

Lecture 3: Perspectives and Linkages

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POPULATION AND SOCIETY: SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO POPULATION

Sociology and population studies developed mostly in nineteenth and twentieth century. The founding fathers of sociology have little to say on population. In their time population was growing at a slow pace. In the nineteenth century social thinkers could see that in the developed countries death rates had begun to fall and as a result of that population had started growing. This growth of population started affecting society and economy. This produced interest in studying population. Population-society link became a hot subject in second part of the twentieth century when the population in the developing countries started growing at a fast rate. Among the founding fathers of sociology, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Marx, it is mainly Marx who wrote on population, though only to illustrate the point that there is no universal law of population. Each historic mode of production has its own law of population. The law of reproduction valid for capitalist society is not the same as that was valid for feudal or ancient societies. Durkheim's views are given below. You will learn Marxist population theory in detail in Module 8 on theories. Weber was more concerned with the relationship between religion and capitalism and although he included population in the factors contributing to industrialization, he did not give much importance to this issue.

EMILE DURKHEIM

Emile Durkheim believed that growth of population increases physical density of population, i.e., number of persons per square kilometre. This in turn increases the moral density of population, i.e., number of interactions between people. For example, if the number of people at a given time is n the number of one-to-one interactions is nC_2 . This implies that number of interactions increases faster than the size of population.