

# SOCI 425

# Industrial Sociology I

Session One: Definition, Nature and Scope of  
Industrial Sociology

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## UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

College of Education

**School of Continuing and Distance Education**

2014/2015 – 2016/2017

# Session Overview

- **Overview**
- Industrial Sociology is a field of applied sociology, interested in work organizations is not the only social science discipline interested in the study of work organizations. This session examines the nature and scope of the discipline and its relations with other disciplines.
- **Objective:** At the end of the lecture, the student will be able to;
- Define Industrial Sociology;
- Examine the History of Industrial Sociology;
- Identify the Nature, Scope and Subject Matter of Industrial Sociology;
- Examine the Justification for the Sociologist interest in Industry.

# Session Outline

The key topics to be covered in this session are as follows:

- Topic One: Definition of Industrial Sociology
- Topic Two: Sociological Approach to the study of Industry
- Topic Three: History of Industrial Sociology
- Topic Four: Nature, Scope and Subject Matter of Industrial Sociology
- Topic Five: Justification for the Sociology's Interest in the Study of Industry

# Topic One: Definitions of Industrial Sociology

- It is a branch of sociology that looks at the impact of labor and industry on society, as well as the ways in which society impacts industrial forces;
- It is a substantive area of general sociology which might more accurately be termed the **Sociology of Work Organization or the Sociology of the Economy**;
- It is mainly concerned with application of sociological principles to the study of economic structures, changes in the structures, & the values & ideologies related to them;
- These principles may apply to the society, community and the work situations.

# Definitions of Industrial Sociology Cont.

- **Miller and Form** (1951) describe the field as being “concerned broadly with the study of industrial society and also ... with the analysis of the social organization of work”.
- They suggest that because it deals with all types of work organization, Industrial Sociology might be more accurately labelled, “Sociology of the Economy”.
- **Wilbert Moore** defines the field as “concerned with the application or development of principles of sociology relevant to the industrial mode of production and the industrial way of life”.

# Definition of Industrial Sociology Cont.

- **J.H. Mills** also defines it as “the scientific study of social relations, industrial and organizational setting;
- And the ways these relations influence and are being influenced by relations in other sub-systems of society”;
- **Etzioni** suggests that Industrial Sociology is most considered as “an applied field and branch of organizational sociology;
- Having the primary aim of producing goods and services, exchanging them, or organizing and manipulating monetary processes”.

# Definition of Industrial Sociology Cont.

- While Industrial Sociologists differ in their definition of the field, there is remarkable consistency in the kind of areas included in the field;
- These include the work group, structure of industrial bureaucracy, union-management relations;
- Industrialization process, and major work roles in industry as well as internal organization of trade unions;
- In summary, Industrial Sociology is a **branch of sociology which applies the principles and theories of sociology to the world of work.**

# Definition of Industrial Sociology Cont.

- Not necessarily factory work but all kinds of work organizations—formal or informal, management union relations;
- As well as the relations between the formal organization of work and the environment;
- The discipline is therefore not only concerned broadly with the study of industrial society but it is also concerned with the analysis of social organization of work;
- As its name indicates, Industrial Sociology is the application of the sociological approaches to the reality and problems of Work Organizations (Gisbert, 1972).



# Topic Two: Sociological Approach to the Study of Industry

- The sociological approach to the study of industry consists of the study of social relations, groups, institutions as they manifest themselves in society;
- An industry can be studied from various points of view namely: political, psychological, economic, technological etc.;
- However, as students of sociology, we must study industry from the sociological point of view;
- That is the social relations that manifest themselves in work organizations.

# Sociological Approach to the study of Industry Cont.

- Industrial Sociology does not exist as a separate field by virtue of a central theoretical focus;
- It draws its theory and methods from a variety of sub disciplines within sociology;
- The analysis of industrialization draws heavily upon general theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of social change;
- The study of work groups and industrial bureaucracy are simply special cases in the analysis of the small group and formal organization.

# Sociological Approach to the study of Industry Cont.

- The analysis of union-management relations relies mainly on concepts drawn from broader theories dealing with collective behavior, power, and social conflict;
- Ideally, the application of these various perspectives to the study of work organizations enhances our understanding of social behavior;
- As Wilbert Moore has noted;
- “If the study of Industrial Sociology has any significance for the general body of sociological principles, it will be sociology before it is ‘industrial’.

# Topic Three: The History of Industrial Sociology

- As is true of all of the special sociologies, Industrial Sociology has its roots in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century European social theory;
- The works of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Vilfredo Pareto, and George Simmel is particularly important for the study of industrial organization and industrial society;
- The influence of some of these works most notably that of Karl Marx and Max Weber, is still very evident in contemporary industrial studies;

# History of Industrial Sociology Cont.

- Karl Marx's concerns with the exploitations in the capitalist system after the Industrial Revolution could be seen as the beginning of sociology's interest in the workplace;
- The issues of power and union-management relations were influenced by the work of Karl Marx and George Simmel on social conflict;
- The work of Max Weber on bureaucracy has influenced directly or indirectly a number of other major contributors to the field of Industrial Sociology.

# History of Industrial Sociology Cont.

- There is virtually complete agreement that Industrial Sociology as a separate field dates from the extensive studies conducted by Elton Mayo and his associates in the Hawthorne Studies;
- The Hawthorne Studies impacted upon the subsequent development of Industrial Sociology because it initiated,
- Or at least gave added impetus to activities labelled “human relations in industry” or in other words interpersonal relations in industry;

# History of Industrial Sociology Cont.

- These studies were initially focussed upon relations among industrial workers in the factory, but they have subsequently been concerned;
- With a wider variety of relationships including notably, social interaction between first level supervisors and employees.

# Topic Four: Subject Matter, Nature and Scope of Industrial Sociology

- The discipline attempts to understand social forces/factors such as customs, values, structures, norms and;
- Others that emerge and operates in the many different groups of society in which the individual interacts;
- These social forces interact to mold individual personalities and shape their behavior and attitudes in work organizations;



# Subject Matter of Industrial Sociology Cont.

- The discipline focuses its attention on the social organization of factories, industries or work organizations;
- This focus includes not only the interaction of people playing roles in these organizations;
- But also the ways in which their work roles are inter-related with other aspects of their life;
- Industrial Sociologists seek to analyse the nature, the content, courses and directions of social relationships of a variety of;
- Groups that individuals belong and their implications for the individuals and the larger community.

# Nature and Scope of Industrial Sociology

- As a social science, the nature of industrial sociology is an attempt to understand and analyse social processes of group life in industrial organization;
- As well as the industrial society in a systematic manner as accurate as possible;
- In other words, it has a scientific approach of studying behaviour in work situation;

# Nature and Scope of Industrial Sociology Cont.

- The scope of industrial sociology is limitless i.e. it is not limited to factory or industry alone;
- The discipline is interested in all settings or anywhere that work takes place such as schools, hospitals, churches, prisons, markets etc.;
- The discipline is therefore interested in any social setting once human beings are involved;
- It is also interested in looking at the interaction between the economic sub-system and the other sub-system of the larger society.

# Aims of Industrial Sociology

- The main objective of the discipline as a scientific discipline is to build a general body of knowledge, theories, principles and concepts relating to the world of work;
- The discipline seeks to develop explanations and draw conclusions of specific special issues about work and work behaviour;
- This is done by comparing and contrasting different category of data with the view to formulate general statement of social conditions relating to work.

# Topic Five: Justification for the Sociologists interest in the study of Industry

- The sociologies interest in the study of industry dates back to the aftermath of the industrial revolution 1750-1850;
- The industrial revolution influenced the life of people as they move to the cities in search of non-existing jobs;
- Capitalist economic systems also emerged which created a free market place;

# Justification for the Sociologists interest in the study of Industry

- Within this system, a few profited greatly while the majority worked for long hours for low wages;
- The sociologist interest began with an attempt by social thinkers such as Karl Marx and;
- Max Weber who tried to understand the social problems faced by workers in these factories and provide solutions to them.

# Justification of Sociologists interest in Industry Cont.

- One important justification for sociologist interest in the study of industry is based on the fact that workers are social beings working in the industry;
- Hence there is the need to understand the social factors that influence the behaviour of workers as social beings;
- Secondly, sociologist interest in industry is justified on the grounds that the factory is a social system;
- And not just a production unit; hence there are social dimensions of interest to the sociologist.

# Reading List

- Refer to students to relevant text/chapter or reading materials you will make available on Sakai
- Grint, Keith. (2005). **The Sociology of Work**. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. London: Polity. (Pages 1 -20)
- Hirszowicz, M (1985). **Industrial Sociology: An Introduction**. London: Basil Blackwell Ltd. (Pages 1-10)
- Miller and Form (1964). **Industrial Sociology: The Sociology of Work Organization**. New York: Harper and Row Publishers. (Pages 1-25)
- Parker, R. S et al (2005). **The Sociology of Industry**. Sixth Edition. London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group. (Pages 1-18)



# Activity/Assignment

- Briefly explain to a Non-sociology student what Industrial Sociology is all about and the justification for the Sociologists interest in the study of Industry.