

Sociological thoughts: chapter- 2 (course content- August Comte-Social statics and Dynamics, Law of Three Stages and positivism) paper- 2 Sociology (lecture-03)

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Static and Dynamic Sociology:

Auguste Comte divided sociology into two major parts, namely, static and dynamic sociology. The idea of this division is borrowed from biology, which is in keeping with his notions of a hierarchy of sciences. Biology is a science which precedes sociology and thus shares common features with this science. The static sociology studies the conditions of the existence of society, while the dynamic sociology studies the continuous movement or laws of the succession of individual stages in society. In other words, the first part studies the social order and the second social changes or progress in societies. In his discussion on Auguste Comte, Timasheff writes that statics is a theory of order or harmony between the conditions of man's existence in society.

Dynamics, according to Comte, is a theory of social progress, which amounts to the fundamental development or evolution of society. Order and progress, are closely interlinked because there cannot be any social order if it is not compatible with progress while no real progress can occur in society if it is not consolidated in order. Thus, although we distinguish

between static and dynamic sociology for analytical purposes, the static and dynamic laws must be linked together throughout the system. Auguste Comte's distinction between statics and dynamics each associated with the idea of order and progress is no longer acceptable today since societies are far more complex than to be explained by the simple notions of order and progress.

Auguste Comte's perception was guided by the spirit of the enlightenment period in which these

ideas developed. Contemporary sociologists do not agree with these ideas. But his basic division of sociology continues to exist in the terms, social structure and social change.

Positivism :

Comte's explanation of the Positive philosophy introduced the important relationship between theory, practice and human understanding of the world. Harriet Martineau's translation of The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte, we see his observation that, "If it is true that every theory must be based upon observed facts, it is equally true that facts cannot be observed without the guidance of some theory. Without such guidance, our facts would be desultory and fruitless; we could not retain them: for the most part we could not even perceive them. He coined the word "altruism" to refer to what he believed to be a moral obligation of individuals to serve others and place their interests above one's own. He opposed the idea of individual rights, maintaining that they were not consistent with this supposed ethical obligation (Catechism Positivist).