**1.What is the difference between micro-sociology and macro-sociology?**

There are many differences between macro and micro-level theories. Micro-level focuses on individuals and their interactions. For example the relationship between adult children and their parents, or the effect of negative attitudes on older people. Some criticize on micro-level theories becuase they focus on what older people do rather than on social conditionsand policies that cuase them to act the way they do. Macro-level focuses more upon social structure, social processes and problems, and their interrelationships. For example the effects of industrialization on older people's status, or how gender and income affect older people's well being. This approach tends to minimize people's ability to act and overcome the limits of social structures. Both micro and macro-leve theories can take one of three perspectives which include: interpretive perspective, normative, and conflict. Normative perspective says rules and status exist in society to provide socail control or social order. Social order is necessary for survival. This perspective focuses upon macro-level. For example structural-functionalism, role theory, modernization theory, and age-stratification. Interpretive perspective says that the social world is created in an ongoing manner, via social interaction. How do we relate to each other on a day-to-day basis? It focuses upon micro-level. Conflict perspective deals with macro and some micro levels. Causes of poverty, health disparities, distribution of life chances via, social class, and gender. Micro level perspectives is the study of small scale structures and processes in society. It says explanations of social life and social structures are to be found at the individual level or in social interaction. George Mead said that objects and events have no meaning in themselves. Rather, people give them meaning through daily interaction. For example gray hair is a sign of wisdom in one. People give meanings to objects then base their actions on these meanings like some people will refuse to wear a hearing aid becuase it symbolizes decrepitude and weakness. Some examples of micro-leve theories include symbolic interactionism, social phenomenology, and exchange theory. Micro level theories are role theories. For example understanding adjustment to getting older. Elderly people are more likely to loose roles than acquire new ones. Macro level theories include age stratification theory. It focuses upon flow of age cohorts through the life cycle.

**2.Why does this course focus exclusively on macro-sociology?**

Macrosociology is an approach to the discipline which emphasizes the analysis of social systems and populations on a large scale, at the level of social structure, and often at a necessarily high level of theoretical abstraction.[1] Microsociology, by contrast, focuses on the individual social agency. Macrosociology also concerns individuals, families, and other constituent aspects of a society, but always does so in relation to larger social system of which they are a part. Macrosociology can also be the analysis of large collectivities (e.g. the city, the church).[2] Human populations are considered a society to the degree that is politically autonomous and its members to engage in a broad range of cooperative activities.[3] For example, this definition would apply to the population of Germany being deemed a society, but German-speaking people as a whole scattered about different countries would not be considered a society.[3] Macrosociology deals with broad societal trends that can later be applied to the smaller features of a society. To differentiate, macrosociology deals with issues such as war, distress of Third World nations, poverty, and environmental deprivation, whereas microsociology analyses issues such as the role of women, the nature of the family, and immigration.

**3. What is a paradigm?**

1. One that serves as a pattern or model.

2. A set or list of all the inflectional forms of a word or of one of its grammatical categories: the paradigm of an irregular verb.

3. A set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the com. munity that shares them, especially in an intellectual discipline.

A paradigm is simply a belief system (or theory) that guides the way we do things, or more formally establishes a set of practices. This can range from thought patterns to action

**4.Of what use is social theory?**

Social theories are frameworks of empirical evidence used to study and interpret social phenomena. A tool used by social scientists, social theories relate to historical debates over the most valid and reliable methodologies (e.g. positivism and antipositivism), as well as the primacy of either structure or agency. Certain social theories attempt to remain strictly scientific, descriptive, and objective. Conflict theories, by contrast, present ostensibly normative positions, and often critique the ideological aspects inherent in conventional, traditional thought.Тhe origins of social theory are difficult to pinpoint, but debates frequently return to Ancient Greece (Berberoglu 2005, p. xi). From these foundations in Western philosophy arose Enlightenment social contract theory, sociological positivism, and modern social science. Today, 'social science' is used as an umbrella term to refer to sociology, economics, political science, jurisprudence, and other disciplines. Social theory is interdisciplinary and draws upon ideas from fields as diverse as anthropology and media studies. Social theory of an informal nature, or authorship based outside of academic social and political science, may be referred to instead as "social criticism" or "social commentary". Similarly, "cultural criticism" may be associated both with formal cultural and literary scholarship, as well as other non-academic or journalistic forms of writing.

Social theory as a distinct discipline emerged in the 20th century and was largely equated with an attitude of critical thinking, based on rationality, logic and objectivity, and the desire for knowledge through a posteriori methods of discovery, rather than a priori methods of tradition. With this in mind it is easy to link social theory to deeper seated philosophical discussions to assure the responsibility in every human also.

**5. What is positivism?**

Positivism is a philosophy of science based on the view that in the social as well as natural sciences, data derived from sensory experience, and logical and mathematical treatments of such data, are together the exclusive source of all authoritative knowledge. Obtaining and verifying data that can be received from the senses is known as empirical evidence.This view holds that society operates according to laws like the physical world[citation needed]. Introspective and intuitional attempts to gain knowledge are rejected. Though the positivist approach has been a recurrent theme in the history of Western thought, the concept was developed in the modern sense in the early 19th century by the philosopher and founding sociologist, Auguste Comte. Comte argued that society operates according to its own laws, much as the physical world operates according to gravity and other laws of nature. Comte's positivism

Main articles: Auguste Comte and Law of three stages

**Auguste Comte**

Auguste Comte (1798–1857) first described the epistemological perspective of positivism in The Course in Positive Philosophy, a series of texts published between 1830 and 1842. These texts were followed by the 1844 work, A General View of Positivism (published in French 1848, English in 1865). The first three volumes of the Course dealt chiefly with the physical sciences already in existence (mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology), whereas the latter two emphasized the inevitable coming of social science. Observing the circular dependence of theory and observation in science, and classifying the sciences in this way, Comte may be regarded as the first philosopher of science in the modern sense of the term.[12] For him, the physical sciences had necessarily to arrive first, before humanity could adequately channel its efforts into the most challenging and complex "Queen science" of human society itself. His View of Positivism therefore set-out to define the empirical goals of sociological method."The most important thing to determine was the natural order in which the sciences stand — not how they can be made to stand, but how they must stand, irrespective of the wishes of any one....This Comte accomplished by taking as the criterion of the position of each the degree of what he called "positivity," which is simply the degree to which the phenomena can be exactly determined. This, as may be readily seen, is also a measure of their relative complexity, since the exactness of a science is in inverse proportion to its complexity. The degree of exactness or positivity is, moreover, that to which it can be subjected to mathematical demonstration, and therefore mathematics, which is not itself a concrete science, is the general gauge by which the position of every science is to be determined. Generalizing thus, Comte found that there were five great groups of phenomena of equal classificatory value but of successively decreasing positivity. To these he gave the names astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and sociology."

**— Lester F. Ward, The Outlines of Sociology (1898), [13]**

Comte offered an account of social evolution, proposing that society undergoes three phases in its quest for the truth according to a general 'law of three stages'. The idea bears some similarity to Marx's view that human society would progress toward a communist peak. This is perhaps unsurprising as both were profoundly influenced by the early Utopian socialist, Henri de Saint-Simon, who was at one time Comte's mentor. Both Comte and Marx intended to develop secular-scientific ideologies in the wake of European secularisation.

Comte's stages were (1) the theological, (2) the metaphysical, and (3) the positive.[14] The theological phase of man was based on whole-hearted belief in all things with reference to God. God, Comte says, had reigned supreme over human existence pre-Enlightenment. Humanity's place in society was governed by its association with the divine presences and with the church. The theological phase deals with humankind's accepting the doctrines of the church (or place of worship) rather than relying on its rational powers to explore basic questions about existence. It dealt with the restrictions put in place by the religious organization at the time and the total acceptance of any "fact" adduced for society to believe.[15] Comte describes the metaphysical phase of humanity as the time since the Enlightenment, a time steeped in logical rationalism, to the time right after the French Revolution. This second phase states that the universal rights of humanity are most important. The central idea is that humanity is invested with certain rights that must be respected. In this phase, democracies and dictators rose and fell in attempts to maintain the innate rights of humanity.[16]

The final stage of the trilogy of Comte's universal law is the scientific, or positive, stage. The central idea of this phase is that individual rights are more important than the rule of any one person. Comte stated that the idea of humanity's ability to govern itself makes this stage innately different from the rest. There is no higher power governing the masses and the intrigue of any one person can achieve anything based on that individual's free will and authority. The third principle is most important in the positive stage.[17] Comte calls these three phases the universal rule in relation to society and its development. Neither the second nor the third phase can be reached without the completion and understanding of the preceding stage. All stages must be completed in progress.[18]

Comte believed that the appreciation of the past and the ability to build on it towards the future was key in transitioning from the theological and metaphysical phases. The idea of progress was central to Comte's new science, sociology. Sociology would "lead to the historical consideration of every science" because "the history of one science, including pure political history, would make no sense unless it was attached to the study of the general progress of all of humanity".[19] As Comte would say: "from science comes prediction; from prediction comes action."[20] It is a philosophy of human intellectual development that culminated in science. The irony of this series of phases is that though Comte attempted to prove that human development has to go through these three stages, it seems that the positivist stage is far from becoming a realization. This is due to two truths. The positivist phase requires having a complete understanding of the universe and world around us and requires that society should never know if it is in this positivist phase. Anthony Giddens argues that since humanity constantly uses science to discover and research new things, humanity never progresses beyond the second metaphysical phase. In this view, Comte's positivism appears circular.[18]

**Positivist temple in Porto Alegre**

Comte's fame today owes in part to Emile Littré, who founded The Positivist Review in 1867. As an approach to the philosophy of history, positivism was appropriated by historians such as Hippolyte Taine. Many of Comte's writings were translated into English by the Whig writer, Harriet Martineau, regarded by some as the first female sociologist. Debates continue to rage as to how much Comte appropriated from the work of his mentor, Saint-Simon.[21] He was nevertheless influential: Brazilian thinkers turned to Comte's ideas about training a scientific elite in order to flourish in the industrialization process. Brazil's national motto, Ordem e Progresso ("Order and Progress") was taken from the positivism motto, "Love as principle, order as the basis, progress as the goal", which was also influential in Poland.

In later life, Comte developed a 'religion of humanity' for positivist societies in order to fulfil the cohesive function once held by traditional worship. In 1849, he proposed a calendar reform called the 'positivist calendar'. For close associate John Stuart Mill, it was possible to distinguish between a "good Comte" (the author of the Course in Positive Philosophy) and a "bad Comte" (the author of the secular-religious system).[12] The system was unsuccessful but met with the publication of Darwin's On the Origin of Species to influence the proliferation of various Secular Humanist organizations in the 19th century, especially through the work of secularists such as George Holyoake and Richard Congreve. Although Comte's English followers, including George Eliot and Harriet Martineau, for the most part rejected the full gloomy panoply of his system, they liked the idea of a religion of humanity and his injunction to "vivre pour autrui" ("live for others", from which comes the word "altruism").[22]

The early sociology of Herbert Spencer came about broadly as a reaction to Comte; writing after various developments in evolutionary biology, Spencer attempted (in vain) to reformulate the discipline in what we might now describe as socially Darwinistic terms.

**Durkheim's positivism**

Émile Durkheim

Main articles: Émile Durkheim and Social facts

The modern academic discipline of sociology began with the work of Émile Durkheim (1858–1917). While Durkheim rejected much of the details of Comte's philosophy, he retained and refined its method, maintaining that the social sciences are a logical continuation of the natural ones into the realm of human activity, and insisting that they may retain the same objectivity, rationalism, and approach to causality.[7] Durkheim set up the first European department of sociology at the University of Bordeaux in 1895, publishing his Rules of the Sociological Method (1895).[23] In this text he argued: "[o]ur main goal is to extend scientific rationalism to human conduct... What has been called our positivism is but a consequence of this rationalism." [13]

Durkheim's seminal monograph, Suicide (1897), a case study of suicide rates amongst Catholic and Protestant populations, distinguished sociological analysis from psychology or philosophy. By carefully examining suicide statistics in different police districts, he attempted to demonstrate that Catholic communities have a lower suicide rate than Protestants, something he attributed to social (as opposed to individual or psychological) causes. He developed the notion of objective sui generis "social facts" to delineate a unique empirical object for the science of sociology to study.[7] Through such studies, he posited, sociology would be able to determine whether a given society is 'healthy' or 'pathological', and seek social reform to negate organic breakdown or "social anomie". Durkheim described sociology as the "science of institutions, their genesis and their functioning".[24]

Accounts of Durkheim's positivism are vulnerable to exaggeration and oversimplification: Comte was the only major sociological thinker to postulate that the social realm may be subject to scientific analysis in exactly the same way as natural science, whereas Durkheim saw a far greater need for a distinctly sociological scientific methodology. His lifework was fundamental in the establishment of practical social research as we know it today - techniques which continue beyond sociology and form the methodological basis of other social sciences, such as political science, as well of market research and other fields.[25]