



İSTANBUL
GELİŞİM
ÜNİVERSİTESİ

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

EMPLOYMENT

WEEK 11

Asst. Prof. Pınar KARABABA KAYALIGİL



Employment

- In all cultures, work is the basis of the economy.
- The economic system for any given culture is made up of the institutions that provide for the production and distribution of goods and services. These institutions may vary from culture to culture, particular in traditional societies versus modern societies.
- **Economy:** is the social institution that organizes the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services.



Employment

- **Employment:** ‘Work’ is conceptualised as activities which people do for a wage, salary or fee.
- **Occupation:** Membership of an occupation involves full time or part time engagement to a range of work tasks.
- In modern societies due to specialization wide a range of occupational categories are formed.
- In modern society, occupational patterns are closely related to class, status, gender and ethnic-religious inequalities.
- In occupational membership people can be engaged in a collective stand for their employment rights through trade unions or ‘professional’ groups.



Employment

- In modern societies one of the most distinctive features of the economic system is the highly complex **division of labor**:
 - Employment is divided into many occupations in which people specialize.
- One of the important features of modern societies is the increase in the economic dependence. We are all dependent to other workers to access goods and services to sustain our life.
- Employment is related with the supposedly most effective institution: economy.



Economy

- “**Economy:** is the social institution that organizes a society’s production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.” (Macionis. p. 370)
- People value goods and services.
 - Why?
- Production and consumption define both the laborer and the consumer.
 - What can be the example of a status given over consumption.



Historical Background

- The economy of modern societies is a social institution developed in a long period of time as a result of three major revolutions:
 - **Agricultural Revolution**
 - **Industrial Revolution**
 - **Information Revolution**
- If economy is defined as the most effective social institution what is the reason of that?



Agricultural Revolution

- Started when hunter and gatherer societies learned to cultivate land.
- The necessity of finding food was over, so new occupations developed (specialization).
- Permanent settlements started
- Trade started and **economy** became an important institution.



Industrial Revolution

- Industrial revolution elaborated the economy:
- **New sources of energy were found:** Steam power transmitted the energy from muscular power to engine power. Heavy machinery started to govern the work life.
- **Centralization of work in factories:** Steam-powered machines transferred work from homes to factories.
- **Manufacturing and mass production:** Industrial economy changed the production process from the production of **raw materials** to processed, **finished products**.
- **Specialization:** Work was transferred from home to factories; from producing the entire product to a part of it.
- **Waged labor:** People became waged laborers while they were producing for their own family.



Information Revolution

- Automatic machinery reduced the role of human labor in production
- Expanded the ranks of clerical workers and managers.
- Service sector was expended in addition to industrial sector.
- Computers took their place in production:
 - **Transition from tangible products to ideas.**
 - **Transition from mechanical skills to literacy skills (computer programming).**
 - **Transition from factories to working everywhere:** transition from work environments near power sources to work openly everywhere with the development of wireless gadgets.



Question

- How the information revolution divided the workforce after the industrial revolution.



Employment in Sociology

- Even during the early years of sociology employment was an important subject.
- Durkheim: Division of labor, organic-mechanic solidarity
- Marx: Relations of Production, Alienation
- Weber: Protestant Ethic, bureacratization, the loss of the spirit

Durkheim

- Durkheim adopts a functionalist model of society. For him social order and solidarity is a priority in terms of society's needs.
- His work **Division of Labor in Society** depends on the comparative analysis of this fact in different types of societies.
- According to him social order and solidarity is rooted in **division of labor** and **specialization**. As division of labor increases the dependency of individuals to each other increases as well.
- In “Division of Labor” Durkheim adopts a evolutionist functionalist perspective. He mentions two different types of solidarity: **mechanic solidarity** and **organic solidarity**.
- **Mechanic Solidarity:**
 - It is the type of solidarity in the traditional societies in which the division of labor is simple and based on similarity
 - In this type of order and solidarity the **collective consciousness** and **collective identity** is stronger than the individual consciousness and identity.
- **Organic Solidarity:** It is the type of solidarity seen in modern societies in which there is a complex division of labor and specialization (it is the type of solidarity that created the industrial society).



Karl Marx

- The class in power is the same class having the property of the means of production.
- The relation between sub-structure and super-structure is determined by the sub-structure. Therefore the relations of production (sub-structure) form the institutions of state, family, religion and other governing institutions (super-structure).
- The economic power of this class enables it to come to power.
- That power gives them the military power and the production and distribution of ideas and knowledge.
- There is continuous conflict between ruling classes and classes dependent to ruling classes.
- **Alienation:** In the capitalist mode of production the natural bond between people and their products collapses. People alienate to the product they produce, their own lives and nature.



Weber

- The development of science, modern technology and bureaucracy brings us **rationalization** which organizes the social and economic life according to the principles of modern life and technical knowledge.
- In industrial societies people favor reason instead of traditional thinking.
- Weber sees that if the same reason is applied on bureaucracy it leads people to adopt more rational behavior.
- Weber argued that particular religious ideas motivated the Industrial Revolution in Western Europe.
- “Protestant work ethic” was transferred from being a sacred essence to profane and industrial capitalism is built on an ideal based on religion.

Thinking About Diversity: Race, Class, and Gender



Women in the Mills of Lowell, Massachusetts

Back in 1810, few people paid much attention as Francis Cabot Lowell, ancestor of two prominent Boston families, the Cabots and the Lowells, stepped off a ship returning from England. But Lowell carried with him documents that would change the course of the U.S. economy: plans, based on machinery operating in England, for this country's first power loom textile factory (Eisler, 1977; Wertheimer, 1982).

Lowell built his factory beside a waterfall on the Merrimack River in Massachusetts so that he could use waterpower to operate large looms to weave cloth. Soon the productive factory had transformed a small farming village into a thriving industrial town that at his death was renamed in his honor.

From the outset, 90 percent of the mill workers were women. Factory owners preferred women because they could be paid \$2 to \$3 a week, half the wages men received. Many immigrant men were willing to work for such low wages, but often prejudice disqualified "foreigners" from any job at all.

Recruiters, driving wagons through the small towns of New England, urged parents to send their daughters to the mills, where, they promised, the young women would be

properly supervised as they learned skills and discipline. The offer appealed to many parents, who could barely provide for their children, and the prospect of getting out on their own surely excited many young women. Back then, there were few occupations open to women, and those that were—primarily teaching and household service—paid even less than factory work.

At the Lowell factory, young women lived in dormitories, paying one-third of their wages for

room and board. They were subject to a curfew and, as a condition of employment, regularly attended church. Any morally questionable conduct (such as bringing men to their rooms) resulted in firm disciplinary action.

Besides fulfilling their promise to parents, factory owners had another motive for their strict rules: They knew that closely supervised women were not able to organize. Working twelve or thirteen hours a day, six days a week, the Lowell employees had good reason to seek improvements in their working conditions. Yet any public criticism of the factory, or even possession of "radical" literature, could cost a worker her job.



What Do You Think?

1. How did race, ethnicity, and gender shape the workforce in the early textile mills?
2. Why were women workers so closely supervised? Can you think of similarly close supervision in the workplace today?
3. Compare the textile mills in Lowell to the Bangladeshi sweatshop described in the opening of Chapter 12. How are they similar? How do they differ?