution to the analysis of social deviance. Merton says that

deviance is a result of malintegration within and between culture and structure. Main functionalist (or Spencerian) assumptions are: (i) Social systems are composed of interrelated parts; (ii) these parts reveal some degree of integration or “equilibrium;” (iii) malintegration or disequilibrium produces aberrant behavior; and (iv) the nature and type of malintegration determines the nature and type of aberrant behavior.

Merton also has a “biological contribution” to social science. His son Robert C. Merton, against the rule that brilliant thinkers tend to have children not as brilliant as them, was awarded a Nobel Prize in Economics in 1997.

**Illustration:** Besides the idea of “focus groups,” Merton introduced the idea of latent and manifest interests. A “faction of class in itself” (Marx) is equivalent to a “cuasi-group of interest” with “latent interest” in Merton’s analysis. Workers in a steel mill factory can be a “cuasi-group of interest.” On the other hand, a “faction of class for itself” is equivalent to a “group of interest” with “manifest interests.” The same workers of the steel mill factory on strike can be a “group of interest.”

Other illustration of Merton’s work is his study on bureaucracy. Considering Weber’s definitions or characterization of bureaucracy, Merton follows a different strategy. Based on the principle that every bright side has its dark side, as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, he centers on dysfunctions of bureaucracy to explain the ‘bureaucratic structure and personality’: “Weber is almost exclusively concerned with what the bureaucratic structure attains: precision, reliability, efficiency. This same structure may be examined from another perspective provided by the ambivalence” (Merton 1957, 102). Thus, Merton approaches the bureaucratic character that Weber describes as ‘methodical, prudent, and disciplined’. Merton points out that discipline becomes part of the life of the

bureaucrat and converts him rigid and unable to adjust to the changing reality: “the very elements which conduce toward efficiency in general produce inefficiency in specific instances” (Merton 1957, 103). This discipline in a bureaucratic structure also creates depersonalization of relationships. The strict bureaucrat attachment to the rule ignores the individual cases; the client, seen as another number in the line, interprets it as ‘bureaucratic arrogance’. Merton observes that a graded career, promotion plans, incremental salaries and retirement pensions (mentioned by Weber) create a similar effect: In his adherence to this plan of life and career, the bureaucrat ‘induces timidity, conservatism, and technicism.’ (Merton 1957, 103). Merton highlights Weber’s mistake of generalizing the strict adherence of the bureaucrat to regulations as a condition of efficiency. The training required to follow this strict adherence to regulations may work against the bureaucrat in changing conditions not recognized as significantly different. An additional trait in the bureaucrat’s personality refers to the Dewey’s “occupational psychosis.” People performing daily routines develop apathy, laziness, internal quarrels, intrigues and sabotages.

**c. Ervin Goffman (1922-1982). *Contribution:*** Goffman used drama as an analogy to study fleeting, chance or momentary social encounters (Abercrombie *et al.* 1994, 186).

Main weakness of this approach is well known:

Institutions appear as unexplained parameters within which actors organise their practical activities. . . . Goffman’s sociology also ignores the possibility of recognizing the dialectic of presence/absence that connects action to the properties of the totality: for this involves the need to generate an *institutional theory of every day life* (Giddens 1979, 81, emphasis in original)

This criticism, however, seems unfair if we attend to Turner's textbook:

Goffman *recognized* that, at best, there is a "loose coupling" of the micro and macro realms. Macro phenomena, such as commodities markets, urban land-use values, economic growth, and society-wide stratification, cannot be explained by micro-level analysis (Turner 2003, 395, emphasis added).

**Illustration.** I do not have a better example than that provided by Diesing (1991).

Goffman [in his *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 1959] describes life as his host saw it, from the inside of the home outward: the back rooms where the self is prepared and repaired, the front room or stage where the self is presented, and the precarious encounters in the outside world. This book puzzled me for many years until, having met Goffman and watched him blend smoothly into the scene, I realize that s/he was describing primarily the presentation of the feminine Scottish self in this very family-centered society. How naïve of me to have assumed that *self* meant *masculine self*!

Using the analogy of rooms of a house, I think all we humans have a bedroom or back room that represents our privacy (where the self is prepared and repaired). We also have a social appearance, a living room or front room we use to attend our guests. Here we play roles and do our best to impress them. Then, on a very selective basis, we decide, if they agree, to show our guests the remaining rooms of our personality. This is how I understand "the precarious encounters in the outside world." In this example it is also evident that a lot of analytical work must be done to bridge the gap between an analysis of individual behaviors and a theory of society.

**d. Émile Durkheim (1858-1917). Contribution:** He studied some individual dilemmas in contemporary society. He stated that the sociological method has to deal with social facts, not individuals (a common methodological flaw in the functionalist school). The reason is that societies have their own realities that could not simply be reduced to individual actions and motives (society cannot be reduced to interpersonal relations, says Poulantzas). Individuals internalize social norms that regulate their actions. Individuals are not just molded and constrained by their social environments, but they *express* the society in their actions.

Durkheim denied the utilitarian version of individualism as a basis to build a stable society. In his first major work (his doctoral dissertation), *The Division of Labor in Society*, he says that the self-interest leads to social instability, as it is evident in various forms of social deviance such as suicide (I will use it to illustrate his contributions). He called “anomia” to this forms of social deviation. Radcliffe-Brown (1996, 207) provides an interesting observation on this point: *Anomia* is a common term in social science to refer social disorder or social deviance. In fact, it should be “disnomia.” Durkheim inappropriately used “anomia” (*anomie* in French, from the Greek word *anomia*, “lawless”) because “eunomia” (social health) and “disnomia” (social illness) are related words.

Durkheim distinguished forms of social order in primitive societies from those in modern societies. Primitive societies or communities (*Gemeinschaft* in Tönnies words) had a “mechanical solidarity” based on common believes and consensus (*conscience collective* of the community). As society industrializes, the division of labor destroys the “mechanical solidarity” and the Society becomes more complex (*Gesellschaft*, in Tönnies

words). “Organic solidarity” of the society as a new form of social order, replaces “mechanical solidarity.”

Briefly, main contributions of Durkheim are:

- He distinguished the field of sociology from the other social sciences.
- He stressed the relevance of empirical data to lend support to his theoretical speculations.
- He focused on the division of labor and its consequences for social life.
- He noted the collective conscience or the need for a common core of values and beliefs.
- He wrote on sociology of religion. This work is still considered an influential study nowadays.

***Illustration.*** Durkheim explains that individuals apparently commit suicide under different forms of social solidarity in different social situations. He identified four different types of suicide. (i) The ‘egotistic’ suicide rate is higher in individuals that had to be responsible for their own situation/salvation (higher in Protestants than Catholics, higher in rich people in Plano, Tx. than poor people in downtown Dallas). (ii) The ‘anomie’ suicide occurs when individuals experience a state of normlessness or when norms conflicted (suicide dominated by uncertainty). ‘Egotistic’ and ‘anomie’ suicides are more common in advanced societies. (iii) The ‘altruistic’ suicide occurs in societies with strong mechanical solidarity such as traditional societies or armies in modern societies, and (iv) ‘Fatalistic’ suicides are typical of societies with excessive social regulation (*i.e.*, among slaves, says Durkheim).

**e. Seymour Martin Lipset (1922- ).** *Contribution:* Lipset's work includes studies of social mobility (class structure and elite behavior), causes and consequences of modernization, conditions that support and sustain the development of democracy in states, political parties, labor unions, and social movements (Johnson 1999).

*Illustration.* The best illustration for Lipsey's work is his most recent book (with Gary Marks) *It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in The United States* (N. Y. and London: W. W. Norton, 2000). This book favors a mixed theory of causation, "neither political, nor sociological, nor cultural factors alone are sufficient to explain the weakness of socialism in America (Lipset and Marks 2000, 83). Authors use two illustrative arguments: (i) immigration from diverse sources (heterogeneous) spoiled class consciousness, (ii) the economic and political inclusion of workers weakened their will to oppose Americanism. The political opportunities that immigrants created by forming voting blocks were absorbed by Democrats (such as *La Raza Unida's* campaigns to support Kennedy and Johnson) or Republicans.

**f. Daniel Bell (1919- ).** *Contribution:* Based on earlier works of Colin Clark (Australian economist that wrote *The Conditions of Economic Progress*, McMillan, 1940), Bell foresees the pre-eminence of the service sector. The Colin Clark hypothesis is that high real income *per capita* is associated to high proportion of workers in tertiary industries. Therefore, economic progress occurs when the working population moves from agriculture to manufacture, and from manufacture to commerce and services. Bell's name is often connected to the term information society. In the early seventies, in his book *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, Bell presented a historical classification of the development of society in three stages: (i) Pre-industrial. Is the feudal society, basically

dedicated to agriculture, (ii) Industrial. Is the result of the Industrial Revolution. It creates massive production of material goods that the society does not necessarily need. This lifestyle eventually will be unsustainable and another revolution will be necessary. This will be the Revolution in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and (iii) Post-industrial or information society. In this stage, society will be a service-oriented economy with knowledge intensive industries, and new technical elites. These new characteristics will require new principles of social stratification.

It is worth to note that Bell wrote his best known and most vigorously attacked book *The End of Ideology* in 1960. His thesis is “history and ideology have come to an end thanks to the twin triumphs of Western democratic politics and the economic system underpinning it, capitalism.” Does it sound familiar? It is because in the early nineties, after the fall of the Berlin’s Wall, Francis Fukuyama wrote a book with a similar title and content: *The End of History and the Last Man*.

**Bell on himself:** “liberal in politics, socialist in economics, and conservative in culture.”

**Illustration.** Most theses in Bell’s *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, written in 1973, describes our society today, in year 2003: (i) the economy is based primarily upon the service-sector, (ii) the occupational structure of this new society has been transformed itself from a dominance of manual, blue-collar workers to the increasing dominance of white-collar and professional employees, (iii) there is the emergence of a new class, the 'knowledge-class', that challenges the traditional sources of power of business and politicians, (iv) theoretical knowledge now dominates the 'culture' of the post-industrial society, and (v) the society is future-oriented.

**g. Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979). Contribution:** In 1934, he found a unifying theme to his diverse interest in the Frankfurt School in exile at Columbia and its Critical Theory approach. Marcuse is best known for his critical analysis of capitalism (*One dimensional man*, 1964), Marxism (as used in the former Soviet: *Union Soviet Marxism*, 1961), revolution (*Reason and Revolution*, 1954), human liberation (*An Essay on Liberation*, 1969), technology and social change (*Negations*, 1968), sexuality and the fate of the individual in modern society (*Eros and Civilization*, 1955).

Approaching Marxism via phenomenology and critical theory, his central concern has been the possibility of authentic existence in industrial capitalism; for example, *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) argued that modern societies generate artificial needs, giving the working class a false consciousness (Abercrombie *et al.* 1994)

**Illustration.** Marcuse addressed issues at the cutting edge of social debate today. He provide: (i) striking examples of discourse analysis (in pieces dealing both with fascist propaganda and the means of combating it), (ii) contributions to clarity in the "culture wars" (in pieces dealing with anti-Semitism, with the German personality, with the cultural conditions in the West that permitted the rise of fascism), and (iii) notes on social change provocative in the context of the defeat of real existing socialism and the reexamination of social democracy.

**h. Karl Mark (1818-1883). Contribution:** He is one of the founding fathers of social sciences. His main writings are *The German Ideology*, 1845 (with F. Engels); *The Poverty of Philosophy*, 1847; *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 1848 (with F. Engels); *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852; *Capital*, 1867, 1885, 1894; and two

posthumous manuscripts: *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, and *Grundrisse*. Marx covers five main areas of sociological interest: (i) the concept of alienation of labor, a man imposing work on others, (ii) the relationship between economic life and social institutions, between structure and superstructure, (iii) relations of production and social classes; capitalists exploit workers by appropriating the product of their labor, (iv) a theory of change where class struggle is the “motor of history”; the working class will overthrow the capitalist class, as this latter did it with feudal aristocracy, and (v) a theory of value linked to a theory of capital accumulation and the eventual collapse of capitalism.

**Illustration.** Revolutions in Russia, China, and Cuba are good examples for Marx’s ideas. His influence ranks from pacific proposals (Dependence Theory, World-System Theory, Theology of Liberation) to violent alternatives of social groups (all guerilla groups: Sendero Luminoso, in Peru or Liga 24 de Septiembre, in Mexico).

**i. Wright C. Mills (1916-1962).** Born in Waco, Tx and former UT student.

**Contribution:** In his best known book *The Power Elite* (1956) “he explained the power structure of postwar in terms of a ruling militarized corporate-capitalist oligarchy.” In different books he presents his criticisms to the American society. Here, Mill saw the use of “rationality without reason,” that is, the use of rational means in the service of substantively irrational ends. He covered different topics such as the propertyless middle-class workers as a staff of the ruling elite (*White Collar*, 1951; *The Power Elite*, 1956), evolution of social sciences and interpretations of the contemporary world (*Sociological Imagination*, 1959; *Listen, Yankee*, 1960), and Marxism as the best “method of work” (*The Marxists*, 1962).

Although many people will disagree, Mills has other contribution to sociology. He pinched academic balloons. He pushed academicians to have analytical rigor by questioning their work. He was “noted for his often controversial critiques of both contemporary society and sociological practice” (*Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology* 2000, 379).

**Illustration.** In Merton’s obituary (*The Times*, London, England, March 4, 2003, p.30) there is an interesting reference to Mills that illustrates his contentious fame:

He [Merton] had very few enemies in a profession rather prone to quarreling. Even C. Wright Mills, the contentious sociological darling of the left, refrained from attacking him in print, though he left enduring scars on Parsons (using the term “grand theory” as criticism) and Lazarsfeld (“abstracted empiricism”).

**j. Max Weber (1864-1920). Contribution.** He rejects the orthodox Marxian view that economics was the preeminent determining factor in social causation and instead he stressed the plurality and interdependence of causes. He also formulated the concept of “ideal types” as a technique of sociological analysis.

Weber’s contribution to modern social science covers five key issues (based on Abercrombie *et al.* 1994):

(1) Philosophy of social science. Weber denied that sociology could: (i) discover universal laws of human behavior comparable with those of natural science; (ii) confirm any evolutionary progress in human societies; (iii) provide any evaluation of, or moral justification for, any existing or future state of affairs; (iv) develop any collective concepts (like 'the state' or 'the family') unless they could be stated in terms of individual action.

2) Rationalization. Rationalization is the process whereby every area of human relationships is subject to calculation and administration

(3) Protestant ethic thesis. Protestantism provides the ethics and culture to develop capitalism. He thought, however, that this ethic was not longer necessary for advanced stages of capitalism.

(4) Weber's relationship to Marx and Marxism. (i) Weber emphasize culture, especially religion, rather than economics. (ii) While Marx approached the objective structural effects in social relations, Weber studied the subjective individual factor. (iii) Weber accounted for status groups and markets while Marx stressed the economic classes and relations of production.

(5) His analysis of bureaucracy, authority and charisma. His works also include diverse topics such as religions, urban sociology, sociology of music, economic history, analysis of ancient civilizations.

***Illustration.*** One of the most known studies of Weber is his analysis on bureaucracy.

Weber introduces his idea of 'bureaucracy' using the word 'officialdom':

(i) S/he works in fixed and specific areas of authority ordered by rules (laws or administrative regulations).

(ii) S/he is subject to principles of hierarchy.

(iii) S/he separates official activity or 'the office' as something different from private life.

(iv) S/he acquires a technical training to 'manage the office'.

(v) S/he usually enjoys a distinct social esteem (status)

(vi) S/he, if of the pure bureaucratic type, is *appointed* by a superior authority. It is worth to note that an official elected is an ‘office-holder’ but not an official (ideal type). I do not think Weber correctly applies this “pure bureaucratic type” here. In fact, since most of bureaucrats in modern states are appointed from above, most bureaucrats today match to this Weberian ideal type.

(vii) An official normally holds a life-long tenure and a retirement pension ‘to ensure the devoted performance of official duties, without regard for extraneous pressures’.

Weber’s essay on bureaucracy and its corrections by Merton help us to understand at least four meanings of bureaucracy:

1. *People* that perform administrative functions.
2. The *relationship* of people in the administrative class.
3. The *power* of administrators.
4. ‘Bureopathy’ or malfunctioning of the administrative body.

However, when people think about bureaucracy usually have in mind something different (or partially different) to what Weber and Merton said:

- More people than it is necessary for a specific task (economic inefficiency)
- Multiplication of forms and formalities (red tape).
- Avoidance of personal responsibility and decision that creates delays in public services deliveries (Passing the buck).
- Straightforward interpretation of rules and procedures, regardless the objective they are designed to accomplish (mentioned by Merton).

**k. George Herbert Mead (1863-1931). Contribution:** Most of his work was published posthumously: *Mind, Self and Society* (1934), *The Philosophy of the Act* (1938) and *The Philosophy of the Present* (1959). His main interest was to study how society affects the self's formation and its functions in relation to others.

Mead developed the concepts of I, me, and mind to explain our ability to take on social roles, to view and reflect upon ourselves, to internalise social expectations, and to carry on internal conversations through which we anticipate the expectations and behaviour of other people (*Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology* 2000, 378).

Mead's thesis is that all human actors carry on an 'internal conversation'. In this conversation interplay "Me," "I," and "Mind". "Me" is the group of organized attitudes to which the individual responds as an "I." This terminology deserves further explanation:

People are born into social structures not of their own making, they are constrained by the "generalized other," the norms, customs, and laws that channel their actions. All of these enter the "me" as constituent elements, yet the "I" always reacts to preformed situations in a unique manner. Hence, while human actors are always immersed in social experiences that fashion their selves, each individual "I," with its incalculable spontaneity, is constantly actively responding against society, so that the mature self transforms the social world even as it responds to its exigencies in socially patterned ways. (Coser 1979)

On the other hand, the "Mind" is nothing but the importation of the external process into the conduct of the individual so as to meet the problems that arise. Mind is

the natural emergent from of interaction between the human organism and its social environment.

I know of no way in which intelligence or mind could arise or could have arisen, other than through the internalization by the individual of social processes of experience and behavior, that is, through this internalization of the conversation of significant gestures, as made possible by the individual's taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself and toward what is being thought about. And if mind or thought has arisen in this way, then there neither can be nor could have been any mind or thought without language; and the early stages of the development of language must have been prior to the development of mind or thought (Mead 1934).

***Illustration.*** It is not easy to illustrate Mead's ideas based on his lectures. There is certain vagueness in his concepts, as it is detailed in Giddens (1979, pages 50, 121, and 124). It is better to let him to present his own example:

Consider a politician or a statesman putting through some project in which he has the attitude of the community in himself. He knows how the community reacts to this proposal. He reacts to this expression of the community in his own experience--he feels with it. He has a set of organized attitudes which are those of the community. His own contribution, the "I" in this case, is a project of reorganization, a project which he brings forward to the community as it is reflected in himself. He himself changes, of course, in so far as he brings this project forward and makes it a political issue. There has now arisen a new social situation as a result of the project which he is presenting. The whole procedure

takes place in his own experience as well as in the general experience of the community. He is successful to the degree that the final "me" reflects the attitude of all in the community. What I am pointing out is that what occurs takes place not simply in his own mind, but rather that his mind is the expression in his own conduct of this social situation, this great co-operative community process which is going on. (Mead 1934)

**I. Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002). Contribution:** Bourdieu “showed how people are defined by their sociality rather than by their material or biological needs. Society is always in the process of becoming, rather than arriving” (*Outline of a Theory of Practice*). “Social change is not driven by external influences such as climate change or demographic pressure.” He tried to understand “the system”, and how its structures make us what we are. He did it with a characteristic “methodological rigor and careful combination of statistics and observation in the field.” He presents his “social critique of judgment” in *La Distinction* (1979), a study of the workings and significance of taste, and the way it is shaped by our *habitus*. The International Sociological Association considers this study as one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s ten most significant works. On the other hand, as a writer and as a citizen, he accused “business leaders of cultural vandalism.”

**Illustration.** According to Bourdieu, a person that eats in certain restaurant, spends vacations in Hawaii or wears certain cloths sends a message of “good taste,” social hierarchy or social status.

Other example based on Bourdieu. He classifies intellectuals and business gurus within the dominant class. Here some references. In Mexico, Francis Fukuyama, Alvin Toffler, or John Naisbitt charges 50,000 dollars per day. The Nobel Prize laureate Geary

Becker charges about 30, 000 dollars a day. In the lower scale, a professor from Princeton, say Maurizio Viroli, only charges 1000 dollars per day. These figures do not include transportation and related expenses.

**m. Lewis Coser (Ludwig Cohen, 1913-2003).** *Contribution:* Coser argued that conflict suppression sets the stage for a social explosion some time in the future, as tension will build up until it finally comes bursting out. By allowing smaller releases of tension with little, manageable conflicts, major social catastrophes can be avoided.

Coser criticized functionalism for ignoring conflict and criticized conflict theory for underemphasizing the functions of conflict. (Turner 2003, 143)

*Illustration.* Coser offered the follow explanation to deal with conflict:

The nature of interdependence. . . . causes conflicts to erupt frequently, but, because they emerge periodically, emotions do not build to the point that violence is inevitable. Conversely, systems in which there are low degrees of functional interdependence will often polarize into hostile camps; when conflict does erupt, it will be intense and violent. (Turner 2003, 146).

**n. Peter M. Blau (1918-2002).** *Contribution:* Blau has three main contributions to sociology. (i) He introduced (with other sociologists) the notion of exchange in social interaction, opening the door to microeconomics into sociology. (ii) He introduced (with Otis Dudley Duncan) “the theory of status attainment, still at the core of the societal stratification” (iii) He developed a general macrostructural theory of society. He tried to develop systematic theoretical schemes to explain macrostructures and their impact on daily life. “Any of these achievements would have elevated Blau into the very highest

reaches of the profession, but the combination of all three is without parallel in the field” writes Miller McPherson in *Footnotes* (2002)

The English sociologist Andre Giddens criticized Blau’s idea of social structure: “social structure is not a set of determinative parameters and external constraints on actors, as Peter Blau and other macrostructuralists contend” (Turner 2003, 480). Indeed, in the end, Blau abandoned his exchange approach at the macrostructural level (Turner 2003, 306).

**Blau on himself:** “Body is simply a mind delivery system” (McPherson 2002, 5).

**Illustration.** There is a good example of Blau’s hermeneutic work in his “Dynamics of Bureaucracy” in *Sociologists at Work*. While studying a government agency, the manager assigned him a desk near the office doorway. All other workers watched him and he could watch everybody working. His idea was to write down everything he saw. Soon, workers identified him as the manager’s spy. Every time anyone went out said, “I am going to the bathroom.” This was the text. “You are a spy,” was the subtext.

**o. Amos Hawley (1910- ). Contribution:** Hawley is well known for his academic contribution to the fields of human ecology, population studies and urban sociology. Amos Hawley provides a new systematization of the ecological approach initiated by MacKenzie (also author of *The City* that treats the city as an ecological system). He presents a conception of society as a hierarchy of spatially defined human communities. Hawley goes back to the evolutionist theoretical macro level previously presented by Herbert Spencer and Émile Durkheim. Hawley viewed social organization as fundamentally produced by the technologies of communication and transportation. “As the technology of these means of interaction changed, so did the patterns of social

organization.” (Gottdiener and Hutchinson 2000, 125). This approach that accounts space changes based on technology produces a technological determinism.

**Illustration.** Hawley asks the following questions: (a) Why do human activities assume an orderly arrangement in space?, (b) Why do they tend to arrange themselves about given points?” He arrives at three answers: (i) The interdependence among people, (ii) The dependence of activities or functions upon various characteristics of land, and (iii) The “friction of space.”

**p. Ernest Burgess (1886-1966). Contribution:** Burgess presents the city as a product of society. This perspective underlies the historicist approach in urban sociology in the United States (Munford, Sjoberg, Firey, Form) and has a particular attraction for European and especially French sociologists (Chevalier, Lefebvre). Burgess established the existence of a relationship between economic development, social transformations and the organization of space, by means of his famous concentric zone theory of urban growth, a theory that does not seek any naïve empirical generalization but rather a demonstration of the dependence of space, and hence of the city, on a given social structure.

**Illustration.** Here one of the many descriptions of Burgess’ model:

Burgess identified a number of typical zones which tended to radiate from the centre of the city. These included the Central Business District in the middle, surrounded by a ‘zone of transition’—an area which was being ‘invaded’ by light industry and commerce, but into which most marginal groups of city dwellers were also forced. This area contained ghettos, and what Burgess described as a

‘black band’. Outside this was a working-class ring and, on the urban periphery, middle-class suburbs (Savage and Warde 1993, 65).

But reality does not fit to Burgess’s view of concentric zones or to any other specific model of the Chicago School.

The geography of socio-economic status (i.e. social class) was largely sectoral; that of family status was largely zonal (with young families in the outer suburbs and the apartment renters close to the city centre), whereas that for ethnic status indicated significant clusters in both zones and sectors (Herbert and Johnston, *Social Areas in Cities*, 1976, quoted by Savage and Warde 1993, 66).

**q. Robert Ezra Park (1864-1944).** Park attended lectures by Georg Simmel in Berlin, but he was less concerned with the city dweller’s encounter with modernity topics. While Marx, Weber, and Simmel approached the city as an environment subject to larger forces of capitalism, Park and his colleagues studied the city as individuals within a container. He studied the process of adaptation of human groups to their environment. Applying Spencer’s ideas, Park thought “the social organization of the city resulted from the struggle for survival that then produced a distinct and highly complex division of labor, because people tried to do what they were best at in order to compete” (Gottdiener and Hutchinson 2000, 110).

Human societies, to him [Park], have a double aspect: they are made up of interdependent individuals and groups competing with one another for economic and territorial dominance and for favorable ecological niches; but they are also held together by symbolically affirmed solidarity, consensus, and common

purpose. The social and moral order softens the impact of the competitive struggle for existence through social control, normative guidance, and involvement in transindividual tasks (Coser 1979).

Robert Park foreshadow the urbanism theme which, when taken up served as one of the foundation stones of urban sociology and as favorite theme in discourses on social change. He saw in the city a new society, a laboratory offering the sociologist the full range of new social phenomena, and, in particular, the problems linked to the integration and cohesion of a social formation undergoing very rapid change.

**Illustration.** Park outlined a series of research questions to study the human behavior in the urban environment: What elements compose the community? Is the community the product of a selective process? How people get in and out the social group? What are the sex, age, and social composition of the community? He extended his research questions to diverse issues: “What is the social ritual, *i.e.*, what things must one do in the neighborhood in order to escape being regarded with suspicion or looked upon as peculiar” (Park, 1917, in Gottdiener and Hutchinson 2000, 109).

**r. Louis Wirth (1897-1952). Contribution:** His doctoral thesis was published as *The Ghetto* (1925, the same year Park, Burgess and Mckenzie published *The City*). Wirth maintained his interests in city life, minority group behavior, and mass media throughout his influential career. He is best known as the author of a classic (and much discussed) essay on '*Urbanism as a Way of Life*'.

Louis Wirth returned to Simmel to recognize the urban influence of forces originated outside the city. Wirth, in his article for the *American Journal of Sociology*

“Urbanism as a Way of Life” (1938), attempts to demonstrate the specific links between size, density and heterogeneity (people with different backgrounds), on the one hand, and urbanism [dependent variable], on the other. Wirth’s work, although it is rigorously formulated and technically coherent, is a collection of common-sense hypotheses without theoretical coherence. It reflects the advance of the urban sociology at that time. Actually, Wirth’s variables may be incorporated to any theory of social problems. Wirth imposed a style of doing research different to that of previous sociologist of the Chicago School fieldwork. Instead, he centered on census data to derive patterns of urban life.

***Illustration.*** Take any urban problem (say violence) as dependent variable and social heterogeneity (say race), size (number of persons), and persons per area unit (density or persons per square mile) as independent or explicative variables. Wirth would say that there exists a positive and statistically significant relation between the dependent and independent variables.

## 7. What is charisma? Why is it important?

Charisma is a new label for the well-known fact that there are individuals who possess an extraordinary talent for imposing themselves as leaders and obtain voluntary obedience. Many scholars associate charisma to Weber. However, according to the experts on Weber, the term charisma is one of his less valuable contributions. Nowhere does Weber claim to have discovered this phenomenon. He used the term 'charisma' in a contradictory manner, basically in the third volume of *Economy and Society (Wirtschaft and Gesellschaft)* that was never completed and was published after his death. Weber contradicts his own definition as soon as he introduces the idea of 'hereditary charisma', 'royal charisma', and 'clan charisma'. In the indiscriminate use of these concepts, 'charisma' becomes a synonym of 'aura', 'prestige', 'elevated status' or 'authority'. **It is worth to analyze 'charisma' only in the narrower definition of "ability to lead and inspire by sheer force of personality and conviction without aid of material incentives or coercion"** (Andreski 1968, 29). A charismatic leader secures obedience through persuasion and has no organized machinery or institutions at his disposal. Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed (before he had an organized army), John Wesley, or Gandhi (before he had the back up of the party machine), Lenin (before he seized power in Russia) are examples of charismatic leaders. People also think of personages as Caesar, Napoleon, de Gaulle, and Hitler. They were *partially* charismatic because they had the army's support. The opposite of a charismatic leader is a tyrant who rules through naked force and the fear that s/he inspires, or a ruler who is obeyed regardless of his or her personal capabilities and solely in virtue of the office s/he holds.

A charismatic leader remains charismatic so long as the number of followers is small; as soon as organization and hierarchy acquire force independent of the personal qualities of the holder, there is a transformation into an institutional leadership. Routinization adulterates or dilutes the charismatic leadership into an institutionalized form: Prophets are followed by popes, revolutionaries by administrators.

**Why is it important?** As it is stated in answer to question 1 in this exam, most sociologists follow Weber's consideration of charisma. He regarded charisma as one of the principal moving forces in history, despite his clear insight into the fact that charisma is always a very short-lived phenomenon. Even though the change has been much less than the revolutionaries hoped or expected, there has been some change in such a way that the world is never quite the same again. However, we must be very careful determining the importance of the charismatic visionary in 'great' events or social change, as Weber did it. There are very good arguments showing that mistakes and vices of key individuals also have represented "turns of history" as the emergence of 'great men' or charismatic leaders. If they are placed in a wider context, there are several historical accidents in determining historical process: (i) Pascal's famous question of "Cleopatra's nose." If she had had a flat nose, Caesar and Anthony had not fell in love with her, the history of Rome (and therefore our history) would have been different. (ii) "The urinary grain of sand" of Cromwell and the English Constitution. With the royal family undone, Cromwell was able to modify all English political system, except for a little grain of sand that formed in his urethra and caused his death. (iii) "Genetic roulette." If genetic accident had placed a smarter ruler on the throne of Luis XVI or Nicolas II, neither the French nor the Russian revolution would have occurred. And it is

not possible to imagine the second without the first one. (iv) “Venereal disease.” If Henry VIII had not caught syphilis he could have a son as tyrant as himself, and no parliamentary system of government would have developed in England and, therefore, no industrial revolution would have taken place.

Briefly, Weber held his position on the role of charisma in historical events between the hero-worshipping exaggerations of Carlyle and Nietzsche, and the equally unsound predetermined oversimplification of Marx and Engels.

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