



# Birth of Sociology

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# Introduction

- Humankind has witnessed major revolutions that has changed the world for ever.
- Not wrong to say sociology is the study of modern societies.
- Why sociology? When social anthropology was already there.
- Social anthropology was then looked into premodern societies.
- Association of this discipline with the modern.
- 3 influences
  - 1. Enlightenment
  - French Revolution
  - Industrial Revolution

# Enlightenment

- Intellectual movement in Europe that started from 17<sup>th</sup>-18c.
- Preceded by scientific and commercial revolution.
- The Newtonian law of gravity, Copernican revolution-shift from geocentric to heliocentric nature of arrangement of cosmic bodies.
- Earth is spherical.
- The doesnot end with my village or my locality.
- darwin's theory- social Darwinism.
- Advances in studies of human anatomy

# Precursor to Enlightenment: Commercial revolution

- The sea voyages marked the beginning of merchantile capitalism.
- You end up in strange societies
- the encounter with the other
- Modern societies opened up their gates for the other.

# Precursor to Enlightenment: Scientific Revolution

- Intellectual movement
- Creation of a new framework of ideas about humans society and nature which challenged our existing traditional worldview.
- Gave primacy to reason as a way for organizing knowledge.
- Empiricism- knowledge about natural and social world can be apprehended through senses.
- Scientific knowledge –human world
- Universalism-reason and science are universal- can be applied in every situation

# Contd...

- Progress- scientific principle and rationality can lead to progress in human societies.
- Rise of Individualism- challenging all authorities..
- Toleration-irrespective of religion, caste race color are same
- Equality-Talk about anatomy
- Freedom- in opposition to the principles of feudalism, all kinds of authoritorial constraints.
- Secularism

# Post enlightenment

- The influence of positivism as a school of thought
- We started using scientific methods and tools-like field work tradition, introduction of surveys for understanding societies.
- Challenging common-sensical knowledge vs scientific knowledge.
- Common sense is socially constructed
- It would vary from society from different periods of time.
- That's how we started analyzing that poverty is not natural. Its man made.

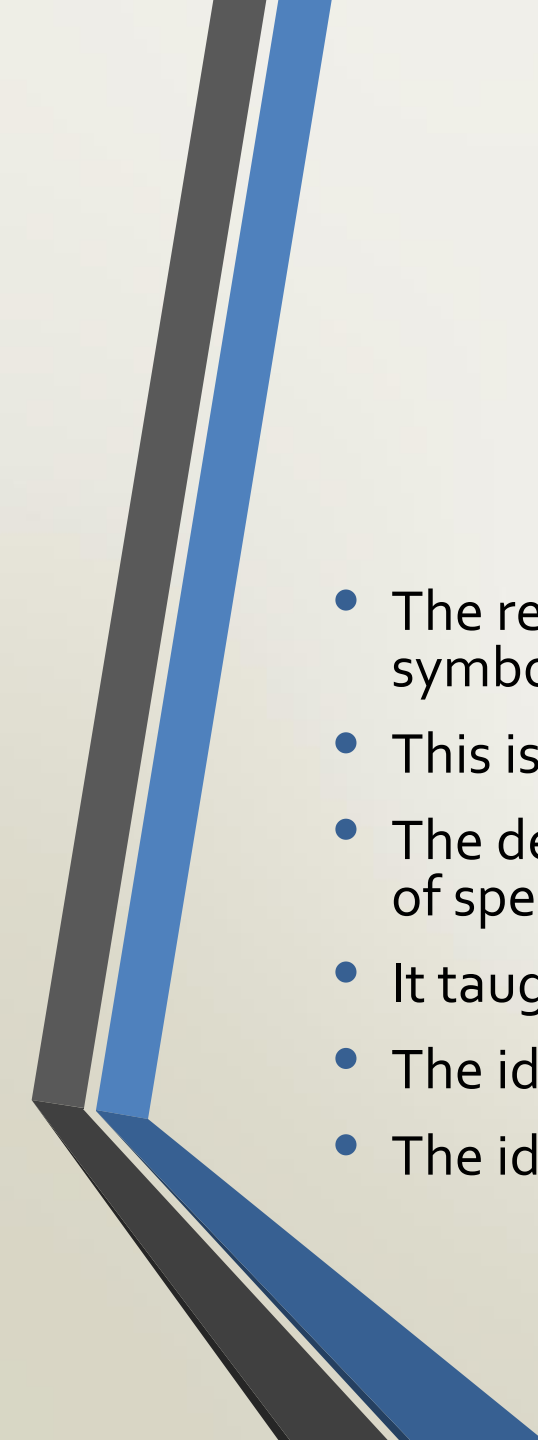
# French Revolution

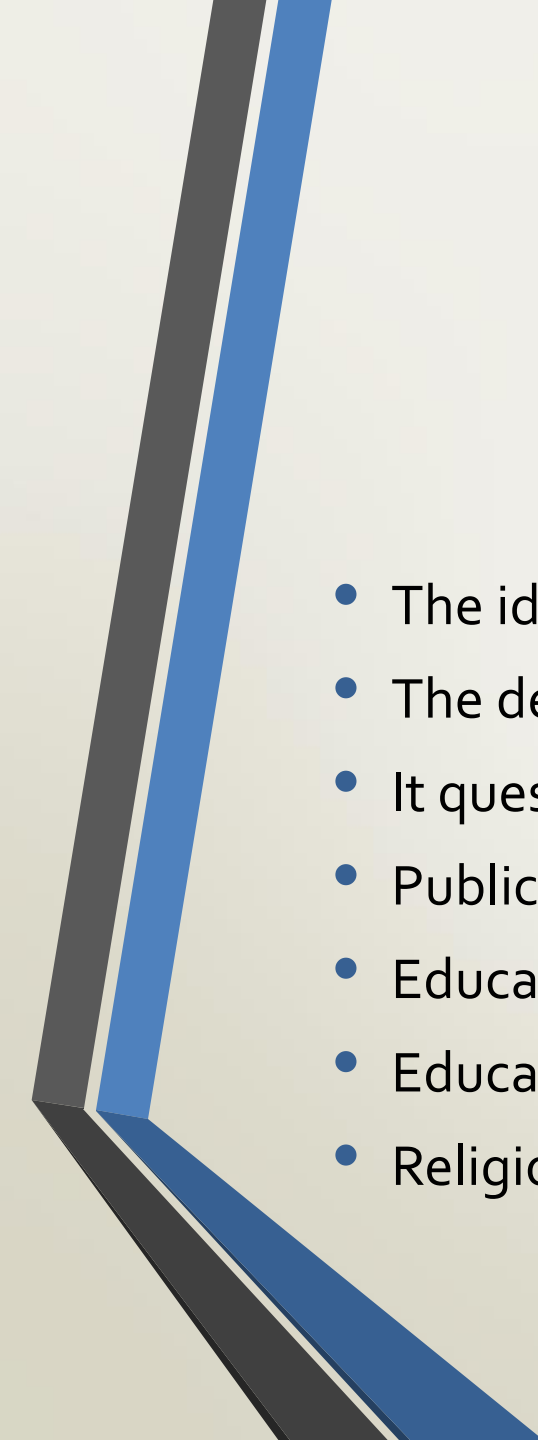
- The influence of enlightenment for challenging your own convictions, ways of looking at things had shaped our understanding.
- The French society believed in absolute monarchy
- It was highly hierarchical:
- 1<sup>st</sup> estate- clergy like bishops and abbots
- 2<sup>nd</sup> estate- nobility-nobility of sword and robe
- Sword-big land lords
- Robe-magistrates and judges
- 3<sup>rd</sup> estate-the commoners-like the peasants, the artisans and to some extent the middle class



## Contd...

- The whole burden of taxes fell on the poor 3<sup>rd</sup> estate.
- I told you, enlightenment had already led to the consciousness of challenging the divine rights of kings. French society had entered the age of reason with thinkers like Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu
- From the reign of Louis XIV onwards French society had fought expensive wars and its burden fell on the common man.
- The French parliamentary body Estate general had not met since 1614.
- In 1778-heavy tax was forced on the 3<sup>rd</sup> estate.

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- The revolution geared up and on July 14, 1778, the royal prison of bastille-the symbol of oppression was broke open.
  - This is celebrated as the independence day in France till date.
  - The declaration of rights of man by the constituent assembly guaranteed freedom of speech, religion, equality, liberty and fraternity
  - It taught the world the values of freedom and democracy
  - The idea of citizenship against subject-hood emerge
  - The idea of a nationalism as a sentiment was understood.

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- The idea of nation-state as a modern political entity.
  - The declaration of human rights asserted equality for all citizens.
  - It questioned the legitimacy and privileges inherited by birth.
  - Public-private realm was redefined.
  - Education Vs religion.
  - Education was part of the private in pre modern times.
  - Religion was part of the public in the pre-modern times.

# Industrial revolution

- Engel's lesser known work *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*. It would be considered as the first urban ethnography. He belonged to a business family based in Germany. He moved to Manchester in 1843
- It began in Britain during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> c
- It has two aspects
- Systematic application of science and technology
- New ways of organizing labour for pacing up with machines

# Contd...

- Advance in science and technology with invention of the spinning jenny
- Steam power, water frame gave
- rise to factory system
- Family from production to consumption
- Emergence of capitalism,
- Changing conditions of labour
- Transformation of property
- Mass exodus
- Urbanization

## Contd...

- Slums
- Anonymity brought crime rates
- Importance clock and calendar.
- Work vs leisure
- Emergence of popular culture
- Collapse of joint family system
- Changing gender relations.
- The three revolutions brought economic, political and social modernity.

## Contd...

- Here things were in a flux- a society that was dynamic and ever changing. It was not a static society like the premodern ones.
- The story of modernity in India was different from the west.
- Colonially mediated modernity.
- We witnessed de-industrialization instead of industrialization-connected to global capitalism.-as CW Mills says thinking away from the routine and locating personal troubles in the public milieu.
- Our old industrial cities were collapsing because of colonial cities.
- There was a strange nexus between caste and class. Rise of intermediary system.

## Contd...

- We experienced nationalism along with communalism.
- Even our idea of nation was complicated.
- But definitely the experiences of modernity in the west was affecting us here.
- It was affecting our ways of looking at the world.
- We did not see any rigid divide between sociology and social anthropology; we were studying ethnic groups, caste, villages. Mostly importantly we did not give it the impression of being fixed.



## Contd...

- Village and urban penetrate into each other, caste in its latest avatar in a political identity rather than just a social one.
- The sociology that we talk about is not just a study of industrial society. We have come of age now.



Thank you