CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

READINGS IN SOCIOLOGY

RESOURCE MATERIALS FOR

CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION (CAPE)

SYLLABUS IN SOCIOLOGY

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SOCIOLOGY RESOURCE MATERIAL

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Preface

Sociology, the scientific study of human society, is becoming increasingly popular among Caribbean students. Sociology examines contemporary society, its major social institutions (including how they fit together and how they impact upon individuals), and the dynamics of human relationships. The sociological perspective also provides a basis for the understanding of various social problems, thereby building a foundation for life-long learning and career preparation.

This Reader discusses sociological concepts and principles as they apply to Caribbean society. It covers critical areas of the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE) Sociology Syllabus, the aims of which include:

1.   the development of an understanding of the basic concepts and principles of Sociology;

2.   the development of an understanding of the main theoretical perspectives in Sociology from   the classical to the contemporary period and their application to the Caribbean;

3.   the use of the main research methods of sociologists;

4.   the appreciation of the dynamics of Caribbean society focusing on socio-cultural continuity and change, diversity and similarity, consensus and conflict;

5.   the development of a sense of personal and cultural identity, including a moral responsibility and social commitment, as Caribbean people.

The Reader is divided into three sections. Section One introduces students to the theories and methods of Sociology. Section Two focuses on structures of power and social stratification and Section Three deals with the study of selected social institutions, namely, the family, religion and education. The text follows the topics and structure of the CAPE Sociology syllabus in a reader-friendly format directed at both teacher and student. There are several activities throughout the text to enhance the understanding of the concepts and issues addressed. Sources and further readings are provided for further exploration of the topics.   *– Nasser Mustapha, January 2005*

MODULE 1

SOCIOLOGY, CULTURE AND IDENTITY

WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?

INTRODUCTION

We like to think of ourselves as individuals who are unique in many respects. Though we are different in many ways, we have a lot in common with other people. We all belong to groups. And these groups influence how we think and how we behave. We are not as free as we think, but our thoughts, ideas and behaviour are unconsciously influenced by our contact with social forces.

The subject matter of sociology is not strange to any of us. Since the discipline deals with human social life, we are exposed to sociological experiences on a daily basis. Sociology examines aspects of social life that might otherwise be overlooked or taken for granted.

Defining Sociology

Auguste Comte, who, is said to have been the founding father of the subject, coined the term 'sociology'. The term "Sociology" is said to have its roots in the Greek words *'socio'* meaning 'society' and *'logos'* meaning knowledge. In explaining what is sociology, different sociologists have differing explanations due to the fact that there are many theories in sociology. There is no one set or correct definition of what sociology is. Some sociologists define sociology as the study of the structures in society, while others define it as the study of individuals in society. Thus the focus is on certain parts of society; a general definition therefore is *'the study of human society and human social behaviour'.* To better understand sociology, one needs to examine the nature of sociology.

The Nature of Sociology

- Sociology is the scientific and systematic study of society.

- It involves the study of human social life, groups and societies. Sociologists observe social phenomena and look for recurrent patterns of behaviour since they believe behavioural patterns tend to repeat themselves and are fairly predictable. They also look at how a society develops and maintains its culture and how groups and institutions influence human social behaviour.

- Sociology involves gaining knowledge about the social world from a sociological point of view. The sociological view of society is special because sociologists, unlike laypersons, tend to look at things from a holistic perspective, that is, they look at all aspects of the phenomenon being studied. The layperson, on the other hand, views society from an individualistic position or what we call common sense knowledge.

- Sociologists possess the sociological imagination, which makes their view different from that of the layperson because they are objective and look at the whole of society and not just a certain viewpoint.

The Sociological Imagination

This term "Sociological Imagination" was coined in 1959 by sociologist C. Wright Mills. The concept describes the ability to see the impact of social forces on our lives. It is a special type of awareness of the relationship between an individual and the wider society. It requires us to view our own society as an outsider would, devoid of biases, prejudices, cultural values and attitudes.

It is an awareness that enables a person to see beyond what is apparent, (everyday occurrences) to see the links between their immediate circumstances and other parts of the world (countries, groups, societies), external forces, that help to shape what takes place in that micro-environment.

Chapter 1

DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Origins of Sociology

Sociology developed as a result of the changes that took place in Europe during the late 18th and 19th centuries, that is, the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. The industrial revolution drastically changed the way goods were produced, and consequently the organisation of social life. Prior to the industrial revolution, people farmed and lived in feudal existence with the church influencing their way of life. However, in the industrial era, cities developed due to the emergence of factories and the social structure changed. Traditional structures or institutions such as the family, religion, education and politics were being broken down and replaced by new ones and the influence of the church was declining.

The social thinkers of the time were concerned with these changes, which, to them, fostered chaos and instability in society. Along with these changes, however, major discoveries in the natural sciences were taking place, which gave social thinkers hope for society. The natural sciences made advances such as Newton's Theory which unraveled the mysteries of the natural world. Social thinkers, therefore, believed that the mysteries of the social world could also be unraveled. They believed that the laws of the social world could be discovered and, once they were found, order and stability would be restored to society. Thus, the changes which occurred in Europe along with the discoveries in the physical and natural sciences, led to a new way of thinking about the social world, and scholars turned to science to provide answers to the issues of the day. This resulted in a new discipline called sociology.

Early Sociologists

Auguste Comte (1798-1857)

Comte is considered the founding father of sociology and he outlined *"What a science of society should be".* He stressed that sociology should be scientific, much like the natural sciences. He felt that sociology should be rooted in **positivism,** that is, knowledge should be derived from observable facts, rather than from superstition, fantasy, or other non-empirical (nonverifiable) sources. He believed that the social world was governed by a set of laws, which made it possible for the study of society to be scientific in nature. He felt that by studying society in this way, sociology would help correct the ills of society. Thus sociology was seen as "the queen of all sciences" and sociologists as belonging to a "priesthood of humanity", by Comte, because sociology and sociologists would be able to restore order in society. Comte's work laid the groundwork for the development of Sociology as it is known today. Many of Comte's doctrines were later adapted and developed by social philosophers, especially the Functionalists.

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)

Durkheim is referred to as the first real "sociologist" and he founded the first school of sociology in France in 1887. Durkheim, a functionalist, like Comte was concerned about the changes which occurred in Europe and the chaos and disorder it created in society. The major question that he sought to answer was "What makes social order in society". Once one discovers the answer to this question then social disorder can be understood and prevented in society. The answer, according to Durkheim, was the underlying set of moral rules, norms, beliefs and values that gives members of society the shared feeling of belonging and which holds society together in harmony and equilibrium.

Durkheim is very important in the development of the discipline, first due to his focus on social facts, which he sees as influencing an individual's thoughts and behaviour in society. Durkheim developed the idea of positivism to the study of social facts and carried out one of the first sociological studies, which utilised scientific methods to learn more about "Suicide". Secondly, he established sociological methods in *The Rules of the Sociological Method (1895)*, which outlines methods to be used in studying the social sciences, and are used by many researchers even today.

Karl Marx (1818-1883)

Marx, like Comte, was a well-known philosopher, social scientist and historian. However, unlike Comte, Marx was a revolutionary, which was reflected in his work. Marx also shared Durkheim's interest in society and the changes that were taking place, but adopted a different approach. Marx felt that the Industrial Revolution was responsible for social conflict, inequality, and social polarisations into groups, which he identified as the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Thus, he was of the view that social relation between these groups is characterised by conflict not harmony. Marx is important to the development of sociology, as the founder of what is known as the *conflict perspective*.

Max Weber (1864-1920)

Weber was a German economist and historian and, like Marx, was critical of capitalism and the social class system it produces. However, he thought Marxist thinking was centered on economic determinism. He agreed that economic factors drove society but he also placed importance on ideas and values in shaping society. A major concept developed by Weber, *Verstehen*, which means sympathetic understanding, formed the basis of an area of sociology known as *Interpretive Sociology.* This branch of Sociology is very wide and can be subdivided into many other perspectives. These focus upon the micro aspect of sociology, that is, the small-scale interactions between individuals. Unlike Comte and Durkheim, Weber felt that sociologists can only understand the reality of social actors by seeing the world through other people's eyes. The branches of interpretive sociology include symbolic interaction, ethnomethodology and phenomenology.

The sociologists discussed above have laid the traditional groundwork in the field of sociology. Today the study of sociology continues to be informed by these theorists, even though the work done may be of a more specialised nature. Sociology was based on the study of the industrial society; it has become very specialised/sophisticated in response to the growing complexity of human society.

Sociology has branched out into many spheres among which are:

- Environmental Sociology
- Sociology of Crime

- Sociology of Education
- Sociology of Development

- Sociology of Sport
- Industrial Sociology

The Relationship between Sociology and the Other Social Sciences

Sociology, sometimes referred to as "the queen of all sciences", has something in common with all these other disciplines but it is also distinct in some aspects

Sociology and Psychology

Similarity: Both Sociology and Psychology are concerned with attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, emotions and interpersonal relationships of individuals in society.

Difference: Psychology focuses more on the individual level of social behaviour while sociology considers the individual within the context of the wider social groups in society.

Sociology and Political Science

Similarity: Both Sociology and Political Science are concerned with the government and the administration of society, distribution of power and peoples' attitudes.

Difference: Political scientists analyze the different forms of government and their underlying philosophies and study the political process, whereas a sociologist examines the interrelationship between political structure and behaviour and other aspect of society, such as the economy, religious institutions, and the attitudes of various social groups.

Sociology and Philosophy

Similarity: Both Sociology and Philosophy are concerned with beliefs about the nature of life.

Difference: Philosophy is a system of abstract reasoning that follows specific rules of logic. Sociology is empirical; it seeks to discover information about the real world by gathering data about what people actually do.

Sociology and Anthropology

Similarity: Both Sociology and Anthropology are concerned with social life, including culture, beliefs, decision-making and relationships.

Difference: Anthropology is more the study of the cultural characteristics of societies other than our own and a comparison of their characteristics cross-culturally. Sociology is based on the scientific study of groups and institutions in society.

Sociology and Economics

<u>Similarity</u>: Both Sociology and Economics are concerned with how society produces and distributes goods and services.

<u>Difference</u>: While the economist concentrates on the economy in its own right, sociologist are more likely to consider how the economy affects and is affected by other social processes and institutions.

Development of Sociology in the Caribbean

The Caribbean is a unique region, in that its population consists largely of persons who were rooted from their homelands and forced to remain in the region against their will. The original population, which consisted of Amerindian tribes, were decimated by the effects of colonization and African slaves replaced them. After Emancipation, East Indian and other *indentured* workers were imported to provide the much needed labour on the plantations.

Early sociological theorizing in the Caribbean took the form mainly of social, political, and economic writings with historical underpinnings. The literature concentrated on the period from slavery onward through the period of independence in the 1960s.

The issues, which were discussed, ranged from the legacy of slavery and colonialism, development issues, migration, as well as the 'brain drain' that plagued many of the territories. There is a wealth of literature in these areas, which emanated from historians, economists, social workers, demographers and geographers, but there was an absence of sociologists.

Today, in the Caribbean, much of these writings form the basis for Sociology theorizing. The work of renowned sociologists such as Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Talcott Parsons and Emile Durkheim, form the basic groundwork which informs Caribbean sociological theorizing. Caribbean Sociology, like sociology in other parts of the world, is informed by functionalism, Marxism and symbolic interactionism.

More specific work, which could be applied distinctively to the Caribbean region, was usually informed by work done in other parts of the world. For example, M. G. Smith described the Caribbean as having a **plural** society. Smith drew from J. S. Furnivall's work on plural societies, and applied the concept of plural societies to the Caribbean. R. T. Smith, in writing on family, used as the basic starting point for his analysis, the traditional family forms of European societies, mainly on the nuclear family. To many writers, these *traditional* family forms are viewed as the norm, and any other family structures are seen as deviations from the norm or adaptations.

The early works sought to explain the trends, as well as the reasons underlying the cohesiveness in Caribbean societies. Some of these works also sought to categorise Caribbean societies or identify characteristics that distinguish Caribbean societies. Among other works, which have engaged the attention of sociologists in the Caribbean, is the manner in which the *migrant* populations sought to find solutions to the living conditions which were dictated to them. Other works covered areas such as migration and the "brain drain" which many Caribbean sociologists view as a response to unemployment and harsh living conditions. In *"My Mother Who Fathered Me",* Edith Clarke (1966) looks at migration from a rural Caribbean community. Clarke examines the implications of migration on the community, and the impact on the livelihood of the family members who were left behind.

Family Land is an example of what many writers see as a response to living conditions. Many sociologists claim that *family land* was the ex-slaves' answer to the problem of land scarcity. Through this system, a person provided for those who came after him, by allowing the land to belong to none in particular, but by allowing all, even future generations, the use of the land. Hymie Rubenstein (1987), sought to explain the existence of several families occupying the same plot of land. This was a practice that was not observed in European and Western societies.

Other areas, which have been covered by Caribbean sociologists, include the topic of race and culture. Sociologists and others have been debating whether there has been retention of the culture of the major races, or whether there has been any diffusion.

Some sociologists have also been occupied with women's issues. Patricia Mohammed has done extensive work on women of East Indian descent in the Caribbean, whilst Rhoda Reddock has also looked at the Caribbean women, including their role in history. Reddock interviewed persons in the society to document important facts about the life and times of Tubal Uriah Buzz Butler. Such information should have been otherwise lost to society with the death of the informants concerned. Through this method of research, Reddock was able to document the part played by women in the events that led up to the Butler Riots in Trinidad in the 1930s. Reddock described the part played by Elma Francois, a migrant to Trinidad, and through her work was able to show that Caribbean women had been left out of history just as in other historical writings.

Today the Caribbean has a wealth of sociologists who are making contributions in every sphere of the real world. The following have made invaluable contributions to Caribbean sociology:

(a)	Susan Craig	*Sociological Theorizing in the English Speaking Caribbean: A Review*
(b)	R.T. Smith	*The Negro Family in British Guiana; Family Structure and Social Status in the Villages*
(c)	M.G. Smith	*The Plural Framework of Jamaican Society*

(d)	Bill Riviere	*Contemporary Class Struggles and the Revolutionary Potential of Social Classes in Dominica*
(e)	Angel Quintero Rivera	*The Socio-Political Background to the Emergence of "The Puerto Rican Model" a Strategy for Development*
(f)	Paget Henry	*De-colonization, Tourism and Class/Race Structure in Antigua*
(g)	Elsa Goveia	*Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands at the End of the Eighteenth Century*
(h)	Derek Gordon	*Class, Status and Social Mobility in Jamaica*
(i)	George Beckford	*Persistent Poverty*
(j)	Rex Nettleford	*Emancipation: The Lessons and the Legacy*
(k)	Lloyd Brathwaite	*Social Stratification and Cultural Pluralism*

Sociology as a Science

What Is A Science?

Tischler (l999) defines a science as "a body of systematically arranged knowledge that shows the operation of general laws". Tischler (1999) indicates that the term also refers to "the logical, systematic methods by which that knowledge is obtained". Comte was among the first theorists to advocate the use of scientific principles in the study of the social sciences. His argument was that the behaviour of humans was governed by the same laws of cause and effect as those that pertained to the study of the natural sciences and that this behaviour was measurable. This way of thinking led to the development of a school of thought which Comte called "**positivism**".

In the 20th Century, this term 'positivism' adopted a more scientific stance in which the theorists of the day emphasized scientific verification. However, the positivists have concluded that in general, sociology and the sciences have five characteristics in common.

1.   **It is empirical**

It is based on facts and information obtained through various methods of observation as opposed to speculation or imagination. It is based on what has been seen and recorded.

2.   **It is theoretical**

Information collected through research is organised in the form of theories, which consist of coherent and logically related principles.

According to Haralambos (2000), a theory is a set of ideas that provides an explanation of something. In Sociology there are different theoretical perspectives (different approaches to the study of the same phenomena).

3.   **It is cumulative**

The sociologists builds upon the efforts of the predecessors. Most new theories develop, modify, expand and refine the older ones.

4.   **It is objective**

The sociologist does not allow personal preferences, biases and feelings to influence the research.

5.   **It is non-ethical**

This is related to the previous point. The researcher's own values or opinions should not affect the research findings. The scientist's duty is to discover the truth: to identify, describe, analyse and explain, but not to say whether it is good or bad.

Is Sociology a Science?

According to Giddens (1986), science is the use of systematic methods of research and investigation and the logical analysis of arguments in order to develop an understanding of a particular subject matter. Many researchers are of the view that sociology possesses these characteristics both in its procedures and the character of its findings. Sociological research adopts the following steps of the scientific method.

1.   Sociology studies human behaviour, which is not easily quantifiable (always changing) but sociology has developed approaches to overcome this problem. Sociology depends on 'empirical', research-based facts and not on value judgements or emotions or even opinions. Empiricism restricts knowledge to the domain of experience, and establishes that knowledge should be based on experience. The theory underlying sociology is based on observation or even experiments as Comte had advocated for empiricism.

2.   Sociology is considered to be theoretical since its subject matter is concerned with *knowledge* obtained from observation and experiments and not through speculation.

3.   The cumulative nature of Sociology implies that the knowledge transmitted from one generation to another is built up on knowledge that was compiled by previous generations. In this way, if knowledge is not refuted, it contributes to the stock of knowledge of subsequent generations, and is used as a base for adding to that stock.

4.   Research that is **non-ethical** must be objective, and free from values. The sociologist must not allow personal biases and emotions to influence the work. In studying society, there will be several concepts which the research may not support, for example, single parenting, where women decide to have a family and support that family out of wedlock. Even though the sociologist may not approve of this type of family pattern, the research should not allow personal bias and opinions to creep in and influence the work. This is one of the requirements of a science, that the subject matter be non-ethical, and value free.

The laws of *positivism* dictate that a science can be empirical, theoretical, cumulative, objective and non-ethical. Thus when a body of knowledge conforms to these criteria, it can be deemed scientific. Sociology has been deemed to be empirical, theoretical, cumulative, objective and non-ethical, and as such, it is considered a science.

However, on the other hand, there are those who argue for the study of sociology differently and claim that the methodology of the natural sciences cannot be adhered to in the study of sociology. This school of thought is of the view that sociology is not a science for the following reasons.

1.   The subject matter of sociology is that of human beings and not physical matter, sociological theories cannot predict individual behaviour, because unlike matter, individuals have free will and are unpredictable.

2.   Sociological theories are based on assumptions of existing reality (researcher's reality) which are really based on ideologies that exist in society.

3.   Objective reality does not exist in sociology; sociologists deal with the meanings that people attach to their actions which results in a subjective reality of society.

Another major concern is whether sociology can or should be value free. Theorists such as the interactionists believe that the only way to understand social reality is by studying the subjective meanings given by people.

This debate continues in sociology with those of the positivist school of thought claiming that sociology is a science and the study of society is possible using the methods of the natural sciences. The social action or interactionist theorists claim that sociology deals with people and cannot be studied using the methods of the natural sciences.

SOCIETY

Defining Society

A **society** is any group of people, plant or animal, living together in a group and comprising a single community whose members are interdependent. The word "society" is commonly used to refer to national communities, for example, the *British Society*, or the *Jamaican Society* or subsections of society such as the *rural* society. The term is also used to indicate groups of persons who share a common interest, such as an *agricultural society*, and may even transcend local and regional political boundaries, for example, the *National Geographic Society*, whose members extend worldwide.

How Does Society Work?

Sociology is concerned with the study of human societies, which consist of individuals. It attempts to study the social forces that impact on the lives of the people in a society and the ways in which these lives or societies are affected. In attempting to study any society, individuals may arrive at their own conclusions or perceptions, which are termed 'perspectives'. Sociological perspectives afford a unique vantage point from which to observe the social world. They provide images of society that focus the study on different aspects of society and on different explanations of why society is as it is. The different explanations or theories may be classified into micro-sociological theories and macro-sociological theories.

·   Using a *micro* perspective, sociologists study society using the individual as the focus;

·   Using a *macro* approach, sociologists look at society as being more important than the individual, and, therefore, study society as a whole.

These 'sociological perspectives' are general outlines as to how theorists view social patterns and the assumptions they make about society and individuals. Each perspective provides sociologists with a different view of social life and a starting point for viewing the world. In sociology, there are three main "sociological perspectives" these are:

K   Functionalism

K   Conflict Theory

K   Interactionism

Functionalism examines the relationship between the parts and the whole of the social system which are believed to be functional or positive to society and leads to consensus in society.

Conflict theory studies the divisions that exist between the groups in society and their relationship to the social structures. Unlike the functionalists, they believe that society is characterised by conflict rather than consensus.

The Interactionist Perspective has been credited as taking into consideration the actions of the individual in society and not viewing individuals as passive actors in their own destiny. It views the individual and the actions of the individual as the point of departure for the study and analysis of society.

Macro Sociological Perspectives

Macro perspectives contend that in order to understand the individual, one must first understand that the individual is a product of society. As a result, these perspectives begin by analyzing the society and its component parts in order to comprehend the actions of the individual. Examples of macro-sociological theories in sociology include:

1.   Functional Perspective

2.   Conflict Perspective

Functionalism

Functionalism draws heavily from the ideas of theorists such as Spencer and Durkheim, but has had its roots traced as far back as the founding father of sociology Auguste Comte. The more contemporary functionalism developed from the contributions of several theorists such as the American sociologist Talcott Parsons and others such as Robert Merton, Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore. The functionalist perspective approaches sociology from a **macro** focus, in that emphasis is placed on the society and its components rather than on the individuals in society.

The functionalist approach places emphasis on:

©   Functions   © Interdependence ©   Consensus and   © Equilibrium

Interdependence

Functionalism sees each part as being interrelated and being interdependent and, therefore, contributing to the maintenance of the whole. Change in any part will affect the other parts and will require each part to adapt as necessary. For functionalists, each individual in society has a part to play which leads to interdependence of individuals and this also determines the smooth running of society. Each individual has a **status** in society, and with this status comes a *role* which he or she has to perform. A **role** is the behaviour which is expected of the individual who occupies a given social position or status in a society. Each individual in society has a role or one of many roles which he or she has to play. An individual may be a doctor, which represents his or her position or status in society. Accompanying this status, he or she has a role to play, which may be that of a medical practitioner in a hospital and attend to patients. In addition to that role, the individual may also have to fulfill the role of father to his children, son to his parents, and he may also be a brother, nephew, uncle among other roles.

Equilibrium

Functionalism sees each part of the system as being interrelated and interdependent. The functionalists maintain that each part must be functioning properly and must be fulfilling its functions, and must, therefore, be in equilibrium if it is to contribute to the maintenance of the equilibrium of the whole. Change in these systems must be orderly and any change in one institution results in an orderly movement of the forces within that institution toward equilibrium, thus resulting in the movement of the whole to a new equilibrium which maintains the social order. For example, if there is a shortage in the economy of a certain good, the prices for that commodity will increase drastically, and even be sold in a 'black market' which would then motivate producers to produce more, in search of increased profits. This will stabilise the shortage in the country.

Consensus

The functional approach sees individual behaviour as being governed by norms and values which are generally acceptable in the society. Norms are patterns of behaviour which are specific to a society and may differ from one society to another. Norms may be defined as "*specific rules of behaviour, agreed upon and shared, that prescribe limits of acceptable behaviour" (Tischler, 1999).* Values, on the other hand refer to *"notions of what is good and bad, what is desirable and undesirable" (Tischler, 1999)* in a society. According to the functionalists, these norms and values that are universally adhered to in the society, are embodied in the formal laws of the country and govern social behaviour. This tends to contribute to consensus in the society. If the individual adheres to the norms, he may be rewarded, whereas if the behaviour deviates from the norm, the individual may be punished. A social group is any number of persons who share the same common goals and norms with individuals in the group having specific roles to play. For example, in modern day society, with division of labour, each person has a different part to play in society - there are teachers, lawyers, doctors and garbage collectors.

The **norms** and **values** in a society contribute to maintaining consensus in that society. These norms are not expressed in written or formal forms, but they are passed on in the society from one generation to the next. These norms and values are passed on from one generation to another, through the socialization process. According to the functionalists, there is a general consensus in the society concerning these norms and values. This contributes to the maintenance of social order in the society. Any deviation from these norms and values incurs **sanctions** on the individual by other members of the society.

Sanctions may be defined as "*rewards and penalties used by a group's members to regulate an individual's behaviour*" (Tischler, 1999). Sanctions may be *positive* or *negative.* Positive sanctions encourage certain behaviours while negative sanctions discourage the individual from performing that particular act in the future. Sanctions may also be *formal* and *informal.* Formal sanctions may be punishments by the law of the land, such as prison sentences, or public recognition of an individual's accomplishments or good deeds. Informal sanctions can take the form of congratulations on an accomplishment (positive), or stares or facial expressions to reflect disapproval (negative sanctions).

Functions

According to the functionalist perspective, society is a *system,* which consists of a number of components or institutions, such as the state, the family, religion, the economy and education. The functionalists envisage each of the parts or components as contributing to society, just as each organ in the body contributes to the efficient running of the whole. For the functionalists, each part of society is, therefore, performing a function or functions, which are necessary to the maintenance of order in the society.

Functionalism perceives the different parts of society as contributing positively to the operation or functioning of the system as a whole. The functionalist perspective perceives each system as having certain needs which must be fulfilled in order for social life to develop. The family, for example, performs tasks such as reproduction so that the population would be reproduced and social life would be maintained. In general, the family performs functions such as nurturing the young and *socialising* its young so that they will be able to take their place in society, eventually.

What is Socialisation?

Socialisation is the process whereby individuals learn about the culture of their society. Implicit in the socialisation process is the learning of values. Children are likely to learn and develop the social values from their parents. By observing these individuals they learn behaviours that are acceptable and those which are not. The socialisation process occurs from the moment they are born and continues throughout the adult life.

There are two types of socialization, namely, **primary** and **secondary**.

♦ **Primary socialization**

This begins during childhood. Children look at the way the adults in their environment behave and they learn which actions constitute acceptable behaviour. Interaction with friends in the school and peers, also contribute to the socialisation process. The family is the key institution involved in the primary socialisation process and is responsible for training the child in basic social skills. Primary socialisation teaches the child correct behaviour, and other skills such as the use of language to communicate and how to take a bath.

♦ **Secondary Socialisation**

The school (education system) is responsible for the secondary socialisation process whereby more specific training and skills are learnt. This institution prepares the individual for work and public life. Interaction with teachers and peers in the education system prepares the individual for the world of work. It socializes the individual into working with time, getting to work on time as well as how to interact with peers and those in authority.

The agents or institutions, which are responsible for the socialisation process, include:

© Peers © Schools © Mass media © Church

The Structural-Functional Perspective

The **structural-functional perspective** explains society as a complex system with many institutions or parts which work together to promote solidarity and stability. This perspective focuses on **social order**, **functions** and **systems**. Sociologists associated with the structural functional perspective include Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim.

The Social-Conflict Perspective

The Social-Conflict Perspective sees society as characterised by inequality which perpetuates conflict and social change. This perspective focuses on conflict, change and evolution of society. Karl Marx has been credited for much of the ideas associated with this theory.

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory originated with the writings of Karl Marx (1818 - 1883). Central to this perspective is the tension that is present in society. In Marx' analysis of the capitalist mode of production, he identified two classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, based on the part played in production and the relationship to the means of production. Marx claimed that the capitalist mode of production promotes differences in wealth and power in society. Due to the distribution of wealth in this mode of production, some groups are more privileged than others and are able to exercise control over those who do not own capital. According to Marx, the dominant groups not only controls the resources but because of their position in society, they are able to maintain the status quo through the institutions that are present in society, such as the education system, and the church. The worker in the capitalist society will be alienated from the end product of his labour, and the surplus he produces will be appropriated by the dominant group.

Marxist theory claims that the status quo will be maintained up to a point in time, and the proletariat will continue to serve the bourgeoisie, and aspire to their goals and ideals. However, with time, the underprivileged group will develop a class-consciousness which will enable it to move as one group and not as individuals. This class-consciousness will lead to the downfall of capitalism through a violent upheaval. Conflict will lead to tensions and hostility in society over goals and values and the consequence will, according to Marx resu1t in violence.

For Marx, society evolved in a linear trend where societies have progressed from ancient slavery to feudalism and then capitalism. Conflict theory indicated that the capitalist society is not the ideal, and with the development of class-consciousness, the status quo will be overthrown, the result being communism. Marx saw communism as the ultimate society, with all societies tending toward this ideal. In the communist system, Marx indicated that there would be a more even distribution of resources in what he termed a 'classless' society.

The Interactionist Perspectives

The Interactionist perspective focuses on individuals and their interpretation of the social world. Unlike the macro theorists who study the structures of society, the interactionist focuses on the individual. They view individuals as creators of society who actively create the structures in society through their everyday routine actions. Thus sociology needs to study how people act and to understand the reason and meaning behind their actions. The Interactionist Perspective includes the following approaches:

- Symbolic Interactionism

- Ethnomethodology

- Phenomenology

- Dramaturgy

Symbolic Interactionism

This perspective was developed out of the work of George Herbert Mead.

Symbolic interactionism assumes that individuals place meanings on objects in the environment, and it is these meanings that determine behaviour in the society. There are three core elements to symbolic interactionism:

1. the Symbol;

2. the Self;

3. the Interaction.

The Symbol

Symbolic interactionism assumes that individuals place meanings on objects in the environment, and it is these meanings which determine behaviour in the society. Mead claims that for sense to be made of the real world and the actions of other individuals, there must be *shared symbols*, that is, symbols which assist in all members sharing a common perception of reality. The world is, therefore, composed of symbols that are created by humans to give meaning or order in society. Such symbols include language which facilitates communication among individuals and acts as a reference point from which individuals can base their interaction.

The Self

Mead refers to the individuals in society as "actors". He elaborates that the mind and the self are socially constructed in a social process whereby individuals or social actors interact and out of this interaction each person internalizes his perception of how other persons visualize him. The individual's notion of oneself, Mead refers to as "I" and the notion which we perceive others that have of us, he called the "Me". This is important because reference groups or what Mead termed "the generalized other" influences interaction in society.

Interaction

According to Mead, no interaction is possible unless individuals are aware of others' intention in society. In society, individuals assume that they share common understandings of the symbols (e.g. language) and then place themselves in the place of others, and react accordingly. Thus interaction in society depends on the meaning that individuals place on things and on how they are perceived by others in society.

Symbolic Interactionism emphasizes three principles:

1.   **Ascribed Meanings**: The actions of human beings are based on the meanings that they ascribe to objects or things.

2.   **Communication**: The meanings which individuals place on things, evolved out of their interaction and contact with other individuals.

3.   **Interpretation**: The individual undertakes an interpretive process through which he/she assigns meanings to the things in the environment.

Ethnomethodology

The American sociologist Harold Garfinkel founded ethnomethodology, in the early 1960s. This perspective emphasizes the way in which people make sense of their social world. It is said to be the study of commonsense practical reasoning.

Ethnomethodology takes the view that social life appears to be orderly but in fact it is very chaotic; social order is constructed in the minds of the individuals. According to Garfinkel, this order is achieved through a process called "the documentary method". This is where individuals, as social actors, make sense of social life by observing a set of unwritten rules which guide routine situations in society. He illustrated the method through an experiment that was carried out among students. Students were asked to speak with someone about their problems, to which random responses were given to the students. The students then tried to make sense of the responses that they had obtained, even if these responses did not make sense. Garfinkel argued that the students were, in many instances making sense of a senseless interaction. Students were constructing a social reality to give order to their senseless reality. Garfinkel suggested that people use this method in their daily lives to make sense of statements or symbols in the context in which it occurs.

Ethnomethodology suggests that all meanings are subjective and as a result, reality is purely subjective or socially constructed to create a sense of order.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a school of philosophy that attempts to explain social action by studying the phenomena or human experience first hand. Alfred Schutz adapted phenomenology from the work of Edmund Husserl. This theory attempts to discover the essence of the objects being studied in society.

Phenomenological studies require that the researcher actually experience the phenomena being investigated because it is the only way the true meaning can be discovered by having lived experiences.

Dramaturgy

Erving Goffman developed this line of analysis called dramaturgy by claiming that people 'stage' social life. In Goffman's book, _The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life_, he discusses impression management, and how this explains individual behaviour.

 According to Goffman, social interaction by individuals is similar to that of actors in a play. To be accepted by the audience, the actor has to portray his role convincingly. In order to achieve this, he practises impression management. The actor on stage follows a script to portray his or her character, the audience is only allowed to view the front stage activities and not the activities backstage if the performance is to be convincing.

Individuals in society adopt similar roles in everyday interaction, that is, a "front stage" and a "back stage". The role that the person adopts depends on their audience.   According to Goffman, the "front stage" is what the individual wants the world to see and the "back stage" is what is kept out of the view of the world, only certain individuals are privy to the back stage. In life, individuals are like actors and certain roles entail a certain type of behaviour which is expected of the individual if he or she is to be accepted.

Thus individuals in society portray themselves in different ways because of what they think people expect from them and what they want people to think of them.   The individual puts forward an impression that he or she wants people to accept and believe. This presentation would differ depending on the audience or group involved in the interaction.

Chapter 2

How do we Study Society?

In explaining how societies or parts of societies work, sociologists attempt to go beyond opinion or speculation. Social researchers provide evidence to support their theory or claims to the operation of society. Sociological theorizing is divided into two major categories, the macro perspectives and the micro perspectives. The theoretical orientation of the sociologist would greatly influence the methodology and research methods used by researchers in carrying out social research in society.

Macro and Micro Perspectives

Macro perspectives attempt to construct theories that place emphasis on the wider societal constraints on individuals' action. These theories assume that man is a product of society and as such individuals have no control of their actions but rather are passive beings whose actions are shaped by the structures in society. Any explanation of human action must, therefore, start by examining the structures of society. Focus is on external factors that can be observed and measured objectively in explaining the working of society. Macro theories advocate the positivist approach to research.

Micro or Social Action Perspectives

Social action theory attempts to discover the assumptions underlying the routine taken for granted action of everyday life. According to this approach, to understand the working of society, the focus must be on the individuals' themselves to understand small-scale interaction in society. The theories under this category are symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology and phenomenology. The perspectives advocate the interpretivist approach to research.

Methodology

Any academic subject requires the use of a methodology to reach its findings.   Methodology examines how sociologist gather information and construct or develop theoretical explanation for action. In sociology, due to the division in theoretical thought, there is also a division in use of methodological tools in conducting social research. There are researchers who use quantitative methods and those who use qualitative methods.

Quantitative Data

Macro theorists advocate the use of similar methods to those in the natural sciences. They are positivist and believe that sociology is a science. They argue that social sciences are made up of facts which are measurable and as such the collection of data should be done objectively and should be value free. They also emphasize the need and importance of scientific verification and to carry out such measurement. They use quantitative methods.

Quantitative data are presented in the form of statistics and various methods of statistical analysis may be employed.

Qualitative Data

The qualitative approach is used by social action theorists who reject the idea that social sciences can be studied with the same methods as the natural sciences. The quantitative approach is seen as inadequate for collecting and explaining social reality since the subject matter involves the study of human beings. Qualitative research is more personal and subjective in nature since theorists believe that to fully understand the phenomena being studied, the researcher needs to experience it himself or herself.

Qualitative data takes the form of narratives and in-depth description of social phenomena being researched. Research methods of the qualitative nature are observation, case studies and unstructured interviews.

Sources of Data

Different methods of data collection will yield different types of data depending on the subject matter that is being investigated. The data source varies on the nature of the study. The data can be obtained in two ways, the use of **secondary** or **primary** data.

Primary Data

This consists of data that are collected by the researchers themselves during the course of their study. Examples include surveys, observation, case studies and longitudinal research.

Secondary Data

This is data that already exist and used by researchers in the course of their study. Examples include official statistics, government reports and personal documents.

Factors influencing the choice of Research Methods:

1.   The theoretical orientation of the researcher.

2.   Practicality, that is, the amount of funding and time available.

3. The nature of the subject matter being studied. This plays a decisive role due to the fact that if one is investigating criminal activity, participant observation would not be used as a result of the danger to the researcher.

4. The objectives of the study.

Process of Data Collection

Research Methods

These are ways in which sociologists gather data. Research Methods include:

- **Surveys**

- **Observation**

- Document Study

- Cross-sectional and Longitudinal Study

Surveys

A survey is a study that involves the collection of data from a large group of people. This method is useful when the researcher wants to question a large number of individuals from the population. The survey usually involves the use of questionnaires. The questionnaires can be given to the chosen respondents, directly, to be completed or can be administered to the respondents in the form of a structured interview. Thus, questionnaires and interviews can be used in a survey.

Questionnaire

Questionnaires comprise pre-set printed questions that are handed out or mailed to respondents to be completed and returned to the researcher. The questions are administered to all the respondents in the same order.

Structured Interviews

Structured interviews involve the administration of questionnaires orally by an interviewer to the respondents. The interviewers read the questions from the questionnaire to the respondents and record their responses.

Advantages of the Survey Method

1. The survey is said to be very reliable. Reliability is easier to ascertain since the questions are standardized and other researchers can easily check the findings of the research.

2. Use of the survey allows for large quantities of data to be collected from a large sample in fairly short space of time.

3. Generalizations can be made from findings of the research since data are collected from a large representative sample. This assists in theory building or formulation.

4. Data collected can be easily quantified and coded and with the aid of computers, data can be analysed quickly and efficiently.

Disadvantages of the Survey Method

1. Validity of the findings from the survey is sometimes questioned. Respondents may give incorrect answers or may interpret questions differently and thus introduce bias in the data.

2. There is a low return rate for mailed questionnaires and many of the questionnaires when returned are incomplete.

3. There is little scope to give additional information by respondents especially in closed questions where there are multiple choices from which a response must be selected.

4. Interviewer bias is another strong criticism against this method. The presence of the interviewer may influence the respondents' answers since they attempt to impress the interviewer and thus bias the data.

5. According to some theorists, the findings from surveys tend to reinforce the existing status quo in society. The researcher determines the type of information being collected since they develop the questionnaires and the findings from the research favours powerful groups in society since they fund the studies.

Observation

The role that the researcher, as an observer, adopts in the study depends on the type of observation being undertaken in the study. The researcher must decide whether the research would be overt or covert and whether it would be participant or non-participant in nature.

Covert observation

In covert observation, the researcher pretends to be a member of the group being studied without revealing his identity as researcher. The group is unaware that the researcher is studying them.

Advantage of covert observation

1.   Researcher is able to collect data to which he would not have gotten assess if his identity as a researcher was revealed to the group.

2.   Data would be reliable due to the fact that the group being studied is unaware that they are being studied and thus would not modify their everyday behavior.

Disadvantages of covert observation

1.   The researcher's life may sometimes be in danger if the false role is discovered during the course of the study.

2.   The researcher sometimes has to engage in immoral, illegal or distasteful activities since he/she must partake in the activities of the group.

3.   Recording of the data is sometimes very problematic as a result of the need for secrecy by the researcher.

4.   It is seen as unethical to study individuals without their knowledge or consent.

Overt Observation

In overt observation, the researcher reveals his identity as an observer to the group being investigated. Thus the group is aware of the researcher's identity.

Advantages of overt observation

1.   The researcher is able to play an honest and clear role in conducting the study.

2.   It is seen as being ethical since access was requested from the group to conduct study.

Disadvantages of overt observation

1.   The researcher may be denied access to certain activities that occur in the group.

2.   The researcher may be unable to get valid information since his/her presence would influence people's behavior.

Participant Observation

The researcher joins the group being studied and participates in the activities of the group. This can either be overt or covert observation, depending on the researcher.

Advantages of participant observation

1. It's the least likely method that would result in sociologists imposing their reality on the social world they are studying. Interactionists consider this the best means of obtaining a valid picture of reality.

2. The researcher is better able to understand the group's behavior or the phenomena being studied since he/she goes through many of the experiences of the observed group.

3. Participant observation provides in-depth information that helps in generating new hypotheses and in challenging existing theories.

Disadvantages of participant observation

1. The method is very time-consuming and demanding on the researcher. Participant observation can sometimes take years to complete and it requires the physical presence of the researcher to proceed. The researcher, therefore, has to give up his way of life and adopt the habits and behavior of the group being studied.

2. The scope for use of this method is seen as limited since many areas cannot be studied using participant observation, for example, criminal activities.

3. The samples are too small and it is not recommended for generalizations to be made from the findings since they only apply to the specific group that was studied.

4. In some cases, validity may be questioned, especially where the overt method was used, since the presence of the researcher would result in the group acting differently from the norm.

5. The positivists view this method as being unscientific and non-systematic and take the position that findings cannot be replicated. It is seen as being subjective rather than objective.

6. The recording of the data is very problematic since the researcher cannot write notes or use recording devices during group activities since this would influence the group's behavior. The researcher in most instances relies on memory since information is recorded later when the researcher is alone.

Non-Participant Observation

The researcher does not participate in activities of the group but merely watches and records the activities of the group without interference.

Advantages of non-participant observation

1. There is a greater chance of eliminating bias in the study as compared to the method of participant observation.

2. Recording of data is easier since the researcher is not involved in the group's activities but is at a distance.

3. The researcher is less likely to get emotionally involved with the group and thereby lose objectivity.

Disadvantages of non-participant observation

Similar criticisms to those of participant observation. However. some interactionists view this method as being too objective claiming that the researcher needs to be more subjective if true reality is to be uncovered.

Sampling

In conducting a research study, it is not necessary to obtain data from the entire population. Researchers select a sample that is manageable and yet gives the necessary information. Sampling is of two types, random (probability) sampling and quota (non-probability) sampling.

Random Sampling

This is a sample which gives each member in the population an equal chance of being represented. This type of sampling includes:

(a)   Simple Random Sampling;

(b)   Stratified Random Sampling;

(c)   Systematic Random Sampling.

Quota Sampling

The necessary sample is chosen without any element of randomness being involved. The characteristics of the population influence the size of the sampling. If the population is homogenous a very small sample may be selected. If it is heterogeneous a bigger sample may be required.

Ethical Issues in Research

The term 'ethics' is normally used to refer to morals or values. In sociology, the term ethics is used to refer to principles of human conduct and is of significance, especially when conducting research. Ethics may generally differ from one culture to another. There are many ethical considerations, which guide the conduct of social research.

Informed consent is one of the basic principles that guide researchers in their investigations. In conducting surveys or interviews, the researcher has a duty to identify himself or herself and inform the respondents about the nature and purpose of the study. Sometimes the respondents are even informed about the results of the study in which they participated. In approaching potential respondents, the researcher should ensure that they are above the legal consent age; if not, parental consent should be obtained, in order to allow the respondents the opportunity to participate. The researcher should not coerce or force anyone to participate in the study in question; participation should be on a voluntary basis. Special populations such as prisoners, employees, and students require special considerations such as approaching the gatekeepers of the community and obtaining authorization to conduct research.

Respondents must also be assured of anonymity and confidentiality, that is, the information that they have given, should in no way be used against them. In addition to the promise of providing the respondent with a copy of the findings, the researcher should outline the benefits or effects, which will accrue from the results of the study.

Ethical considerations also arise with regard to sponsors of research. Sponsors may include private firms or employers who contract the researcher to conduct the research on their behalf. Sometimes such situations warrant the researcher to compromise his standards and perform the research according to guidelines issued by the sponsor. The guidelines may require the researcher to violate certain ethical considerations when conducting research. It is up to the researcher to decide whether he or she would compromise his or her ethics and, therefore, quit the study.

In writing up the research, the researcher has a responsibility to the public and the academic world to report his/her findings truthfully and honestly, without any bias. Subjective bias should be left out of the research process, so that the research will not be invalidated. In addition, findings should not be distorted to suit the researcher's purpose or that of the sponsor's. These findings should be reported without any distortion, especially since future research can depend on such findings as a guide.

Activity 2.1

Please write one sentence in your notebook on each of the following ethical issues.

Ethical Issues

- **Informed Consent**

- **Anonymity**

- **Confidentiality**

- **Responsibility to sponsors**

- **Responsibility to report findings**

Chapter 3

CULTURE, IDENTITY and GLOBALIZATION

Defining Culture

Some aspects of human behaviour are genetically transmitted, while other aspects are learnt. Culture refers to the set of beliefs and values that are common to a group of people. When people interact and communicate with other members of their group, the culture of the group is reflected in the group's shared habits. In the "Mirror of Man", Clyde Kluckhohn referred to culture as " the total way of life of a people". Kluckhohn describes culture as "the social legacy the individual acquires from his group".

In defining culture, Ralph Linton (1945) states that "the culture of a society is the way of life of its members; the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation".

These definitions of culture indicate that culture is shared among the individuals in a group. It is not peculiar to one or a few individuals, but it is common to all members of the group in society. The people in a society eat similar foods, dress alike, and share other similarities. Definitions of culture also stress that culture is learnt and that learning plays a key role in the transmission of culture from one generation to another. Individuals are not born with culture, but the children in a society learn culture from the adults in their environment. The process of learning culture is known as *enculturation* and it is a life-long process. There is a temporal dimension to culture and this in itself implies that culture is dynamic and is subject to change.

Definitions of culture also state that culture is unique to mankind and not to other groups of animals. It is a body of learnt behaviours, which determines how the group of people or the society behaves – what is socially acceptable and what is not. There are aspects, which in time may be lost to the group or the society. This suggests that culture is not static.

Culture is also *symbolic.* It is characterised by symbols which represent deeper meanings or which hold meanings for the members of the respective society. For example, an emblem depicting skull and cross bones, may be symbolic of danger, while in certain countries it may symbolize other meanings. On the high seas, a flag with these symbols may bring fear to the minds of sailors since it may represent the presence of pirates. In some societies the symbol may have no meaning attached to it all.

Culture can also be *adaptive,* where individuals in society adapt to changes in their environment and as a result there is a change in their way of life.

Subculture

The term 'subculture' is commonly used to refer to the culture of members of different strata in society. A subculture is a smaller culture that may exist within a larger culture. It is believed that each group develops its own subculture, which is characterised by certain norms, attitudes, values, and beliefs, which are peculiar to that social group.

In many societies there are groups who may share a set of distinctly similar cultural traits. These groups are said to have a subculture. Such groups are common among the East Indians and Africans in the Caribbean. Both groups have brought with them cultural traits from India and Africa respectively. These traits may have remained with them from the times of their ancestors, and may be present today in the form of language, food, dress, religion and rituals. Subcultures may be classified as:

1. Ethnic: Certain groups especially immigrants have maintained their original traditions, or some aspects of their original traditions.

2. Occupational: Certain groups in society are identified as belonging to certain occupations.

3. Religious: Certain people belong to differing religious beliefs, such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and yet they participate in the wider culture of society.

4. Political: Membership in a political party influences the lifestyles of its members.

5. Geographical: The area to which people belong is characteristic of a certain way of life, for example, people living in the rural areas have a different way of life from those living in urban areas.

Ethnocentrism

The tendency for people to use their culture to judge other cultures is known as ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is basically the general belief that the ethnic group or culture with which an individual identifies is superior to all other ethnic groups or cultures. The individual uses his/her culture to evaluate or make judgments concerning other individuals. The ethnocentric view that a group or its members are inferior may be expressed through prejudice, contempt, or acts of violence.

Identity

Whilst culture determines the accepted behaviours for members of a society, identity refers to an individual's relationship to the environment with which he/she interacts and the persons with whom he/she interacts. It is the sense of self that the individual conjures up.

An individual can possess any number of identities. This array of identities can be represented in the form of concentric circles. The first sphere or circle would be represented by the characteristics of the individual. These characteristics are unique to that individual and help to differentiate him/her from any other individual. The second sphere is that of the immediate family to which the individual belongs. The individual can be represented as a member of that family. In the instance of a male family member, he may be a father, a brother, a son, an uncle, a nephew and a grandson all at the same time.

There are other factors which represent a person's identity. The individual possesses an occupational identity, identities due to political affiliation and religion as well as identity as a citizen of a particular country or geographical location.

Globalisation

To different people, globalisation embodies different things. To the economist, the process of globalisation signifies an increase in trade and capital flows across national boundaries. This is the means whereby it is hoped that there will be a more even distribution of incomes and resources in a 'global society', where there will be no cultural boundaries.

Advocates for globalisation, view a 'free' world whereby technology and capital would be free to move across geographical and international boundaries without restrictions. They see this process as one which is beneficial to developing countries since they would benefit from the technical know-how and capital of the richer countries. The argument is that globalisation can improve living standards for everyone.

Opponents of globalisation, claim that it is the process which empowers the transnational corporations; it enables them to traverse the globe in their search for increased profits. In doing so, they are free to exploit the people and resources of the developing countries, which are at the mercy of these transnational corporations.

Globalisation influences all aspects of human life. It impacts on culture, in that individuals are now exposed to various cultures from all over the world. The influence is seen in the Caribbean where youths of the Caribbean have embraced a lot of American culture. Cable television and other media have resulted in American music, sports and food (to name a few) being adopted by the youths of the region. The development of the Internet has facilitated easier access to different cultures by the click of a button. Through globalisation, Kentucky Fried Chicken, MacDonalds, Pepsi and Coca Cola are present in countries across the globe and may even be considered as essentials for living by some.

Many people view globalisation as a threat to their national culture and identity. Critics are of the opinion that the culture of the larger western countries will be imposed on the identity of smaller, less vociferous countries.

Plantation Society and Culture

The arrival of Christopher Columbus in the West Indies' in 1492, initiated the development of a very diversified population in the region. On arrival in the West Indies, the Spanish were greeted by the native Arawaks and Caribs. Other groups, such as the English, French, and Dutch later ventured into the region in the search of wealth and prosperity.

With the almost decimation of the native population who provided the labour force for the Europeans, the need arose for a labour supply from outside the region. This was provided by the African slaves who were imported from the African continent, for the purpose of working on the sugar cane plantations. When slavery was abolished in the 19th Century, the need for a labour supply was satisfied by importing 'indentured labour' from India and China. This chain of events led to the diversity of the population which is found in the Caribbean today.

The Indigenous People

On his arrival in the West Indies in 1492, Columbus encountered the native Indians. He recorded in his journal: "They should be good servants and intelligent, for I observed that they quickly took in what was said to them." (Williams, 1983). Columbus believed that the Indians could be put to good use. He described the Caribs as "a wild people fit for any work, well proportioned and very intelligent and who when they have got rid of their cruel habits to which they have been accustomed, will be better than any other kind of slaves" (Williams, 1983). It was even documented that on his third voyage, Columbus shipped some six hundred of these people back to Spain, which Williams (1983) describes as the beginning of the slave trade, even though it was an outward cargo from the West Indies.

The Indians were exploited as slaves. They were stripped of their land by the Spaniards and tributes were exacted from them. They were also forced to work in the mines under conditions that were too exacting for them. The result was that the population of native Indians quickly dwindled. In 1492, the population of Hispaniola was estimated at between 200,000 and 300,000, and by 1508 it had decreased to 60,000 and in 1514 to 14,000 (Williams, 1983). This was the state of events that led to the importation of the Africans as slaves.

The Africans

African slaves were obtained by traders who traveled to Africa, and either captured their victims or purchased those persons who had been enslaved for one reason or another. The Africans were then transported across the ocean in slave ships, and if they survived, on arrival in the West Indies, they were sold or auctioned off to the plantation owners.

The slaves provided the labour on the plantations or estates which were largely engaged in sugar cane cultivation. The owners of these large estates were Europeans who were usually resident in the mother country and were known as absentee owners. These plantations were engaged in mono-crop production, that is, the production of one crop. Life on the estate was all-encompassing. There was a church on each estate, a Great House in which the master or owner lived when he was there, and each estate also included a place to care for the sick.

Each island contained several estates, and each estate concentrated on producing sugar for export. Goods were not manufactured for local use, and all needs were satisfied by imports from other countries with the economy concentrating on the production of one commodity for export. Each estate existed in isolation, and its residents were bound to the estates, with only brief exceptions on market day when they would meet at the local market and interact with other residents from other estates. Interaction between slaves from different plantations was discouraged.

Slavery was abolished between 1834 and 1863 (1834 in Anglophone islands, 1848 in Francophone islands, and 1863 in Dutch islands), and the ex-slaves left the estates in large numbers (Augier, Gordon et al, 1960). They turned to any available land and cultivated other crops such as cassava, ginger and arrowroot, and produced items such as honey and beeswax, and they also turned to occupying themselves as craftsmen. They did not wish to work on the estates.

The estates were well-organised systems in which the master was the superior power. On the estates, the masters or the plantation owners occupied the upper stratum and represented the law in that estate. Other whites occupied positions as doctors, lawyers, clergymen, missionaries and school teachers.

There was an intermediate class in the plantation society which comprised the *free coloureds*. In this group, there were free mulattos or the "*gens de couleur*" who were usually offspring of the white planters and slaves. In this group there was also black slaves who had been given their freedom by their owners in return for some exceptional service and old or disabled slaves who were released to save on the costs of providing health care and food. Some slaves were also allowed to accumulate savings and purchased their freedom with their master's permission (Augier, Gordon et al, 1960). This group of persons was not encouraged to own land, especially in the English islands. They were also prevented in different ways, from entering large-scale agriculture, so they had to turn to other avenues for their livelihood.

The lowest stratum on the plantations, were the Africans who worked on the plantations as slaves. Among the slaves, there was a system of stratification whereby the slaves were subdivided according to their status or their abilities. The slaves who worked in the house or close to the master, and did not perform the menial field tasks, were of the highest prestige and were most respected. Next, there were the field slaves who were divided into groups or gangs according to their ability to work. Those who were able to do the most difficult tasks such as planting, reaping, and carting occupied one group while gangs of slaves, some of whom would tend the canes as they grew, and others would run errands were classified into other groups.

The Plantation Society

1. Each plantation existed in isolation and represented a self-contained, organised social system.

2. The plantation was a place of residence as well as a place of work.

3. There were no linkages with the other islands or plantations, except through the legislative system.

4. The main purpose of the plantation was to produce a crop (sugar) for export and all other needs were satisfied by imports.

5. There was a system of stratification based on race and colour which was pyramidal in shape, that is, the whites (planter class) occupied the uppermost strata, and they were fewest in number. The Africans occupied the lowest strata but they were the greatest in numbers, with the mulattos or coloureds in the middle.

By the time slavery was abolished, many plantations had gone bankrupt. After the abolition of slavery in 1838, the plantation did not occupy the same position as it did before. The ex-slave was now free to work his own land or work for the more profitable plantations, or he was able to practice a trade, or to do petty trading. However after slavery, the colonial governments, maintained their hold on their colonies. The education system in their respective colonies, the legislature and other systems, were patterned along those of the respective mother countries.

The plantation, which has been described as an organised social system, contributed significantly to the way of life of the Caribbean and pervaded all aspects of social, cultural, economic, and political life. The plantation was the major institution which played a significant role in the development of Caribbean culture. The islands were developed along the lines where items were generally brought in from abroad to satisfy the needs of the people. Even technology was imported. Caribbean economies were dominated by mono-crop production, usually staple production for export. Best (1968) sees this importation as one that develops foreign tastes in goods and services and, as a result, a foreign culture.

During slavery, the culture which the Africans brought with them to the Caribbean, was discriminated against in the interest of production. On the plantations, slaves were not allowed or encouraged to practice the religions and beliefs that they brought with them. They aspired to the culture of the Europeans. Many were converted to Christianity since the African religions were viewed as pagan. Even after slavery, the Africans aspired to the European practices. Sir Charles Metcalfe (Ryan, 1991) noted that the ex-slaves' dress rivaled the clothes of the planter class. During slavery, there was no room for social mobility in the plantation system. The plantation represented what is known as a closed system. The society in the plantation was stratified on a basis of race and colour. After emancipation, there was limited social mobility and "people came to hinge their future on the emergence of particular individuals who by acquiring the culture of the metropolitan system are then able to deal with it on behalf of the population". (Best, 1968).

Production in the plantations was dominated by the outside territories. The planters were the decision-makers who decided what should be done, but they were usually absentee, since they resided in the mother country and left the plantations in the care of an overseer. Like the plantation society, production in the colony was still dominated by decision-makers from outside the system and this continues to be so. These overseers are the multinational corporations, which are headquartered in the developed world. This relationship, in which there is dominance from external forces, is maintained today by the multinational corporations.

The plantation system was all-pervasive. Horowitz (1971) sees it as a societal design which perpetuates a society divided into segments – one large and unfree, and another that was small and free and which controlled power in the society. Beckford notes that in the 20th century, after emancipation, Caribbean society was still modeled along the lines of the plantation society. Best (1968) remarks on the lack of social integration and saw the populations which were brought from all over the world existing as a plural society with no basis for integration. M. G. Smith, (1965) writing about Jamaican society, also observed that nationalism was slow to develop, and that the abolition of slavery "freed a race, but failed to create a society."

The Plural Society Thesis

M.G. Smith outlined the **plural society** thesis as it applies to Caribbean societies. Smith's work centered around a concept introduced by J. S. Furnivall, a Dutch economist. Smith believed that "people's culture form the matrix of their social structure...". In his thesis on Caribbean societies, Smith explains that a common system of basic institutions is shared in homogeneous societies. However, in plural societies, alternative and exclusive institutions exist and as a result the basic institutions are not shared. Smith does not see such plural societies as being stratified by classes, but there may be internal classification among the various races. In these societies, he sees the major cultural elements, the whites, Africans, East Indians, and Chinese, each practicing different forms of the common institutions such as marriage, family and religion.

Smith (1965) examined Grenadian society where he identified two sections of the society - the whites and blacks. He also studied Jamaican society *(The Plural Framework of Jamaican Society,* 1965), in which he identified sections in society such as the whites, black and brown. In Jamaican society, Smith identified alternative forms of all institutions. In looking at the family, he recognised other forms besides the nuclear family.

Smith's thesis holds as follows:

1.   to define the social structure, we must analyse the institutional system" (Smith, 1969);

2.   homogeneous societies are those with one set of institutions whilst those with alternative institutions are heterogeneous;

3.   those societies where the basic institutions (family, education, religion) are not shared are *plural* societies;

4.   the main cultural sections in the Caribbean are whites, browns, blacks, with East Indians and Chinese in some territories.

Brathwaite (1960), one of the critics of Smith's plural society thesis redefines a plural society as "*one composed of such varying groups, each with its own subculture, that only a few cultural symbols are shared by all".*   Brathwaite criticizes Smith's theory on the following grounds:

1.   every society is 'pluralistic' in that there is no 'homogeneous' society;

2.   distinguishing between plural societies and homogeneous societies is difficult;

3.   plural societies are not always unstable, societies may possess *"a rich cultural variation"* within a "*highly unified national society";*

4.   societies should not be defined in cultural terms;

5.   Brathwaite describes two critical values - universalistic-achievement values and particularistic-ascriptive values. Universalistic-achievement values are those to which all the groups aspire, and particularistic-ascriptive are those values common to a specific group in society. Brathwaite was of the opinion that the universalistic-achievement values shared by groups in society are those values which hold the society together, as in Trinidad where there are East Indians and Africans.

Carl Stone's (1973), critique of Smith's thesis was based on a survey which Stone conducted in Jamaica. According to Stone:

1.   differences are not based on cultural sections, but have a material base; these differences are related to income and resources;

2.   the economy and the occupational structure should form the basis for any analysis.

Respondents saw themselves as belonging to 'classes' and not to 'cultural sections'. They were of the opinion that they belonged to one of the upper, middle, working and lower class.

Caribbean Popular Culture

Caribbean popular culture in recent years is being marketed all over the world. Calypso, carnival, reggae, literature and the steel pan, have not gone unnoticed across the globe. However, it has only been within recent times that an appreciation of Caribbean popular culture has developed.

Carnival

Carnival, as celebrated in the Caribbean, originated in Trinidad, and has been exported to other Caribbean territories (Lent 1990). However, it has been observed by Manning (1978) that Carnival is somewhat different in the other territories. Carnival has also been promoted overseas by West Indians in areas such as Montreal, New York, Toronto, and London.

Carnival has been credited as having originated among the French planters. The word carnival comes from the words *carne* and *vale*, meaning farewell to flesh. Carnival is celebrated on the Monday and Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, which is the beginning of the Lenten season. The French and Spanish played the major part in carnival until 1838 when slavery was abolished. It's believed that after the abolition of slavery, the slaves began to organise their own celebrations. Today the celebrations include masquerade of bands, in which people spend a lot of money to acquire costumes, to play 'mas'. This is a far cry from the origins of the celebrations, when it was the ex-slaves who were engaged in the festivities in the streets. In the past the steel bands also played the major role on the actual day when they played in the streets. Today the steel bands have lost some ground to the sound systems of disc jockeys, who blast music from large trucks in the streets.

Trinidad Carnival is characterised by several competitions, which begin weeks before the actual two days of celebrations. Competitions include:

- Panorama Steel Band Competition

- Dimanche Gras (in which the Calypso Monarch is crowned)

- Road March (most popular calypso, determined by the calypso that is played the most on the road during the two days of celebrations)

- Band of the Year (best judged costumes)

- Young King

K   Jouvert (mudmas)

K   Extempo competition (when a calypsonian is given a topic and he/she has to sing without
         preparation)

Today, Carnival has become very popular not only in Trinidad, but all over the world. Tourists comenot only to look on but also to participate in the celebrations. The celebration has become a major income earner for many Caribbean territories.

Activity 3.1

Is there a carnival in your territory? How is it observed?
How is it different from the carnival celebrations of the other Caribbean territories?

Music

Music in the Caribbean has been following different trends, and it is one of the most popular forms of expression. Artistes use music to voice their opinions on the state of local politics, on global issues, or current issues in their countries. Trinidad is well known for its calypso, while Jamaica is famous for reggae and Martinique and Guadeloupe for *zouk*.

Trinidad's calypso has developed out of the rhythm of African songs. It is believed that the word 'calypso' originated from the African word 'Kaiso' which means 'bravo' a word used to praise a good singer. It is also the belief that calypso originated from the songs that were sung on the plantations as the African slaves worked. Slaves were not allowed to talk as they worked, so they used calypso as a form of communication. The calypsoes were sung in French creole dialect, which is also known as patois. After slavery, the tradition continued and grew into an attraction for tourists. The accompaniment for calypso traditionally included bamboo and rattles, but today it includes drums, guitars, and other musical instruments. Today, calypsos are sung in calypso tents that have become very popular around carnival time. In these tents, calypsonians sing about current events, politics, and other issues of national and international concern.

The importance of calypsoes cannot be underestimated. The art form has been studied by many scholars, and has even been the subject of a seminar in Trinidad in 1986 (Marshall, 1986). However, it is also the subject of much debate since there is no agreement about where the art form originated. Famous calypsonians in Trinidad and Tobago include: The Mighty Sparrow, Lord Kitchener, David Rudder, among others. However, calypsonians come from all over the Caribbean to participate in Trinidad's carnival.

Calypsonians

The Mighty Sparrow

THE MIGHTY SPARROW, also known as "the Birdie" and sometimes referred to as the Calypso King of the World', was born on July 9, 1935 in Grenada. He was named Slinger Francisco. His family migrated to Trinidad when he was just a little over one year old. Sparrow sang many popular tunes. He has won many competitions and he has also been awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of the West Indies.

The calypso, like most art forms, have been subject to evolution, and Lent (1990) cites Linden Lewis' (1981) interview with Winston Bailey (The Mighty Shadow) where calypso is summed up as follows:

> "One of the Caribbean's most outstanding art forms is the Trinidadian calypso. More than a spontaneous typical West Indian song."

The calypso has long since metamorphosed from early spontaneous outpourings to a sophisticated and profound sociopolitical and cultural medium of expression. Not only has the calypso matured in terms of its lyrical content, but also in terms of its ability to incorporate other musical sounds such as American Soul and Disco music. These attempts are evident in many songs today. From the calypso has evolved other musical art forms such as: soca, chutney, soca chutney and other variations.

Some of the above, such as the chutney and the soca chutney are relatively new art forms. These are really versions of calypso in which the East Indian influence is present.

Reggae and Rastafarianism

Jamaica is well known for its reggae music. This musical form evolved alongside Rastafarianism which developed in Jamaica in the 1930's. Rastafarianism incorporates teachings from the Egyptians and concedes to the god Ra, the Egyptian sun god. The teachings also maintain that man and God or Jah (Jehovah) are one.

Reggae as it is known today in the Caribbean, is very popular among the people of the lower socio-economic groups. Bob Marley is the man to whom much credit has been given for the development of reggae. Marley had converted to Rastafarianism, early in his life. It is believed that reggae arose in response to the social oppressive system, which existed in Jamaica at the time (the 1930s) in a climate of social upheaval and labour unrest. Rastafarianism soon became an official religion in Jamaica. The religion was given a new dimension in April 1966 when Haile Selassie I, Emperor of Ethiopia visited Jamaica. Selassie's visit disappointed many of his devotees, as he was merely a Head of State and did not acknowledge the Rastafarian movement. Today Rastafarianism is a cultural force and has spread to other parts of the world including Britain and the USA.

East Indian Culture

Large numbers of East Indians were introduced into Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname. These Indians came largely from North India and thus most of their customs came originally from the Gangetic plains region of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Oudh.

Since they resided on isolated settlements surrounding the plantations, they were relatively free to practise many of their ancestral traditions. They practised North Indian patriarchal family patterns, Indian culinary practices, Indian language and dress.

They were also allowed to establish Hindu and Muslim places of worship only decades after their arrival in the West.

Compared to other groups, Indians were able to achieve a significant amount of cultural persistence. However, change and adaptation were inevitable.

The most significant change occurred through the efforts of Christian missionaries. In Trinidad, many Indians also became assimilated in the society through educational attainment and social mobility.

In addition to the Indians' physical isolation, cultural persistence was due to contact with their ancestral homeland through music, movies and missionaries.

Indians have attributed to the rich cultural landscape of the Caribbean in several ways:

(i)   Movies   -   Indian movies are still very popular in several territories.

(ii)   Music   -   Indian music has incorporated many western and West Indian rhythms.

(iii)   Food   -   Indian dishes are now part of the national cuisine in many territories.

(iv)   Religious   -   Religious festivals are now part of the national festivals in several territories.

         Festivals

(v)   Clothing -   Indian fashions are very popular in many territories.

Chutney

This is one of the cultural art forms, which originated in the Caribbean, but has its roots steeped in East Indian culture. Chutney derived its rhythm from Indian classical songs of Hindi origin. Its lyrics are a cross between Indian and English language. Chutney utilises the instruments of traditional East Indian culture such as the dhantal and the dholak, and a combination of other instruments from the West.

Literature

The Caribbean has produced many writers who have made a name for themselves in the Caribbean and in the wider literary world. Among these renowned novelists and writers are:

- **Erna Brodber** of Jamaica

- **George Lamming** of Barbados

- **Wilson Harris** of Guyana

- **V S Naipaul** of Trinidad

Many Caribbean writers have also focused on the folklore of the Caribbean, which is rooted strongly in African folklore. "Nine Folk Tales", is an anthology of short stories, which reflects African traditions and folklore. The literature which emanates from the Caribbean is largely a reflection of life in the Caribbean, Caribbean society or Caribbean folklore.

Folklore

Folklore differs from one country to another, and the territories of the Caribbean are no exception. The folklore of each territory is quite different, but the common thread that runs through the folklore is the allusion to African culture. The folklore of the Caribbean can be said to be vibrant and fascinating.

The folklore is similar in most territories with some degree of variation. Some characters in West Indian folklore are:

- *La Diablesse* or the Devil Woman is identified by one cloven hoof, which she hides with long skirts. She is beautifully dressed and wears a wide-brimmed hat with a veil over her face. She roams at night and has eyes like burning coals and a face that resembles that of a corpse. Her victims are men whom she lures, under a spell deep into the woods and leaves them to lose their way. They are usually unable to find their way home and fall into rivers or ravines or are attacked by wild animals in the forest.

The *Soucouyant* (pronounced –"Sukuya") of Trinidad and Tobago or Old Higue of Guyana, is a paranormal being who can change herself into all kinds of different forms. At night she sheds her human skin and changes into a ball of fire. In some of the islands, she is known to change into animal forms. She can cast spells on people to turn them into animals, the *soucouyant* enters the homes of her victims and she sucks their blood. However, she has to slip back into her skin before dawn and before the cock crows. Her skin can be destroyed by rubbing salt on it.

Douennes are the souls of children who have died before baptism. Their victims are children whom they lead astray in the forest until they are lost. *Douennes* are doomed to roam the earth forever. Their feet turned backwards can identify them.

Papa Bois, unlike the above-named characters is a very kind old man who lives in the forest and protects the animals that live there. He saves the forest animals from snares and he cares for the sick animals. *Papa Bois* usually carries a horn hanging from his belt. He can change wicked hunters into wild animals.

Voodoun or Voodoo

Many of the slaves in Haiti came from the Dahomey area in Africa and these slaves brought Voodoo with them. They had to practice their beliefs secretly during the days of slavery. Voodoo worshippers worshipped several Gods one of whom was very powerful and known as Vodun. Voodoo followers attribute powers to their different gods and they call on them for help and protection. The cult includes religious practices, dances, music, medicine, art as well as rituals. Voodoo practices have often been viewed as evil and have met with opposition from the traditional Christian religions. *Santeria* flourishes in Haiti and has roots in Africa. It's a nature religion based on stones, seashells, water and herbs. Yoruba slaves brought their deities, called Orishas with them, and in the New World identified the orishas with Catholic saints in order to preserve the tradition. Santeria is a syncretistic religion of Caribbean origin. It incorporates the worship of the Orisha (literally "head guardian") and beliefs of the Yoruba and Bantu people in Southern Nigeria, Senegal and Guinea Coast. These are combined with elements of worship from Roman Catholicism.

Conclusion

Caribbean culture is rich and diverse. The culture is steeped in the history of the region and involves aspects from the different people, (Spanish, French, Dutch, British, Chinese, Syrians, Portuguese, East Indians and others), who occupied the Caribbean at one time or another. Each country's arises out of a common heritage, that of slavery, yet the culture of each territory is unique in many ways.