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CADRE Generally the term denotes a small permanent core of soldiers or officials that can be expanded as necessary. Specifically it was used to denote elite groups within ruling communist parties.

CALVINISM As a result of the Reformation in the 16th century, the western Christian Church divided in two. The part which continued to accept the authority of the Pope of Rome we now call the Roman Catholic Church; the rest is Protestantism, which is itself divided into a number of significantly different streams with an enormous variety of churches, sect and denominations within each. Calvinism is the ascetic strand of Protestant thought based on the teachings of the French reformer John Calvin (1509–64). That this version of Christianity became influential in Holland, Britain and the American colonies (the heart of the development of the modern economic system) explains why Max **Weber** suspected the relationship he elaborated in his writing on the **Protestant Ethic thesis**.

CAPITAL In its general sense, capital is any asset, financial or otherwise, that is itself a source of income or can be used to produce income. For example, manufacturing equipment would be a part of an industrialist's capital. In mainstream economic theory, capital is one of the four means of production, along with land, labour and raw materials.

CAPITALISM The term denotes that economic system in which goods are produced for profit (rather than one's own immediate use) and sold (rather than bartered) in a free market (rather than one in which the government regulates prices and the right to sell). Capitalism is further distinguished from previous economic systems such as **feudalism** in that there is an at-least-hypothetically-free market in labour, which is bought and sold like any other commodity. Workers in capitalism are free to sell their labour to the highest bidder rather than being themselves the property of a feudal lord or slave master. In a capitalist economy the means of production are privately owned and are typically concentrated in the hands of a small capitalist class.

Marxists believe that conflict is an essential feature of capitalist economies because the capitalists exploit the workers by paying their employees less than the value they produce. Marxists also hold that capitalism is essentially unstable. Karl **Marx** mistakenly believed that, owing to competition between manufacturers, capitalists would have to steadily increase the extent to which they exploited their workers and that eventually the workers would revolt. The 'contradictions of capitalism' would eventually lead to its overthrow and replacement by **socialism**, an economic system in which the means of production would be communally owned.

In fact no capitalist economy has ever been entirely free of government intervention. In times of crisis, such as the rationing

associated with wartime shortages, the state has assumed control of whole sections of the market and even in peace-time the governments of most western states have regulated parts of the economy through, for example, selective taxation and the provision of unemployment benefit. At the other extreme to Marxist commentators, some right-wing reformers argue that many socio-economic problems arise because contemporary societies are not capitalistic enough.

CAPITALISM, TRANSFORMATIONS OF Karl Marx's predictions for the future transformation of capitalism proved entirely wrong. Where some form of socialist economy was established (as in Russia in 1917, and subsequently in the USSR's post-Second World War/empire, and in China after 1949) it was in marginally capitalist economies that lacked most of the features of the Marxist model and the shift resulted from forced political change, not from the internal contradictions of the economy. The mature capitalist economies that Marx studied proved remarkably robust. Far from being 'immiserated' (i.e. made more miserable) their working classes prospered and it was the socialist economies of communist eastern Europe that were undermined because of their failure to satisfy the economic aspirations of their people.

The main changes in capitalism have been the diffusion of capital, the division between ownership and control, and the globalisation of capital. The creation of the joint-stock company and the evolution of financial markets have given a large proportion of the population a small capital stake. Insurance companies, banks, pension funds and building societies (in the USA, savings and loan companies) invest savers' funds in the stock market and spread ownership. Increasingly those who own large amounts of capital no longer, as their grandparents did, invest it in the family enterprise but spread it thinly around a large number of enterprises. Whether

these changing patterns of ownership make much difference to the behaviour of capital is unclear. Individual capitalists may have lost some ownership to institutional share-holders but, provided enterprises remain profitable, institutional owners tend not to interfere in the running of enterprises. That is, the ownership of capital may have been enormously broadened but control of it has not been.

The second major change is the **managerial revolution**: most commercial and productive enterprises are no longer run by the people who own them but by professional managers, hired for their expertise in management. Again this change may be less significant than it seems for sociologists' continued identification of a capitalist class because the most senior managers are normally rewarded in part with shares in the enterprises they manage. Thus their interests turn out to be rather similar to those of the owners.

The third change is the globalisation of capital. Over the first half of the 20th century, firms became larger as local companies were bought up or merged into national companies; in the second half of the century many national companies became international. The ending of national restrictions on the movement of capital and the creation of international markets in goods and services have allowed the growth of companies that now have a turnover greater than the gross domestic product of many small countries. This has given large companies an unprecedented freedom from government regulation in that they are able to switch operations from country to country in search of the most favourable operating environment. Capitalism is no longer simply a national-level phenomenon and national transformations of capitalism seem no longer on the cards.

This final change potentially has enormous consequences for sociology in that it challenges the importance of the state as well as the sociological assumption that societies are national societies.

See **globalisation**.

CARGO CULT In the modern colonial era, Melanesia saw the periodic outbursts of a variety of **millenarian** movements which combined elements of indigenous and western beliefs into a view that religious rituals would persuade the gods to deliver to the natives the 'cargo' that the white man had stolen. The cargo cults would often promote ritualistic imitations of western behaviour (e.g. clearing ground for airstrips and making imitation radios). Worse, many added the belief that placing oneself entirely at the mercy of the gods (by, for example, burning houses and destroying cattle and grain stores) would hasten the delivery of the cargo. As local people came to understand western technology better, such cults became less common.

CARNIVAL Carnivals are major annual festivities commonly occurring in Catholic countries in the week before Lent. Surpluses saved up during the year are extravagantly consumed before the period of 40 weekdays of fasting, commencing on Ash Wednesday, during which Christians prepare themselves for the Easter celebrations of Christ having risen from the dead. Common features of such events are playful symbolic reversals of social roles and a temporary relaxation of sexual mores.

See **Bakhtin**.

CARTESIAN Cartesianism refers to the system of thought associated with the French philosopher and mathematician René **Descartes** (1596–1650). Of most relevance to social science is his pioneering work on the 'mind/body' problem. Descartes saw that there was a problem in understanding human action of the following sort: we can comprehend how a person moves a hand by contracting muscles in the arm, but we cannot understand in the same way how the wish to move the hand leads the arm-muscles to

contract. One process seems wholly mechanical while the other crosses from the mind to the body. Descartes was fascinated by this mind/body interaction and speculated about where in the body this interaction might take place.

It is clear that Descartes's understanding of this process must be wrong; our consciousness must somehow arise from our body rather than sitting in some parallel dimension giving it orders. All the same, four hundred years on, we are still not much further advanced in our understanding than he was. Descartes's account also corresponds well with commonsense western experience of the mind and body. For many everyday purposes, we feel ourselves to be ghosts in the machines of our bodies. Given sociology's concerns with people's motives and intentions, sociology recurrently throws up the mind/body problem anew.

CASTE As a system of social stratification, caste differs from class in its rigidity and in the basis of legitimation. Membership of castes is ascribed rather than achieved and social contact between castes is heavily constrained and ritualised. The exemplar is India. Although Hindu castes are described as occupational groupings, the basis is religious. Castes are held to differ in degrees of ritual purity. The highest castes are the priestly Brahmins (the 'twice-born') and the Kashatriyas: originally the warrior caste but now including major landowners. Next comes the Vaishyas (or business people) and the Sudras (or workers). Finally, and outside this structure, are the Harijans (or untouchables), also known as Dalits, who perform the most menial and degrading jobs and who are considered ritually impure. Within each of these broad divisions are innumerable smaller jati (or species or breeds) made up of specific regional or occupational groups.

Caste does not allow for individual social mobility; it is fixed because it is congenital.

Personal achievement will not change caste position and each jati is careful to prevent lower castes marrying in. The only possibility of this-worldly mobility is for an entire jati to improve its status relative to another by becoming more 'sanscriticised': that is, aping more closely the mores of the Brahmin caste. Hence the only method for achieving change within the system, reinforces rather than weakens it.

The system is kept in place by temporal power (like the medieval guilds, the jati can control entry and monitor its members) and by spiritual power. The ideological basis of control is formed by the Hindu notions of reincarnation and karma. The soul does not die with the body but is re-born. Precisely how you will be re-born depends on the balance of good or bad karma (or merit) you have accumulated. The major source of good karma is the correct performance of the rituals and social obligations associated with your caste. The pious conforming Hindu can hope for a better life next time around.

In principle, all post-independence governments of India have been opposed to caste but it has proved resilient.

CASTELLS, MANUEL (1942-) See information society.

CATHARSIS The idea originated with the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, who believed that watching a tragedy performed purged the spectator of powerful emotions. It has since come to mean any release of strong emotion. It has a particular meaning in media and cultural studies where it describes the counter-argument against those who fear imitation. The imitation argument is that watching scenes of sex or violence stimulates the viewer to imitate what is portrayed. The catharsis case is that watching scenes of violence provides the viewer with a vicarious alternative and thus purges the desire to

engage in what is depicted. The difficulties of measuring the effects of mass media products are such that this debate is no nearer a clear resolution than it was 30 years ago.

CAUSATION, CAUSAL RELATIONSHIP When two events occur in the same time and place, one just before the other, and the second seems highly unlikely to have occurred without the first, then we suppose there is a causal relationship between the two: dropping the lighted match on the petrol caused it to explode. When we see the same relationship repeated endlessly we may even derive a 'law'. Not only are we sure there is a causal relationship between heating a metal bar and it expanding, we can observe a regular relationship, for each type of metal, between the amount of heat and the amount of expansion.

Philosophers like to agonise about causation but most of us have no difficulty at all with the idea. What causes some anxiety for sociologists are (a) the particular nature of purposive action and (b) the use of 'functions' as causes.

Clearly, to the extent that humans have freedom, we cannot treat the causes of social action in exactly the same way as the heating of metals. I may say I have taken to my bed 'because' I have a cold but as it is possible for me to struggle off to the office sniffing, the cold is not causing me to have a day off; rather the cold is, in my circumstances (such as not much liking my job), a good reason for taking the day off. We can apply the same re-construction to some large-scale social phenomena such as voting for the Nazi party in 1930s Germany. When we list the causes of the rise of Nazism (resentment at the enfeeblement of Germany after the First World War and economic depression, for example) we are not claiming that these things forced Germans to vote for Hitler; we are using 'caused' as an abbreviation for 'in this particular set of circumstances and for these

people, provided good reasons for'. This leaves unresolved the tricky question of whether there are universal standards of 'good reasons for' acting or whether good reasons are to some degree idiosyncratic or culturally variable. Sociologists are still divided over this matter.

The second problem concerns social functions. Sociologists are often concerned with the consequences or effects of some piece of social action or some institution. For example, we may argue that organised religion serves the important social function of creating a sense of social cohesion. There are problems borrowing the method of functionalist biology, in which organs are analysed in terms of their functions for the body as a whole, and these are discussed under **functionalism**. It is tempting to slide from saying that organised religion has the consequence of creating cohesion to suggesting that societies have organised religion because they require or wish social cohesion. In the case of the conscious individual there is no difficulty treating a consequence (something that comes after the act) as a cause (which must come before it) because we can bridge the time gap by asserting that the actor desired the consequence and acted as she did to bring it about: she wanted to make new friends so she joined a badminton club. But it is not equally appropriate to reason in this way for societies as a whole since, unlike the badminton enthusiast, societies do not have coherent wishes; this is the problem with any talk of **latent functions**.

CENSUS This term is usually used to denote a government-sponsored universal and compulsory survey of all the individuals in the state. Censuses are extremely useful for social researchers precisely because they include everyone and because people have to answer. The information thus gathered is vastly more extensive than that which can be derived from any social survey. It also

provides us with benchmarks against which we can judge the representativeness of survey samples on certain criteria such as age, gender, religion or occupation. Nonetheless, there may be problems with compliance as people may resent the obligation to respond to the census and may therefore give false or misleading information.

CENTRAL TENDENCY See **measures of central tendency**.

CENTRE AND PERIPHERY These terms are used by sociologists in a conceptual rather than geographical sense; London, Paris, Washington, Stockholm, Helsinki and Moscow are all at the edges or corners of the countries of which they are the capitals but they are nonetheless the centres of their societies. The contrast pair is commonly used to draw attention to the unevenness of economic development and modernisation. The centre is more urbanised, more densely populated, wealthier, more commercialised, more diverse in its culture and more liberal in most matters than the periphery. In the first instance this is simply a matter of uneven development but there is often a reactive element. People in the periphery may exaggerate some of their differences from the centre in order to reinterpret what could be counted as a deprivation, as a virtue. If the centre becomes more secular, the peripheries may add an element of intent to their greater religiosity and take pride in this element of their supposed backwardness. For most of the 20th century, people in the highlands of Scotland, Sicily and the Carolinas contrasted themselves approvingly with the evils of the cosmopolitan world.

The contrast pair has also been used in international contexts. In his **world-systems theory**, Immanuel Wallerstein argues that from the 16th century onwards a capitalist world system began to develop with France,

chaos

chodorow, nancy (1944–)

Holland and England as its core. They became wealthier by exploiting other countries, which supplied raw materials and cheap (or, in the case of slavery, free) labour. Later Wallerstein added the intermediate category of semi-periphery to describe countries such as those of Latin America and South Korea that had attained a degree of industrialisation and hence were less dominated by the core.

CHAOS In everyday use, chaos means a disorderly mess. But the word has a technical meaning within the natural sciences. Some equations are chaotic in the special sense that, though they may look straightforward, they do not result in any predictable trend. Anyone who has lain in a bath and tried to guess when the next drip will fall from the tap has experienced this phenomenon. Water seeping from the tap adds to the droplet but it's impossible to guess exactly when it will splash down. In what seems like a paradox, some things in nature appear to follow a rule but are nonetheless unpredictable. The weather is believed to have this property. No matter how much you knew about today's weather, the weather in two weeks would still remain unpredictable. The weather may be deterministic, in that it is governed by equations to do with heat from the sun, evaporation of the oceans and so on, but it is chaotically deterministic.

To say that something is chaotic in this special sense does not just mean that it is too complex to predict in practice (like the ball on a roulette wheel) but that there are inherent limits to its predictability. Social scientists have been interested in chaos for various reasons: in part because some social phenomena (currency markets, for example) may themselves be chaotic in this technical sense but also because chaos speaks of limits to scientific prediction. The idea has thus proven attractive to advocates of **postmodernism** and to others worried about **determinism**.

CHARISMA; CHARISMATIC AUTHORITY

In general usage, charisma is now simply the property of being attractive and telegenic; Presidents Kennedy, Reagan and Clinton were repeatedly described as charismatic. The claim would have been more compelling if they had been ugly and inarticulate and still became so popular because Max **Weber** borrowed the term for a 'gift of grace' from the Christian tradition to signify extraordinary (and often divine) powers claimed by or for an individual. Narrow sociological usage of charisma is almost exactly the opposite of popular usage in that what most clearly fits the Weberian notion, is drawing intensely loyal support when the leader who claims charismatic authority utterly lacks conventional sources of power and influence.

See **authority, routinisation of charisma**.

CHICAGO SCHOOL The University of Chicago housed one of the USA's first sociology departments (founded 1892) and its pioneering school of urban sociologists. What at the time seemed like its major achievement – the ecological model of the city as a series of concentric circles – is little attended to these days, but the department's commitment to detailed interpretative studies, what would now be called **ethnography**, left an enduring mark on the profession. Louis Wirth's (1928) *The Ghetto*, Henry W. Zorbaugh's (1929) *The Gold Coast and the Slum*, and Paul G. Cressey's (1932) *The Taxi Dance Hall: A Sociological Study in Commercialized Recreation and City life* are examples of classic Chicago work.

CHI SQUARE (χ^2) See **significance, tests of**.

CHODOROW, NANCY (1944–) In *The Reproduction of Mothering*, Chodorow (1978) examined the ways in which mothering

reproduces gender identity. Using Freudian psychoanalytical ideas she argues that young girls remain 'mother-identified' even after the Oedipus complex symbolically separates the male child from his mother. For Chodorow the acceptance of the domestic ideal is the foundation of women's oppression. Although popular with feminists, her work, like that of **Butler**, **Irigaray** and **Kristeva** builds complex interpretative and inferential developments on a small and rather unsystematic evidential base.

CHOMSKY, NOAM (1928–) Widely accepted as the most renowned contemporary theorist of linguistics, Chomsky has claimed that the wide range of grammatical structures evident in language (the syntax of various languages) is underlain by common 'deep structures'. In *Syntactic Structures* he (1957) showed how a common deep linguistic structure (**deep structure**), combined with a straightforward set of transformation rules, could generate a very wide range of apparently dissimilar surface structures. In subsequent work he sought to apply a similar 'transformational' approach to semantics (meaning) and phonology (pronunciation). The significance of this claim for social science more generally is that his theory proposes that humans are in some sense innately highly prepared for language, and if they are hard-wired for language, then humans cannot be wholly the product of learning from their environment as other social scientist have often supposed. His view about this innate ability provides a striking challenge to popular conceptions of human nature.

Chomsky is also widely known for his strident critiques of western and particularly US foreign policy and militarism. He is always careful to claim that his political views and linguistic theory are wholly separate enterprises; indeed there is very little that is conventionally left-leaning about his linguistic theories. His political writings,

though sharply observed, often appear tendentious.

CHURCH See **religious organisations**.

CICOUREL, AARON (1928–) Long associated with **Garfinkel**, **ethnomethodology** and **conversation analysis**, Cicourel (1964) first became widely known in sociology because of his book *Method and Measurement in Sociology*. This work was ethnomethodological in the sense that it concentrated on the practices through which sociologists derived, recorded and in a sense created the phenomena in which they were interested. However, unlike strictly ethnomethodological studies which do not seek to engage with the worlds they document, this study assumed that sociologists would have an interest in his ethnomethodological critique and even reform their procedures in response. Subsequently, Cicourel turned to more substantive sociological analysis particularly in medical and educational sociology.

CIRCULATION OF ELITES This phrase, about all that is left of the legacy of Vilfredo Pareto (a theorist Talcott **Parsons** thought central to sociology), captures perfectly his rejection of the progressive views of thinkers such as Karl **Marx** and Herbert **Spencer**. Pareto first coined the term 'elites' to avoid talking of a ruling class (with all that implied about the economic base of political power) and argued that, rather than there being an innate tendency for societies to develop in a liberal and democratic direction, two types of elites regularly replaced each other. The types were defined by psychological characteristics: lions were conservative; wolves were innovative but untrustworthy.

CITIZEN Initially the term was used by the Greeks to denote members of that small elite within a city-state that had political rights and it was contrasted with a 'subject': someone who had a master. Until the rise of the

nation-state, citizenship was either entirely absent or restricted to a very few. The modern nation-state represented an important break with earlier formations in that its legitimacy was based on its ability to embody the will and aspirations of an entire people who were in some sense all equal participants in a horizontal fellowship. This egalitarian rhetoric was eventually given substance in the expansion of the franchise until, by the early part of the 20th century, most industrial democracies gave the vote to all their members.

T.H. **Marshall** expanded the idea of citizenship by defining it as the status of a person who is a full member of a community and arguing that it had three components. First, there were civil rights (such as the right to freedom of expression, access to information, freedom of association and equality before the law); second, political rights (expressed mainly as the right to choose the government); and third there were social and economic rights: Marshall regarded the right to social welfare as an important safeguard against sections of the population being enfranchised in theory but in effect excluded from society by poverty.

Marshall tended to assume that the three components are acquired in the order set out above. However, feminist authors have noted that women's acquisition of citizenship entitlements has not necessarily followed that of men with, for example, voting rights often preceding full equality before the law.

Since the collapse of communism in the late 1980s there has been renewed interest in the notion of citizenship. With socialism no longer seeming a viable alternative to capitalism and the old rhetoric of state intervention unpopular, critics of capitalism have turned again to the ideas of **civil society** and citizenship.

CITY A city is distinguished from towns and villages by its greater size, by the range of institutions its houses, and by the wealth of

activities possible within its boundaries. The first cities naturally appeared in fertile areas where the surrounding countryside was sufficiently productive to liberate part of the population from agricultural work and to support a range of specialist trades. In England, the importance of the national Christian church was such that a city was marked by the presence of a cathedral. The defining characteristic of a cathedral was not its size (though they were very large) but its role as the administrative headquarters of a bishop and hence as a centre for public administration.

CIVIL INATTENTION In *Behaviour in Public Places* Erving **Goffman** (1963a) noted a variety of tacit rules that maintain civility between strangers in public. Civil inattention denotes the ways in which we show others that we are aware of their presence without causing offence by intrusively attending to them. Like many of Goffman's ideas, it was obvious once he described it. What made Goffman such an influential figure was that he was the first sociologist to pay systematic attention to the small details of interaction ritual that sustain social life. In many western societies, civil inattention is a particularly important accomplishment for women to develop if they are to avoid the intrusive attention of heterosexual males.

CIVIL RELIGION This denotes a set of beliefs, rites and symbols that indicate and celebrate the individual's relationship to the civil society, nation and state, and claim divine support for the nation's history and destiny. The term originated with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's distinction between the religion of man, which was a private matter between the individual and God, and the religion of the citizen, which was a public matter of the individual's relationship with the society and government. A civil religion

binds all members to society, instructs them in their duties and, if necessary, mobilises them to war in support of the state.

Much influenced by the **functionalism** of Talcott **Parsons**, Robert Bellah argued that there was a US civil religion, distinct from the Christianity to which most Americans belonged. Key texts are the Declaration of Independence (with its claims for divine approval) and President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. The 'feast days' of this civil religion are Thanksgiving, Veterans' Day and Memorial Day. The rituals are saluting the flag and singing 'God Bless America'.

The idea has been vigorously criticised. It may well be that certain manifestations of US patriotism perform the same social functions as institutional religion (creating a sense of cohesion, for example) but that does not mean it is a religion: a fever and an electric blanket both make me feel hot but they are not the same thing. The frequent references to God in US civil pronouncements may reflect either the habits of the age or the politician's desire to enlist as many allies as possible. We know that many patriotic rituals are performed without the deep involvement we would expect from a religion, and where we do find strong entanglement of religious faith and patriotism, it is because those people are religious in the conventional sense and believe that God is on their side. There is no need to claim a distinct civil religion and little clear evidence for one.

Less contentiously the term is used to describe religions that actually deify the state or its rulers: Confucianism in pre-Communist China and state Shinto in Japan are examples. It is also used to describe one aspect of conventional religion: acting as a guarantor of national identity and a promoter of national interests. For example, the Catholic Church has long played an important social role as guarantor of Polish national identity in the face of repeated conquest and oppression by more powerful neighbours on all sides: Lutheran Swedes, Lutheran Germans and

Russians (who were first Orthodox Christians and then atheistic communists). As the only institution that was not taken over or severely compromised by Soviet communists, the Catholic Church performed a vital function of cultural defence. So long as it did so it was supported by many Poles who were not strongly committed to its religious teachings and ritual practices; hence its depiction as a civil religion.

CIVIL RIGHTS Sometimes used as a synonym for human rights, civil rights may have a slightly narrower meaning. Both notions imply that all of us should be treated equally, irrespective of such characteristics as wealth, colour, religion or gender. Civil rights suggests more: particularly both the protection of the law and protection from the state. In the USA the Bill of Rights makes human rights, civil rights. In the UK, where, until the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights in 1998, there was no written protection of such rights, it is more common to talk of civil liberties.

Although the language of civil rights is often used by campaigners to suggest that they have a case that no decent person could refuse, what should count as the basic human or civil rights is itself a matter of political argument. The obvious difficulty is that any extensive list will contain irreconcilable items. For example, if a religion supports the view that women should be subordinate to men, then women's rights and religious liberty will clash.

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT (US) In theory the subordinate status of blacks in the USA ended with the victory of the Union states in the Civil War of 1861–65. Blacks were left formally free but in reality still enslaved. In the south they were denied the vote and the protection of the law, were segregated and given only the most rudimentary public services. Slavery was replaced by 'Jim Crow'.

The Jim Crow laws were named after a character in a pre-Civil War minstrel show. Thomas Dartmouth Rice, a white actor, became famous for 'blacking up', mimicking black vaudeville artists and performing a comic song-and-dance routine in which he repeatedly sang: 'Weel about and turn about and do jis so/Eb'ry time I weel about I jump Jim Crow'. Jim Crow laws were designed to achieve, in the new urban setting, the degree of segregation and subservience that informal pressures and patterns of interaction had previously maintained in the rural south. In Alabama, white nurses could not be asked to nurse black men; buses, toilets and restaurants were segregated; inter-racial pool and billiards games were prohibited; mixed race marriages were void. Georgia segregated public parks, restaurants, burial grounds, barber shops and psychiatric hospitals and required that segregated baseball grounds be two blocks apart. Mississippi not only banned inter-racial marriage but also made it an offence to print, publish or circulate arguments in favour of such mixing. Furthermore, in all the southern states complex laws were used to make it difficult (if not downright impossible) for blacks to register to vote.

The civil rights movement may be dated from the 1955 Montgomery boycott of buses. The next nine years saw considerable conflict as southern blacks, led by trusted clergymen and aided by white liberals from the north, staged a variety of usually non-violent protests. Racist whites attacked the protestors and American public opinion was scandalised by the white violence, by the failure of the white authorities to control it and by open connivance in the flouting of the law. President Lyndon B. Johnson used his considerable political capital to force through Congress the sweeping Civil Rights Act of 1964 (which outlawed segregation of public facilities) and the Voting Rights Act 1965 (which used the power of the federal government to effectively enfranchise blacks). These and other legislative actions did not

end racial conflict or immediately redress black grievances but they removed the major injustices that had been the focus of the civil rights movement.

CIVIL SOCIETY The term was first popularized by Adam Ferguson and his colleagues in the **Scottish Enlightenment** of the late 18th century in contrasting the democratic institutions of the West with the despotisms of the East. Later it came to mean the inter-locking array of non-governmental institutions that fills the space between the family and the state: churches, trade unions, voluntary associations such as the Freemasons and the Buffaloes, and sporting clubs are examples. A large and active civil society is held to be essential for a pleasant and effective society in that it brings individuals together outside of their family bonds in non-commercial relationships and acts as a counter to the power of the state. The defining feature of **totalitarian** states (such as those of communist eastern Europe) is that they destroy civil society, by either banning those forms of it they do not control or taking control of them.

CIVILISATIONS, CLASH OF This phrase was popularised by US political scientist Samuel Huntington's use of it for a 1993 article which was later expanded into a book. The civilisations in question are the West (Protestant and Catholic Christian), Islamic, Hindu, Orthodox Slav, Confucian, Japanese, Latin American and 'possibly' African. He argues that the main divisions of the post-Cold War world will be around culture rather than ideology or national identity. Although nation-states will remain the principal international actors, they will, like family members rallying round, form alliances based on shared culture. Second, he anticipates that resentment at western cultural penetration and political domination will cause the other civilisations to oppose the West, which will be weakened by relative economic and

demographic decline. Accordingly, he proposes that western societies should strengthen commitment to their core civilisational values, stop interfering with other civilisations, and concentrate on maintaining a stable balance of power between the core states of rival civilisations.

Huntington has been much criticised by those who on principle reject the idea that religion is important in international relations, for exaggerating the internal cohesion of his civilisations (see **orientalism**). He has been accused of being an ideologue for the West, though his willingness to treat other cultures as civilizations with virtues suggests otherwise. He has been faulted for over-looking research which suggests that all cultures, as they become richer, tend to change in similar directions. It is claimed that he exaggerates the inherent conflict between civilisational values: are Islamic values really that different to Christian ones? His concern over the relative financial decline of the West, reasonable in the early 1990s when the Asian economies were booming, a decade later seemed like a poor prediction. The thesis is also not supported by studies of current wars; most still concern national rivalries between neighbours (irrespective of sharing a civilisation) and secessionist struggles.

Ironically, Huntington might become right for the wrong reasons. The 2003 Iraq war and other US foreign policy initiatives have had the effect of greatly increasing anti-American sentiment in the Muslim world.

CIVILISING PROCESS See **Elias**.

CLAN A clan is a unilineal kin group (i.e. descent is traced back to one parent, not both) claiming descent from a common ancestor, and is often represented by a totem. Clans can be either matrilineal (that is recruiting the children of female members) or, more commonly, patrilineal (recruiting the children of male members) and are often internally divided into lineages.

CLASS All societies have some form of stratification. The simplest societies allocate duties and rights on the basis of age and gender. Hindu India divides people by **caste**. Feudal societies divide people by **estate** or station. Modern industrial societies are divided by class. A variety of ways of describing class all have in common attention to the economy and the organisation of production. For Karl **Marx** and Marxists, the crucial divide is between those who own the means of production (the capitalist class) and those who have to live by selling their labour (the proletariat or working class). Although there are important fractions within these classes, this basic division is the key to understanding much else about societies based on capitalist economies.

Max **Weber** builds his class scheme around the twin pillars of property ownership and market situation. He recognised major differences within the mass of the population who did not own capital. Professionals who possess highly valued and scarce skills are able to demand greater rewards and greater control over their working lives than the unskilled who, precisely because they are readily replaceable, have a relatively weak position in the market place.

In the 1970s, when it was clear that western class structures were not falling into the shape Marx expected, a number of neo-Marxists attempted to resolve the anomaly of the professional middle class. Nicos **Poulantzas** followed Louis **Althusser** in arguing that the mode of production (and hence class) could not be defined simply by economic considerations; definition needed also to incorporate political considerations (supervisors versus non-supervisors) and ideological ones (mental versus manual labour). Erik Olin Wright distinguished ownership and control of the means of production. Although both scholars saw themselves as updating the Marxist theory of class, their conclusions seem remarkably similar to the position where Weber started.

In practice, much social research is based on neither Marx nor Weber. The Marxist model has the advantage of being based on a clear theory but it is of little value for research because the capitalist class narrowly defined is extremely small compared to those who do not own the means of production and is rarely available for study. The Weberian model is more useful for research in that it generates a larger number of similar-sized classes but, until the 1970s when John **Goldthorpe** and his colleagues developed a class model on Weberian principles that was adopted internationally, almost all research on class used the rather ad hoc divisions that had been created by government officials in the early 20th century. The British Registrar-General's classification of occupations was a creative mix of attention to wealth and typical pay levels, some notions of autonomy and discretion, and an estimate of social worth, so that routine non-manual workers were ranked higher than skilled manual workers: a reflection of the general preference for clean over dirty work. On the grounds that they required lengthy periods of education and were widely respected, clergymen and teachers were ranked higher than their salaries would merit.

Unease about the detailed rankings of occupations in most schemes, lack of detailed information about people's jobs and pay, the relatively small numbers of people in even large-scale and expensive surveys, and the importance of other variables (such as age, gender and religion) encourage social researchers to simplify class classifications and in much social research the effects of class are explored with just two class categories: manual and non-manual.

Arguments about how we should define class and the complex technical problems in collecting and analysing information might suggest that the notion is pointless. It is not. Over the second half of the 20th century a vast body of social research pointed repeatedly to the enduring importance of social

class in determining life-chances, social attitudes, patterns of consumption and political preferences.

At the end of the 20th century it became fashionable to argue that class was no longer of great social importance. Technological evolution was removing swathes of manual work and eroding the differences between blue-collar and white-collar work. Greater prosperity and cheaper goods meant that the gross differences between classes in appearance and material possessions had gone. Almost all households in the USA and UK have cars, televisions, central heating, a wide range of clothing and the like. In the 1930s, members of the working class were readily distinguishable from the middle classes: they smelt and were shabbily dressed. With the exception of small segments at the top and bottom, most American or British people are now superficially similar. Technological evolution has also reduced the centrality of work in the sense of how much time it takes up. In the 1950s it was common for people to work 10 hours each weekday and at least half of Saturday. The typical working week is now only half of that. In Europe at least, most jobs now provide a month or more of paid holidays in addition to the large number of public holidays. Hence people now spend far less time at work and with work colleagues and more time with family and friends. All of these changes add up to good reason for supposing that how we earn our living is less significant now than it was in 1950 and that the key to social identity lies not in production but in consumption.

This is an exaggerated picture. The lives of white-collar and blue-collar workers may be superficially similar and there has been a noticeable decline in deference, but it is still the case that social realities (such as health, income, longevity, values) remain influenced by class. And even the core of the consumerist idea is suspect; increasing prosperity has allowed the bulk of the population to enjoy a larger number of the same consumer

goods but rich people have their own 'top end' of consumption that is denied to others and the tastes of university-educated professional workers still differ markedly from those of manual workers.

See **class consciousness, occupational scales, proletarianisation.**

CLASS CONFLICT It is an essential part of Marxist thought that the social classes identified by the ownership (or otherwise) of capital be in conflict. Classes have irreconcilable collective interests and the war between them is the engine for social evolution. Modern capitalism has actually been characterised by an almost complete absence of class conflict. Groups of workers have pressed for greater rewards and better conditions but such contests have often involved workers competing against each other and have not challenged the fundamental nature of capitalism nor the fact of a class system. In the 20th century the major threats to capitalist societies came not from class but ethnic and national conflict: for example, the two world wars and the Spanish Civil war.

CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS, CLASS-FOR-ITSELF; CLASS-IN-ITSELF With any form of classification system there is a question of whether those we classify see themselves in the same way as we see them. All the **class** schemes discussed allocate people by objective characteristics; people either own or do not own the means of production, have similar positions in the labour market, and their jobs offer a certain level of freedom and discretion, irrespective of what they think about those characteristics. There are occasions when sociologists are interested in the consequences of class that are not mediated by some form of awareness. For example, there is a strong association between class and the incidence of certain illnesses. However, much sociological interest in class supposes that the

members of a class share common beliefs and values and act in concert; people have a subjective or personal appreciation of their class position and some sense of group identity: objective class position should be matched by class consciousness. Karl **Marx** distinguished between class-in-itself (the objective reality) and class-for-itself (the awareness of this and the development of an appropriate political response). When the objective and subjective do not match we may either doubt the value of our classification system or find particular explanations of why people are blind to their common position.

The failure of the working class to act in concert is usually described by Marxists as **false consciousness** and explained by the ideological work of the capitalist class promoting various forms of divide and rule. For example, a chauvinist upper class may stimulate racial and ethnic rivalries so that white workers think of themselves as superior to black workers.

A less contentious explanation of the absence of class consciousness is that changes in the **class structure** (see below) mean that throughout the 20th century there has been too much movement through classes for people to associate strongly with them. Classes have been more like hotels than stable communities; people have been passing through.

A third explanation is that Marx was simply wrong about the importance of social class as he defined it.

CLASS, STATUS AND PARTY Max **Weber** regarded this trinity as providing a fairly comprehensive description of the major divisions in modern society. Class (or market situation) was the objective condition of place in the economy, defined by wealth and earning opportunities produced by possessing scarce skills. Because it described similarities of circumstance, class might form the basis for occasional collective action but there was no implication of a necessary class consciousness.

Status referred to actual groupings of people defined by specific positive or negative social estimations of honour who have a sense of common identity (visible in attempts to protect their privileges, in common customs and in excluding marriage patterns): Ivy league college-educated professionals would be an example of a status grouping within a class structure. A Hindu jati would be a status grouping in a **caste** structure. Political parties may be based on class or status or some other identity such as regional minority. In essence, Weber was countering the simple Marxist model of class by drawing attention to the diversity of sources of division.

CLASS STRUCTURE, CHANGE IN Since the late 19th century there have been major changes in the class structure of modern economies because the nature of work has changed. The shrinking of agriculture (and other forms of primary production such as fishing, mining and logging) has continued as technological developments have allowed fewer people to do more. Large numbers left the land and moved into manufacturing. In the 1950s the white-collar middle class began to grow relative to the manual working class and by the end of the 20th century white-collar had outstripped blue-collar work. Precisely how the class structure of advanced societies has changed will depend on how we define, measure and divide class. For example, the model devised by US Marxist Erik Olin Wright produces a much larger working class than does that used by John H. **Goldthorpe** and European colleagues. Nonetheless, when either model is applied to historical and contemporary data the general patterns of change remain the same.

CLERGY Originally a term identifying an official of the Christian Church and now applied widely to professional leaders in any religious tradition, it shares a common root with 'clerk': a reminder of the Middle Ages

when literacy was largely a preserve of the church.

CLIENTALISM, CLIENT-PATRON RELATIONSHIP
See **patron-client relations**.

CLOSED MIND See **open and closed mind**.

CLUSTER SAMPLING This is an alternative to random sampling in selecting respondents to represent a general population for study purposes. A random sample for a postal survey could be constructed by using some formula such as picking every 1000th address from a zip or postal code list. The cluster alternative is to start with some organising principle (such as dividing post codes by the social class of the area) and then selecting one wealthy area, one middling area and one poor area, and picking a set number of respondents from each. Cluster sampling is often used because it is cheap and quick; if you plan to conduct face-to-face interviews you want your respondents to be in close groups rather than spread around the country. But it will produce a distorted image of the general population if the initial principle of clustering is mistaken. For example, a survey of political attitudes may produce unrepresentative results if, unknown to the survey analysts, an area chosen to produce wealthy people has become popular with staff of the local university (who are likely to be unusually cosmopolitan and liberal).

COERCION This denotes the use of force (or the threat of force) to achieve a particular purpose.

See **power**.

COGNITION Mental life can be described as having two components: thinking or knowing, and feeling. Cognition, the first

component, is concerned with perception, language, memory and problem solving.

See **affect**.

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE Dissonance (contrasted with consonance and resonance) was originally a musical term denoting a clash of sounds or an unpleasant combination of notes. In the 1950s Leon Festinger used the term in a study of behaviour that was inconsistent with knowledge (or cognition). Why, when we know that smoking is very bad for us, do we continue to do it? Festinger supposed that we all have some deep need for consistency and that we will attempt to harmonise our beliefs and behaviour, either by changing the behaviour or selectively re-shaping what we know (every smoker has an uncle who smoked heavily and lived to 80). Looked at closely, Festinger's work does not actually explain anything but the term became extremely popular.

COHABITATION A pompous term for 'living together' used to describe people who, in the view of the speaker, should be married, this is slipping out of use simply because the relationship it describes is now so common in the West as to be unremarkable. Infinitely preferable to 'cohabitee' is the Scots 'bidie-in' (from 'bide' meaning to stay).

COHORT, COHORT ANALYSIS Originally a term for a unit of the Roman army (10 of which made up a legion), this is now used to describe any group of people with the same time-specific experiences: for example being born, entering university or joining the police force in a particular year. The cohort is important because its experience represents one of three possible explanations of change. Suppose we find in a large survey that the band of people aged 60 and above are much

more likely than the younger age bands to attend church. This could be explained by an ageing effect: as we get older and nearer our deaths we become more mindful of our souls. It could be explained by an historical change that came after this age band formed its habits: the removal of a prohibition on secular forms of leisure on a Sunday may have permanently made church-going relatively unattractive. Or, and this is the cohort effect, this band may have had some common experience which made it unusually church-going. Distinguishing these is important. If it is the first, church membership will remain stable; if it is the second it will decline; if it is the third, it may well bounce back.

It is often difficult to untangle ageing, historical and cohort effects in survey data but the fact that they are different should restrain us from jumping too quickly to conclusions from observed social trends.

COLLECTIVE ACTION, COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOUR

Although preferring one over the other sometimes reflects underlying assumptions about the nature of the matter in hand, more often these terms are used interchangeably to describe social phenomena that range from the crowd, as the least enduring and structured, to the professionally-led social movement – the most organised and enduring expression of collective action. The term implies the following: the collective action/behaviour has some specific and finite goal; that goal involves remedying or redressing some wrong; and ordinary people are active. Rioting in protest against high food prices; campaigning to end racial segregation; mobilising sentiment against the transporting of live animals are all examples.

See **social movement**.

COLLECTIVE CONSCIENCE This is the English translation of the term popularised

by Emile **Durkheim** (1912) in his *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* to refer to the shared beliefs and moral attitudes that give cohesion to a society. The collective conscience is particularly important in simple societies based on **mechanical solidarity**. In complex modern societies a common conscience is less important as an integrating principle because the advanced division of labour creates inter-dependency irrespective of a collective conscience.

COLLECTIVISATION This denotes the amalgamation of small peasant holdings into large agricultural units under state direction and was a feature of Stalin's agricultural policy in the Soviet Union in the 1930s.

COLLECTIVISM Specifically this refers to a political doctrine that advocates communal or state ownership of the means of production and distribution or a political system based on such a doctrine.

COLONIALISM Most generally this is the political rule of one nation, country or society by another, usually some way off. But it now more commonly refers to the domination of large parts of the world by white Christian European states in the 19th and 20th centuries. States differed considerably in the ways they colonised. The British often tried to expropriate the wealth of their colonies without disrupting native society and culture; for example, until the middle of the 19th century there was considerable resistance to allowing Christian missionaries to evangelise in the colonies. The preferred model of exploitation was to rule indirectly through local potentates. The French empire took the very different form of imposing French culture and ruling directly through French officials, with the colonies being given a place in the Paris government.

COMMAND ECONOMY As the name suggests, this is a structure of production and distribution in which decisions about what to produce result not from market forces but from central government direction. The economies of the 20th century communist states were largely command. Although they permitted individual initiative in small-scale enterprises, major enterprises such as mining, heavy industry and transport were run by government agencies which decided how many tractors should be made, of what quality and at what price they should be sold. Over the longer term, command economies are generally inefficient because workers have little direct stake in the success of the enterprise, consumer preferences have little impact on the economy and the goals of managers easily shift from running their enterprises efficiently to flattering their political masters.

It should be noted that in times of crisis (during major wars, for example) the governments of the most free-market oriented economies have been willing to take command of vital interests.

COMMODIFICATION The term may denote a distinguishing feature of market (normally capitalist) economies; rather than producing goods and services to satisfy their own needs, people produced 'commodities' to be sold in a market. Especially when used by Marxists, the term is pejorative and rests on the romantic notion that struggling to produce enough to meet one's own immediate needs is somehow more noble (even if less efficient) than producing for a market.

Arlie Russell **Hochschild** has drawn attention to the ways in which emotions are now marketed as commodities. Dating clubs, commercial child-minding services, party planners; such emotional-work services test the boundaries we place between what may reasonably be bought and sold and what should involve personal commitments beyond commerce. That we have such

boundaries is clear from usage: the 'commodification of steel manufacture' is not condemnatory; 'the commodification of sex' is. All the same, as the service sector grows in free market economies more and more areas of life are likely to become commodified.

Still, the use of 'commodification' which implies or asserts that modern relationships have become dominated by the cash nexus is usually mistaken. Even in advanced capitalist societies, non-commodified work is an important part of the social world. Almost half of most people's time is taken up with non-monetarised (i.e. not directly paid) work: domestic labour is a very large part of that. A 2000 survey showed that 45 per cent of Americans over 18 spent five or more hours a week in unpaid voluntary and charity work outside the home. It remains common for people to engage in unpaid reciprocity: one person helps a friend move house; that friend helps another repair a car and so on. And even when money changes hands it is often the case that the money has only a tangential relationship to the activity and that making a profit is not the primary purpose of the exchange. For example, a housewife regularly provides hot meals for a confused elderly female neighbour; a relative of the woman insists on giving the helper a large sum of money as a Christmas present. Or someone with easy access to horse manure gives a trailer load to a neighbour who grows roses and the rose-grower insists on paying for the delivery. This sort of loose reciprocity, although it involves money, is closer to gift-giving than to commodified exchange and it remains extremely common, even in advanced industrial capitalist societies.

COMMON-SENSE KNOWLEDGE At one level, sociologists are interested in common-sense knowledge because this is the knowledge that people use to make judgements and navigate their way around the world. **Goffman** is a leading analyst of commonsense

understood in this way. However some sociologists, notably **ethnomethodologists** and **social phenomenologists**, are more interested in the character of common-sense knowledge, particularly in contrast to what they assume scientific knowledge is like. For example, though the words used in everyday speech are not subject to rigorous definition and there are no set criteria for establishing what other people mean or are talking about, people manage well enough with this seemingly unsystematic body of knowledge. From this observation, ethnomethodologists and phenomenologists have gone on to argue that sociology follows a false path when it tries to ape the sciences and should content itself with the more everyday credentials of common-sense knowledge. Such arguments typically rest on an exaggerated sense of the 'scientificness' of communication within science and overlook the way that commonsense is refined in various institutions such as the law. The divide to which they wish to draw attention does not actually exist in the form they suppose.

See **ad-hocing**.

COMMUNAL VIOLENCE The downside of **community** is that the strength of social bonds within it is often matched by ill-feeling to those outside the community. 'Communal violence' is often used to denote widespread murderous attacks by one group (usually defined by religion and ethnicity) on its neighbours, where what is at stake are not national boundaries but the relative power and prestige of groups within the state.

COMMUNE This generally denotes a self-selecting group of people living and working together, sharing some or all of their possessions, and assisting each other with domestic tasks and child-rearing. Unlike extended families or small villages, most communes have a specific purpose. Most have been

religious in origin, united in the belief that their communal way is divinely ordained and that they are creating heaven on earth. Those that have survived more than one generation have paid attention to the two great threats: members being seduced by the outside world and falling out among themselves. Successful communes have managed to isolate themselves and have developed mechanisms for defusing potential conflict. The Hutterites, for example, farm using traditional methods which prevent them becoming too prosperous and when they grow beyond a size where face-to-face relations can be maintained, they buy new land and start another commune.

Most communes have been short-lived. Many were created in the expectation that a messiah would soon come and end this world and did not survive the disappointment of their **millenarian** dreams. Some died out because they failed to attend to the basic requirements for self-reproduction. For example, the Shakers, a 19th century US communitarian sect, prohibited all sexual activity; as they failed to maintain a supply of adult recruits, the commune literally died out, leaving only a simple style of furniture design as their legacy.

In the second half of the 20th century, communes in Western Europe and North America were also formed on secular bases. Usually in urban areas and sometimes in the context of 'squats', which repossessed abandoned buildings, these faced the same threats to survival as the earlier religious communes and were uniformly short-lived.

If spelt with a capital letter, the term refers to the revolutionary government established in Paris in 1870–71.

COMMUNICATION While definitions differ according to the theoretical frame of reference, they all include the following five fundamental elements: an initiator, a recipient, a mode of communication, a message and an effect.

Humans differ from other animals in the vast capacity for communication that language

gives. One of the aspects of communication that particularly interests sociologists is the way that modern technologies allow time and space to be transcended. Writing, printing, and such technological forms of communication as the radio, television, telegraph, fax, mobile phone and e-mail all allow easy storage of communicated information and almost instant communication across great distances. The consequences of modern communication are paradoxical. On the one hand, effective communication allows effective control and there is much concern about the enhanced powers of the modern state to monitor its citizens through such things as the recording of credit card payments and closed-circuit television monitoring of shopping precincts. On the other hand, the Internet and the mobile phone have been extremely effective in allowing individuals to subvert government attempts at censorship and information control. A good example was the 2003 failure of the Chinese government to restrict news of an outbreak of Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome (or SARS).

See **time-space distancing**.

COMMUNISM This term generally denotes the practical aspect of **Marxism**: the belief that human societies can be organised in a thoroughly egalitarian way by having the means of production commonly owned and thus removing the basis for class conflict. Without class, there would be no need for a state to protect the interests of the ruling class and it would wither away.

Marx and Engels (1967) used the term in the title of *The Communist Manifesto* (published in 1848) but for most of the 19th century radical parties that adopted some or all of the Marxist programme called themselves **socialist**. It was not until 1918, after the successful Russian revolution, that the Russian Social-Democratic Labour party changed its name to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

COMMUNITY Although often used in the geographical sense as a synonym for neighbourhood, the term does have a quite precise meaning in sociology, derived from Ferdinand Tönnies' (1887) *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (or *Community and Society*). The community of the pre-industrial rural society had the following characteristics. A small group of people interacted with each other over many years and many separate spheres of life: work, leisure, church, family. Relationships were many-sided, intimate and enduring, and created networks of reciprocal obligation that survived from one generation to the next. The stability and close contacts allowed considerable social cohesion.

In the urban industrial society very large numbers of people interact with each other over very narrow and specific tasks and only briefly before moving on. Many relationships are based on contract. I employ the plumber to fix my shower and pay him the agreed sum. I need never see him again; he will not call me when he needs help and I am not obliged to marry his daughter. The pre-industrial village dweller dealt with the same 20 people all his or her life; the typical city dweller deals with 200 people every day, most of them only fleetingly. One simple way of capturing the point is to think of compulsion. The modern city dweller can choose a plumber from a hundred listed in a trade directory, can choose his religion from the hundreds of churches and chapels within easy travelling distance, and can choose which of his many neighbours he wishes to befriend. The feudal villager was given his social world.

As is the case with much of early sociology, there is a great deal of nostalgia and romanticism built into this paired contrast but it contains an essential truth. Whether one sees it as freedom from intrusive and sometimes oppressive relationships or as the loss of something important to psychic stability, the modern city allows a degree of anonymity that was almost impossible in small-scale pre-industrial societies. This is

not to say that community is unknown in the city; especially where major social divisions constrain interaction (e.g. in an ethnic minority neighbourhood) then one may have an unusual degree of stability and hence intimacy in relationships. But the difference in degree of compulsion remains.

For this reason, many current uses of the term community seem quite inappropriate. Groups of people who share common interests, beliefs and values and who may interact only in some mediated way (through the Internet, for example) are described as communities when the term 'voluntary association' is more appropriate. The crucial point is the absence of some sense of necessity or compulsion; however active people are in a steam engine restoration society or white witch network, they can easily withdraw without any great disruption to other parts of their lives.

See **intentional community**.

COMMUNITY STUDIES The defining characteristic of the community study is not its research methods (which usually involves **ethnography** but may also include attitude surveys and the collection of detailed descriptive statistics) but its attempt to get to grips with all the socially salient features of a particular small locality. An early American classic, which shows what is involved if one takes seriously the ambition to comprehend a community rather than an activity or institution, is W. Lloyd Warner's (1940) *Yankee City* research which is reported in four long books. Though considerably shorter, Norman Dennis et al.'s (1956) *Coal is Our Life: an analysis of a Yorkshire mining community*, is a good British example. It is implicit confirmation of the view of Ferdinand Tönnies that **community** was being displaced that the sort of community studies common in the 1950s are now rare. Longer travel-to-work distances and greater

mobility mean that place and proximity less define social relationships than they once did. Detailed ethnographies are now more likely to concern disparate individuals drawn together for a specific purpose, than a town or village.

COMPETENCE This word has come to have three meanings that sociologists may come across. First, **Chomsky** introduced a distinction between competence and performance to indicate the way that speakers of a language who master the (in his view in-built) rules may nonetheless produce utterances that are ungrammatical. The utterances are the performance whereas the set of rules that have been mastered are the competence. Other social scientists have adopted this terminology as a way of talking about the difference between what people may know or be able to do and what they do on any particular occasion. People with fully developed social skills may still make a gaffe without that necessarily indicating a lack of competence.

Ethnomethodologists and others who study small-scale interaction have alerted social scientists to a range of skills that are so widespread as to be almost invisible: the skill of recognising irony, of thanking appropriately and so on. Under special circumstances – for example, when dealing with machines programmed to respond to human talk – these ubiquitous skills may become problematic. Thus one way of interpreting the claims of **ethnomethodology** is to see it as asserting that people are far more competent than they are routinely acknowledged to be by social scientists who often take these everyday skills for granted.

Finally, in an ugly usage, those who are concerned with developing people's social and occupational skills – for example, in training service staff – have begun to speak of particular skills as 'competences', with competence or competency as the singular form of the word.

COMTE, AUGUSTE (1798–1857) Rarely read now, Comte performed the signal service to the discipline of coining the term 'sociology' which first appeared in his 1838 *Cours de Philosophie Positive*. For Comte, sociology was an empirical observation-based comparative science which would dominate the highest stage of human evolution. He believed that thought developed through the stages of the theological, the metaphysical and the positive. Societies evolved from the primitive through the intermediary to the scientific. Comte saw the increasing division of labour making societies more complex, specialised and internally differentiated. Like Emile **Durkheim** later, he saw modernisation as paradoxical; increased division of labour made people more dependent on each other and thus increased social solidarity but it also created class divisions and a gulf between the public and private worlds.

Comte divided sociology into two: social dynamics and social statics. The first was concerned with principles of evolution; the second, which anticipated **functionalism**, was concerned with the function of specific social institutions (such as family, private property and the state) in maintaining social order. Although we can find elements of Comte's work that are obvious precursors to modern sociology, the overall project seems thoroughly alien because it was intended as a utopian blueprint. The positive era would be characterised by reliable knowledge, rational government and a new religion centred on humanity, not god. The positive society would be governed by bankers and industrialists, guided by sociologists!

CONCEPT A concept is an idea. Sociologists are concerned about concepts – the concept of the family or of power and so on – because various writers may use the same term but mean different things by it. Given that sociologists are in the business of trying to make systematic interpretations of

society it is important that their good work is not undermined by hiding competing concepts behind the same term. Conceptual analysis – an analysis of precisely how the word ‘class’ is used, for example – can thus be a key component of sociology.

CONCOMITANT VARIATION This is a rather clumsy way of denoting an empirical (that is, actual rather than logical) relationship between two variables where the magnitude of one goes up or down in proportion with the magnitude of the other. The effect of heating a metal strip is a concomitant variation in length and heat. Constant concomitance is what we have if the relationship holds for all values of heat. If we persistently find that (a) as people grow richer (b) they more frequently vote for a right-wing party, we have concomitant variation and can begin to consider that (a) might cause (b). The sad fact for the social sciences is that, compared with the natural sciences, we very rarely find relationships of constant concomitance.

CONDITIONED REFLEX See **conditioning**.

CONDITIONING Conditioning is an important aspect of work within the **behaviourist** school. Behaviourists were interested in studying human conduct as scientifically as possible and believed that their approach must depend on analysing connections between observable inputs (or stimuli) and observable outputs (or responses). Conditioning is a form of learning that can be observed in this scientific way. If a bell rings before food appears for a dog, in time the dog will come to salivate just when the bell rings, even in the absence of food; this is a conditioned reflex since previously the dog would not have salivated at the whim of a bell-ringer. Some behaviourists hoped to be able to understand aspects of human culture in terms of the conditioning of

infants and children; this programme did not get very far.

CONFESSIONAL TECHNOLOGIES This translation of a term coined by Michel **Foucault**, as with so much of his work, misleads as much as it informs. He does not mean ‘technologies’ at all; he means social practices (a combination of ideas and activities) which encourage people to see themselves as requiring or benefiting from the assistance of psychiatrists, therapists, social workers and the like in becoming ‘normal’. ‘Confessional’ is clear in that it borrows the Catholic Church notion that the burden of sin can be removed by admitting it to a professional who has the power to prescribe rituals for its discharge. But ‘technologies’ seems to have been chosen to remind us of Foucault’s claim that such methods of policing the self are peculiarly modern.

CONFIDENCE INTERVAL Sociologists often use a sample to try to understand the characteristics of a population as a whole. For example, if we wish to know how common car-theft is in the whole of France, we could ask a sample of French people for their experience of car theft. But the conclusion drawn from a sample is unlikely to be exactly the same as it would be were we able to ask the whole population. The confidence interval is a way of using the sample result to express a range of estimated values for the population as a whole. We might, for example, be able to say that we have a 90 per cent confidence that the annual risk of car-theft is 8 plus or minus 2 per cent. That is, our sample was sufficiently large and well selected that we think there is only a 1 in 10 chance that the overall population’s rate of car-theft is more than 2 percentage points different from that detected in our sample.

CONFLICT THEORY Any theoretical perspective (such as **Marxism** or **feminism**)

informed by the idea that society is dominated by a conflict of interest between those who have access to wealth, power and status and the rest, may be described as a conflict theory. From its standpoint, there are two implied contrasts. Other approaches (Parsonian **structural-functionalism**, for example) may be criticised for assuming too much consensus or (as with **symbolic interactionism**) for ignoring power differentials.

CONJUGAL ROLES 'Conjugal' simply means 'of marriage' and the term refers to the reciprocal roles of marriage partners.

CONSANGUINITY Literally meaning 'of the same blood', the term is used in anthropology and in many legal systems to refer to a blood kinship tie. It is contrasted with 'affinal', so that my bond with my son is consanguineous while my bond with my wife is affinal. In some societies, degrees of consanguinity are important for deciding the order of inheritance or for regulating choice of marriage partners. Because they share more of 'the same blood', siblings are closer than cousins.

CONSCIOUSNESS Consciousness is a puzzle for scientists and philosophers since they are unclear how brains and minds are able to be conscious of themselves. Nonetheless, consciousness is a given for sociologists since it is clear that people are, generally speaking, conscious of themselves. As Erving **Goffman** has so clearly documented, in our everyday lives we monitor our social selves, consciously thinking about not only whatever task or purpose we have in mind but also how other people view us. When I cannot find my car in the supermarket car park I may make a show of being lost and befuddled, not for my own benefit, but to indicate to other shoppers that I am not prowling around, looking out for cars to break into. I am conscious of

myself but also conscious of how other people may view me. Consciousness in this sense is part of the fabric of **inter-subjectivity** that binds people into a common, taken-for-granted world.

CONSCRIPTION Generally meaning being signed up for something against your will (or in the US drafted), this more particularly denotes being required by the state to undertake military service. Most modern states maintain small professional armies and reserve the right to conscript sections of the general population as required.

CONSENSUS; CONSENSUS THEORY Denoting the existence within a group of fundamental agreement about basic beliefs and values, consensus is important in sociology because beliefs about its extent identify a major fault line. Some sociologists (e.g. Talcott **Parsons**) believe that shared values are vital to maintaining social order; others suppose that common interests or coercion play a larger part in explaining the persistence of social systems.

See **conflict theory**, **structural-functionalism**.

CONSERVATISM The meaning of this is entirely situational in that, as a political doctrine, it means defending the institutions, values and habits of the existing order. As a set of political attitudes it means the opposite of 'radical'; it is a general disposition to support the status quo. As the world changes so too do the things that conservatism wishes to defend.

CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION In his *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, Thorstein Veblen (1899) argued that a defining characteristic of the leisure class was that its members purchased goods and services not for their

construct

obvious utility but for show: to demonstrate that they could afford such things.

See **positional goods**.

CONSTRUCT Construct is often a fancy word for an idea or concept. For example, some psychologists maintain that people build and maintain a relatively stable image of themselves; this is known as a 'personal construct'. Generally, therefore, a construct is a special kind of idea: one that is durable and has been deliberately cultivated.

CONSTRUCTIONISM See **social construction of reality**.

CONSUMER CULTURE This rather vague term refers to the idea that since the 1970s wealthy capitalist societies have become much more focused on **consumption** than production. Consumer culture refers both to the interest that citizens have in the consumption aspects of their life – their interest in fine dining, fashion, home improvement and so on – and to the industries that have developed to cater to this taste. Television programmes that show you how to dress or to do a 'house makeover' are part of consumer culture, as are decorating magazines and the supplements in newspapers devoted to lifestyle enhancement.

CONSUMPTION Denoting the process in which goods and services are used, consumption has been given markedly less attention than production by sociologists, for the good reason that since, in most societies to date, people's time and energy has been largely taken up with work, their place in the production process has greatly influenced much else about them, and few have had enough discretionary income for consumption to rise much above the bare necessities. Arguably

content analysis

the increasing affluence of modern societies and the shrinking of the presence of work in our lives means that consumption should be studied as an important social phenomenon in its own right.

See **consumer culture**.

CONTAGION EFFECT See **copycat effect**.

CONTENT ANALYSIS At its simplest, content analysis is the reduction of freely occurring text (e.g. a speech or a newspaper article) to a summary that can be analysed statistically. One may try to capture the essence of a text by counting certain words. For example, we could analyse the respective place of religion in US and British politics by comparing the frequency of references to God in speeches to the respective legislatures. The problem, of course, is that the meaning of words is rarely simple and the meaning of a text is rarely apparent from its words taken in isolation. Summarising a text in statistical form may give a spurious appearance of objectivity to what is always an artful and creative process of interpretation. The digitisation of text and the speed of the modern computer allows the application of extremely sophisticated analytical frames to texts but they do not remove the filter of interpretation. One response is to have texts coded by a number of operators and checked for consistency. This would still not give us the 'correct' reading of a text or the intention of the speaker or writer but it does give us a consensus version.

Although content analysis as such is not at fault, it is often associated with an evidential weakness at the heart of much cultural analysis. Researchers may suppose that some text means the same to the audience as it does to them. They may also assume that the text has the consequences for the audience that they guess the producers of the text intended.

CONTEST AND SPONSORED MOBILITY This contrast pair was used by R.H. Turner and L.M. Killian (1960) to draw attention to different ways in which education could serve as a channel for social mobility. The distinction can be clearly seen in a comparison of the British state schooling system of the 1950s and that of the 1990s. In the 1950s children were tested at the age of 11. A small number went to high quality schools where they were educated for university and financially and socially supported as they gained the qualifications for entry into elite positions. The 'comprehensive' school system that largely replaced the two-tier model in the 1970s offered contest mobility: a much larger number of children were encouraged to compete for access to universities and hence to the professions. Experts may argue over exactly how fair a contest is presented by any education system but the distinction is a useful one.

The pair were also used to contrast the UK and US patterns of social mobility. As part of a general contrast of the supposed old class-ridden Europe and the new classless USA, social mobility rates in the US were assumed to be much higher than in the UK and to involve more open competition. In the UK the ruling class selected a small proportion of the working class and 'sponsored' its mobility. While there was some truth to the contrast, detailed empirical research from the 1970s onwards suggested that the differences were exaggerated.

CONTINGENCY TABLE See **cross-tabulation**.

CONTINGENT This means liable but not certain to happen. It can be used to stress unpredictability (as in 'the contingencies of war') but in social science it more often signifies a real causal relationship rather than a connection by definition. It is certain to be the case that the next triangle I find will have three sides because that is ensured by the definition of triangle, not

by the regularity of the world. Whether I enjoy the next film I see is a contingency. The word is also used as a synonym for 'caused by': as in 'my pleasure in the watching this film is contingent on there being no smoking in the cinema'.

CONTRADICTIONARY CLASS LOCATION The phrase was coined by US Marxist Erik Olin Wright in his attempt to remedy the defects of Karl Marx's class model and to identify which occupational groups might form alliances with the working class in revolutionary struggle. In the absence of a complete polarisation of class around ownership of capital, a variety of class locations are characterised by 'contradictions'. For example, managers, like the workers they manage, are exploited by capitalists but, like capitalists, they exercise control over others. We are tempted to say that Wright and others could have saved themselves a great deal of remedial work by simply admitting Marx was wrong but Wright's explorations of the complexities of class have stimulated a great deal of useful debate and comparative research.

CONTROL GROUP Knowing how effective some change is requires that we have a base line against which to make comparisons. In experiments to test new drug therapies, for example, cases are allocated randomly to the experimental group that will receive the treatment and the control group that will be given a placebo. The former can thus be compared with the latter to identify the effects of the therapy. In the 'double-blind' method neither the researchers nor the patients know which cases are in which group. Such experiments are not possible in sociology but we can sometimes create something like a control group by careful selection of cases to compare.

CONTROL THEORY Traditionally most explanations of crime have supposed that being law-abiding is the human default

position and that criminality needs explaining. Travis Hirschi's 1970s control theory of crime starts at the other end. It supposes that the potential for crime is widespread and that no special motives need be invoked to explain it. Most crime is opportunistic and what mostly deters people are their attachments to law-abiding parents and peers, their rational assessment of the risks and costs of being caught, their involvement in others things (put simply, if you are very busy with the swimming club you have less opportunity to become delinquent) and their beliefs (which for some will prevent delinquency). As we get older we acquire good reasons not to commit crimes (such as spouses and children; commitment to a career; status in our social circles and the like) that acts as controls on our actions. Putting it this way identifies those groups that do not have much at stake: the young and the poor.

In the 1990s, Hirschi amended his theory to give much greater weight to the role of parenting, effective early socialisation, conscience and self-control.

CONTROLLING FOR Sociologists very rarely have the opportunity to construct experiments. Normally we work with 'naturally occurring' research materials. We cannot study one human characteristic in isolation from others and hence it is always possible that what we take to be a case of A causing B may actually be a matter of C causing both A and B. In a survey of church-going we discover that people who describe themselves as Catholics are more likely to go to church than those who describe themselves as Protestants. We might waste a lot of time constructing an explanation for the greater loyalty of Catholics before we notice that through some accident of sampling our Catholics are markedly older than our Protestants. We suspect that age has a strong effect on church-going so we 'control' for age by dividing our sample into age bands and

comparing Catholics and Protestants within each age group. We may well discover that the initial correlation disappears.

Without the ability to create experimental controls, sociological attempts to create clear and uncontaminated comparisons rest on selecting the cases to be compared so that they are alike in as much as possible except for the variables whose relationship we wish to explore.

CONVERGENCE THESIS See **industrial society**.

CONVERSATION ANALYSIS Conversation analysis (or CA as it is often known) grew out of **ethnomethodology** but is now in many respects rather distant from ethnomethodological concerns. In their pioneering ethnomethodological studies Harold **Garfinkel** and Harvey **Sacks** were concerned to show how the orderliness of society is actively produced by the actions of participants. Conversations became one arena for displaying this orderliness. For example, in a regular conversation no one is in charge of the distribution of turns at talking. But most conversations are remarkably orderly, with little overlap and a series of 'turns' for each speaker. Somehow the orderliness of conversation is spontaneously produced by the speakers themselves.

Telephone conversations early on became important to CA. In part this was because in a phone conversation all the speakers have to go on is the preceding talk (and whatever assumptions and background knowledge the speakers bring to their interaction); there are no non-verbal cues. But it was also because phone calls could be recorded and then the analyst would have virtually the same access to the interaction as the participants themselves. In fact, as the tapes could be replayed over and over again, the analyst had something of an advantage over the conversationalists.

From these unfocused beginnings CA has developed into a major branch of sociology.

It has achieved at least three important things. First, CA has uncovered a lot of the ways in which ordinary talk is structured, for example through looking at how conversations are terminated, how topics are chosen or avoided, and how special turns at talk known as **adjacency pairs** (such as greetings) operate. This work has even been influential outside sociology, for example in linguistics and psychology. Second, CA has been able to throw light on institutional talk by comparing specialised forms of talk – courtroom interrogation, pilots' conversations with air-traffic control, calls to emergency services – with everyday talk. Many jobs are done mainly through talk – even being a family doctor is mostly talk – so CA has contributed significantly to the sociology of work. Third, CA has introduced innovations in the standard of evidence available to sociologists. Not only do conversation analysts work on recorded materials that can be thoroughly checked by other social scientists, they have also developed methodological tools to check the validity of their analyses. For example, if they claim that a greeting makes a return greeting normatively appropriate in normal conversation, they can study this both by looking for examples of returned greetings and by looking for occasions when greetings are not returned. If on such occasions the co-conversationalist treats the absence of a greeting as 'trouble' then the conversation analyst has some form of independent warrant for her claims. For this reason, conversation analysts often see their generalisations as more robust and better tested than those of other qualitative sociologists, and they quite commonly see CA as a highly scientific form of study.

CONVERSION This denotes a radical change of beliefs, usually accompanied by a corresponding change in attitudes, action and personality. Explaining conversion is a major concern of students of religion. Competing

explanations can be grouped according to the cause of change. In the early 1960s it was common to suppose that people who abruptly changed beliefs had been 'brainwashed'; skilled manipulators could, by depriving people of sleep and food, scaring them literally witless and seducing them with the prospect of approval and reward, reduce people to a state of credulity and persuade them to accept ideas they would normally find implausible. This was thought to have been done effectively by Chinese prison guards to Americans captured during the Korean war. A careful reading of Robert Lifton's (1961) *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* or Edward Schein's (1961) *Coercive Persuasion* reveals that no such claims are made for brainwashing but the idea became popular in the 1970s when large numbers of middle-class young people (whom, it is implied, should have known better) briefly joined exotic **new religious movements**. The clearest evidence that movements such as the Moonies did not have the power to brainwash is that the vast majority of people whom the Moonies tried to recruit did not convert and almost all members left within a few months.

Sociologists have preferred one of two approaches that correspond to the classic divide over **agency and structure**. Some take a rather passive view of the convert and explain conversion by pointing to antecedent problems (such as **anomie**), structural constraints such as the strength of family and friendship ties, and ties to advocates of the new worldview. Others stress agency or free will and see conversion as an accomplishment. It is not something that happens to a person but something a seeker achieves.

An important general observation from the study of conversion is that ideological change may actually come late in the social process. Many 'converts' begin by playing the role of a believer with a degree of **role-distance** and only if they find the role satisfying do they gradually come to internalise the new beliefs.

Conversion has been an important site for developing ideas about the relationship between **accounts** and actions. Rather than naively taking what believers say about their conversions as raw material for explaining them, we are aware that conversion testimonies are themselves a stylised and scripted performance, designed for a purpose other than merely explaining the past; like courtroom testimonies, they are intended to have an effect on the hearer.

COOLEY, CHARLES HORTON (1864–1929)

For modern purposes, the most important part of Cooley's work was his attempt to abolish the dualisms of society/individual and body/mind. He believed that the self and society could only be defined in relation to each other: society inevitably shaped the individual; individuals constituted society. His idea of the **looking-glass self** was taken up by George Herbert **Mead** in his general theory of the self.

COPYCAT EFFECT Also known as the contagion or imitation effect, this is the supposed power of the mass media to create a rash of imitative behaviour. If a popular TV soap shows someone committing suicide by piping exhaust fumes into her car, then suicides by that method go up in the weeks afterwards. Outside the artificial setting of an experiment, such effects are notoriously hard to prove. A practical difficulty is that much of the evidence comes from people who, in being forced to **account** for some deviant or criminal act, blame it on prior example. We are then unsure if we have a genuine example of imitation or someone opportunistically trying to evade responsibility.

CORPORATE CRIME The phrase conveys the point, often neglected in criminology, that organisations can, in two senses, commit

crimes. They can break the law (as when senior officials of a corporation instruct staff to construct fraudulent accounts). They can also inflict harm of a scale and nature which, were it done by an individual, would be regarded as a crime. For example, a corporation may cause serious damage to the health of its workers. Organisational crime should be distinguished from **white-collar crime** (which often involves crimes against employees; embezzlement is an example) and from organised crime.

CORPORATION From 'corporal' meaning 'belonging to the body', this denotes a group of people legally structured so as to act and be treated as if it were a single person. Normally a corporation would elect its own officers. Local governments, large businesses, a professional association; all of these may be corporations.

CORPORATISM When confronted with the increasing democratisation of politics at the end of the 19th century, the Catholic Church promoted an alternative to mass politics, which it saw as encouraging class conflict. Its preferred model was the world of the medieval guilds: groups with a common interest (businessmen, tradesmen, workers, farmers and the like) would each form a corporation and the leaders elected from each body would negotiate a division of political power. Corporatism was popular with some right-wing European politicians in the first half of the 20th century and informed some of the more benign authoritarian regimes established in such states as Lithuania and Latvia in the 1930s.

Latterly the term has come to be used to refer to one way in which modern states can be organised. In, for example, Germany (and previously in West Germany) business leaders, leading government politicians and trades union leaders met in regular forums to discuss

policy initiatives, to settle major pay claims, negotiate reform of welfare entitlements and so on. In the USA and post-1980 Britain, by contrast, relations between the executive and unions were more oppositional. For many years it appeared that the corporatist model worked better in delivering economic prosperity and extensive social welfare provision, though the ability of corporatist states to cope with international economic competition from low-wage countries and with the growing costs of the welfare state has recently come to appear questionable.

CORRELATION This denotes a regular relationship between two variables. If our survey data shows that the people with the highest A also have the highest B, then we have a positive correlation between A and B. If they also had the lowest C, then we would say there is a negative correlation between A and C. Identifying correlations in data sets is, however, only the start of analysis. A correlation of itself does not tell us if A causes B, B causes A or if both A and B are caused by some third unknown variable.

There are a variety of statistical measures of correlation, each more or less suitable to different sorts of data (see **measurement, levels of**) with differing patterns of distribution. For example Pearson's *r* is commonly used to describe the correlation between two variables that have been measured on interval or ratio scales where the values follow a normal or bell-shaped distribution. When it is not possible to assign actual values to variables but only to place them in a rank order and when the distribution is not bell-shaped, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient is more appropriate. The only thing the amateur needs to know is that data must be described with an appropriate statistic.

COUNTER-CULTURE In the 1960s this term was popularly used to describe people

who 'dropped out' of the social, economic and cultural mainstream to live alternative lifestyles. Common themes of the counter-culture included sexual freedom, recreational drug use, criticism of conventional family life or conventional occupations as sterile and oppressive, and criticism of industrial capitalism and western rationality. The counter-culture never posed a threat to the mainstream. Very few people dropped out entirely; for most being a hippie was a weekend and holiday pursuit. However, it was successful in promoting those cultural and social innovations that were compatible with a modern industrial economy. Sex outside marriage, recreational drug use, rock music, diversity in dress styles, an interest in eastern religion; all are incorporated in the mainstream.

COVERT RESEARCH Some styles of research are invariably public; people cannot complete a survey questionnaire without being aware of it (though we can do subtle things with question placement). But it is possible to study people without their knowledge. We could study a new religion by pretending to be a believer or watch and overhear diners by working as a waiter. As Laud Humphreys did in (1970) *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places* we could pretend to interview people for one research purpose while actually collecting some of that information for a quite different purpose.

There are very good reasons for covert research. As was found with the **Hawthorne effect**, knowing that they are being studied may change the behaviour of the people we wish to study. Respondents may choose to mislead us. If the purpose of participant observation is to learn what life feels like for a member of some sect, declaring that intention may well compromise the research because, even if other members are happy with being studied, they are unlikely to treat the researching participant in the same way as they would treat ordinary members.

Finally, being undercover may well be the only way to study groups engaged in deviant or criminal behaviour that are powerful enough to control access. In brief, covert research may be the only way to acquire certain information and experiences.

COVERT RESEARCH, ETHICS OF Led by the example of medical research, where it is now standard to require that those studied give their informed consent, some sociologists argue that covert or hidden research is always unethical and that social researchers should identify themselves as such. While this may seem a reasonable requirement, for the reasons given in the previous entry, it would close off important parts of the world.

Rather too much can be made of the ethical problems of covert research. After all, unlike medical research, most social research is not doing anything to people. If it remains truly covert and identities are so well disguised on publication that those who have been studied never become aware of it, it is difficult to see what harm is done to our subjects. Second, covert researchers often act out fully the roles they have adopted as they conduct their research. That they reflect more professionally and rigorously on their experiences and observations than do the people they work alongside does not of itself make them that different from their subjects. In the research reported in his classic *Organization Man*, William H. Whyte (1956) worked for a number of corporations and did a perfectly good job. That he also kept notes on what he did and observed and drew inferences from them caused no disruption to the firms for which he worked. We may scruple that he sometimes led people on (for example promising to assist a female secretary in her amorous pursuit of a friend in return for some indiscretion over personnel files) but this could be defended on the grounds that had he not been a researcher, he might well have done the same thing for less good reasons.

One sensible way of settling the ethical dilemma is to consider if the activity or group in question is public or private. If a new religion claims that we are all doomed if we fail to follow its revelations and aims to recruit from the general public, it seems reasonable for the covert researcher to join it and study it because the new religion has placed itself in the public domain. Given the general requirement to respect privacy, spying on people who have not put themselves in the public domain seems harder to defend.

See **ethics of research**.

CRIME Crime is that particular subset of deviance or failure to conform to rules where the rules in question are legal codes. This definition could be operationalised in a thoroughly pragmatic way by treating as crime only that which the appropriate legal authorities have determined is criminal, but many sociologists would regard that as unduly restrictive and wish to include acts which in some sense or other should have been regarded as crimes. This then introduces the complexity that the actor, the agent of social control, and the observer may differ in their judgement either of general principles (should pollution be treated as a crime?) or of specific instances (would this act have been treated as a crime had it come before a different judge or jury?).

CRIMINOLOGY Less an 'ology' than a substantive area of interest explored from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, criminology has undergone an important expansion in its scope since the 1970s. Initially criminologists took a rather narrow view of their field, taking for granted the laws, the infraction of which constituted crimes, and concentrating on trying to explain why some people broke the law. More recently, criminologists have also studied the creation of law and its differential

enforcement and punishment. For example, feminist criminologists have pointed to the patriarchal nature of attitudes to domestic violence. Until the last quarter of the 20th century the legal systems of many western countries regarded the violence inflicted by men on their spouses as a private matter. As an example of differential enforcement we may note that in the USA blacks are often given more severe sentences than whites for apparently similar offences.

Explanations of crime have followed the contours of well-established general models for explaining other sorts of conduct. Cesare **Lombroso** believed that criminality was genetically transmitted and that criminals could be recognised by head and face shape. Each sociological perspective has its preferred approach to crime. Some functionalists have stressed the role of poor parenting and faulty socialisation in preventing the inculcation of law-abidingness. Others have followed Emile **Durkheim** in suggesting that, although too much would be harmfully disruptive, some crime is useful in giving upright citizens regular opportunities to display their shared commitment to decency. Rather against the **structural-functionalist** tendency to stress the integration of institutions, Robert K. Merton pointed out that crime could be a reasonable response to failures of the social structure evenly to provide legitimate means to achieve the cultural goals which American society offered evenly to all citizens. In his view certain types of crime were not so much alien intrusions as by-products of features of the social structure itself. The main contribution of **symbolic interactionism** is focused not so much on initial criminal acts as on the unintended consequences of societal reaction to criminality. The point, now accepted by most social control agencies, is that to respond to the crimes of the young by excluding perpetrators from conventional roles and forcing them into the company of professional criminals, may well encourage further crime by reducing opportunities for non-criminal careers and

allowing young people to be socialised into criminal values.

Marxists have developed a **critical criminology** that stresses the class basis of the definition and punishment of crime. Feminists have raised important questions about the role of women as perpetrators and as victims of crime and have drawn attention to the previously neglected topic of the influence of gender on the social definition of crime.

For the good reason that this is what scares most people, criminology has traditionally been concerned with crimes of violence, theft, robbery and burglary. One of the most useful contributions of sociology (since Edwin Sutherland coined the term 'white-collar crime' in 1939 through to the work of Richard Quinney) had been to draw our attention to the very large amount of middle-class crime that stretches from small-scale office fiddling to the major scandal of the 2002 collapse of the Enron energy corporation. It is clear that while certain kinds of crime may be more common among the working class and the poor than among the middle class, criminality itself is not confined to any particular class, gender, race or status group. Criminologists have also tried out new methods for the study of crime, including victim studies – which focus on people's experiences of crime rather than on officially recorded infractions – and longitudinal studies that follow **cohorts** of people to map when in their life-course they are most deviant and liable to be charged with criminality.

CRITICAL CRIMINOLOGY Also known as radical criminology, this 1970s development from the sociology of deviance argued that much crime was a reasonable reaction of exploited and dispossessed people to the inequities of capitalist society. In the US Richard Quinney was a leading exponent of this view; in the UK, Ian Taylor, Paul Walton and Jock Young's (1975) *The New Criminology* was a pioneering text.

The critical criminologists were reasonably accused of romanticising crime and of finding revolutionary intent in action that was actually far more exploitative and damaging to the working class than anything done by capitalists. Young later came to appreciate this and coined the term **left realism** for a view of working-class crime that much more honestly recognised that it really did have victims and that most victims were poorer and weaker than those who victimised them.

CRITICAL REALISM Developed mostly in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s, critical realism is a school of Marxist thought anchored in philosophical analysis. Authors such as Roy Bhaskar used philosophical arguments about **realism** to suggest that success in the natural sciences comes about when scientists identify the real causes that underlie regularities in the natural world. From here it is a short step to the idea that good sociology too must identify the underlying causal powers. Critical realists thus derived a 'template' for what social scientific explanations should look like and then proceeded to argue that a version of Marxism was the form of sociology best suited to identifying the causal powers driving social change.

CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY This is an umbrella term used to designate sociological work which sees itself as critical of the economic, social and political organisation of contemporary societies. Most critical sociologists are approximately Marxist in their orientation though many feminists would be happy to be so described also. Beyond this basic outlook critical sociologists need not have much in common and lack the specific philosophical basis for their critique that is to be found in **critical theory**.

Given that a certain degree of scepticism is a pre-requisite for nearly all sociology,

since we are often in the business of testing the lay explanations that people offer for their actions and of trying to expose the hidden causes and consequences of social action and social arrangements, self-proclaimed critical sociologists often distinguish themselves by having an overt political agenda. All too often they are conspicuously uncritical about their own political preferences.

CRITICAL THEORY Though the term 'critical' is a label that has sometimes been used to designate any sociological theory that is critical of the status quo (**critical sociology**), critical theory has a more technical meaning. Critical theorists claim that their sociological work is both a description of contemporary society and a critique of it. To many mainstream (particularly North American) sociologists this appears to confuse a description of facts with a judgement about values, and thus to violate the ideal of **value neutrality** in scientific thought. However, critical theorists argue that we are able to apply rational analysis to matters of value as well as to those of fact. Indeed the sociologist fails to fulfil their ethical role if they apply critical thinking only to facts and not to values.

In particular, the very same rational tools that we apply in analysing society are said to contain an approach to thinking about values as well. The social theorists of the **Frankfurt School** maintained that we can apply the same rational approach to thinking about justice, exploitation and fairness as we apply to analysing society empirically. Jürgen **Habermas** took this further by finding (or claiming to find) the value criteria within the very language of analysis. According to Habermas, academic inquiry, and more generally the search for truth, presupposes an 'ideal speech situation' (or ISS) of unfettered speech; within this ISS we can find ethical values already presupposed by the way we conduct our analysis. In this way, critical theorists claim to study society empirically but

also to be able to conduct a political and cultural critique of society and social institutions at the same time. For most critical theorists, this is to fulfil a key task that Karl **Marx** set himself: to produce an authoritative description of society which was simultaneously a critique of that society's limitations. All critical theory thus challenges the fact/value distinction and claims that the systematic analysis of society predisposes us towards certain values and away from others (such as arbitrary authority). Contemporary mainstream political theorists such as Charles Taylor have a lot of sympathy with this line of reasoning even if they don't call themselves critical theorists.

CROSS-TABULATION This describes the simplest way of looking for a connection between two or more variables: we look across a table. In what is called a contingency table, the following table gives some fictional data for the social class of fathers and sons; the columns of the table describe the father's class and for each column the row cell shows what percentage of sons have that class. If all sons had the same class as their fathers the numbers in the diagonal running from top left to bottom right would be 100 and the other cells would be empty. The size of the numbers in cells on either side of the diagonal gives us a rough idea of how far the actual inheritance of class varies from that.

	Father's Class		
	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Son's Class (%)			
Class 1	60	20	10
Class 2	20	60	10
Class 3	20	20	80
Total	100	100	100

Making inferences from the spread of data in a contingency table obviously gets more complex the greater the number of variables we wish to consider and how finely divided each of them is, which is why we input data into programmes such as **SPSS** and use computer-generated statistics to ask the sorts of questions of the data which, in the simple model given here, we can pick out by eye.

CULT See **religious organisations**.

CULTURAL CAPITAL Pierre **Bourdieu** introduced this concept to draw attention to the importance for social mobility and social differentiation of assets other than wealth and political power. He argued that middle-class parents were able to pass on to their children (hence the capital metaphor) the great asset of understanding and exemplifying the middle-class culture that informed the education system.

Analysts of cultural capital present it as an asset in three ways. Most obviously, speaking in the same way and possessing the same stock of cultural knowledge as teachers is likely to make middle-class children better thought of. That their homes and schools share the same cultural background also makes middle-class children feel more comfortable and confident in the school system. But there is a more subtle effect: simply because they are more familiar, middle-class children are often credited with greater intelligence and skill than objective measures would suggest they possess. Or to present the same point from the other side, without necessarily intending to, teachers often under-estimate the competence of working-class children by taking the lack of surface cultural competence as a sign of underlying inadequacy.

Plausible though these ideas are, Bourdieu's claims are not well supported by large-scale empirical research on social mobility. If cultural capital is very important we should

have seen the link between social class of origin and educational attainment strengthen considerably over time; in international studies this appears not to be the case.

CULTURAL DEPRIVATION THEORY In the 1950s and 1960s it was common for the failure of the children of the working class and of some ethnic minorities in the USA and the UK to perform as well as white middle-class children to be explained by their cultural deprivation: the failure of the home and the neighbourhood to provide appropriate (primarily linguistic) skills and suitable encouragement. The idea remains popular with right-wing politicians and educationalists but has fallen out of favour with sociologists, who are generally reluctant to endorse the value judgement implicit in describing as inadequacy what may just be cultural difference. Pierre **Bourdieu's** cultural capital serves the same purpose of explaining educational failure by the gulf between some home cultures and the culture of the school without supposing that the latter is the standard against which home backgrounds should be measured.

CULTURAL DOPES Theoretical approaches such as **structural-functionalism** and **Marxism** have been criticised for viewing people as little more than passive carriers of features of the social structure, shaped by social forces beyond their control and often beyond even their knowledge. The phrase 'cultural dopes' was coined by Harold **Garfinkel** as a way of focusing attention on the error at the heart of structuralist theories.

CULTURAL IMPERIALISM This is the imposition of American or western values upon non-western societies, largely through the export of mass media products. US-based trans-national media and communications now dominate so much of the world that

scholars talk seriously of a threat to weaker nation-states. It is certainly true that US media products dominate the market but it does not automatically follow that they are persuasive. The popularity of Islamic fundamentalist attacks on the USA shows that many people can take US culture as an enemy to be opposed rather than as a friend to be imitated. Even when there is a positive correlation between western media penetration and social change (for example, an increase in individual assertiveness) this need not mean that the first caused the second. At least some of what are called western values (e.g. a desire for greater personal freedom) are quite likely to become more popular as increasing prosperity allows their expression, and increasing prosperity permits greater consumption of electronic media products. Some of what is taken to be cultural imperialism may be internally-driven change.

CULTURAL PLURALISM Like its close relative 'multiculturalism', this term both describes and promotes. As description it refers to a situation of a plurality of cultures (with the implication that they are co-existing tolerantly): that of New York where a large number of religious, ethnic and linguistic groups live side-by-side is an example. The term is also used to describe a deliberate policy of encouraging awareness and acceptance of alternative cultures.

CULTURE The culture of a society is the totality of its shared beliefs, norms, values, rituals, language, history, knowledge and social character. Although very broad in scope, the term usually has the clear sense of excluding the economy, the polity and those elements of the social structure least requiring constant re-affirmation. It implies those things that are conscious, that are kept in being only because we choose to maintain them. Although many elements of our culture

confront us as external things apparently outside our control (e.g. we are born into a language which we more or less automatically adopt) there is a sense in which we can change our culture much more easily than the economy or the polity.

The term also implies a contrast in the other direction: inward. That which is entirely a matter of biology is not culture. Culture is a human creation into which we are socialised and which we can, with some effort, modify.

In common usage the term refers to the more sophisticated expressions of human creativity – opera, ballet, orchestral music – and preceding adjectives can identify alternatives such as **mass culture**, low culture and **popular culture**.

CULTURE OF POVERTY The phrase was originally used by Oscar Lewis in the early 1960s to express the idea that poverty created its own distinctive culture which inhibited the development of attitudes and practices that would allow people to rise above it. Fatalism was one such restraint. Lewis was challenged by scholars who stressed the structural causes of poverty (especially in the developing world) and by others who questioned the accuracy of his

ethnography, arguing that far from being fatalistic, shanty town dwellers often worked together to make the best of their difficult circumstances.

The argument about the relative weight in causing poverty of culture and social structure periodically returns in new guises. In the 1980s there was concern about the existence of a self-reproducing ‘underclass’ whose members lacked any great familiarity with paid work and were dependent on either crime or welfare. In the late 1990s, the argument was made cross-cultural when, as an alternative to the view that the enduring poverty of the Third World was a result of western imperialism, scholars began to explore the possibility that differences in economic development might be at least partly caused by internal features of societies.

See **underclass**.

CUSTOMS Denoting the established norms and patterns of behaviour of a particular society, the term often implies patterns of behaviour that are very old (and somewhat redundant) and characteristic of a particular society: Appalachian customs, rural Japanese customs.