ability  The power to perform a mental or physical task—either before or after training. Social psychologists usually distinguish ability from aptitude, the natural capacity to acquire or learn a body of knowledge as measured in an aptitude test. Sociologists would probably distinguish ability and skill, the former being relatively specialized and task-specific, the latter referring to a wider set of learned techniques that can be applied to a number of cognate tasks.

abolitionism  A term originally associated with a call for the abolition of slavery on the grounds of its inhumanity (see, for example, the arguments of William Wilberforce, 1759–1833). More recently extended to arguments for the abolition of prisons and imprisonment. The latter stance developed within Scandinavian criminology (see T. Mathiesen, *The Politics of Abolition*, 1974) but has since been taken up within wider *critical criminology. Abolitionists argue that prisons are ineffective, their justification untenable, and their violations of human rights widespread. The abolitionist stance rejects mere reform on the grounds that this perpetuates and legitimates the existing system. Abolitionism proposes new responses to crime, offending, and disputes—for example community-based alternatives to incarceration—and argues that the urge to punish and inflict pain must be challenged.

absolute deprivation  See DEPRIVATION.

absolute mobility  See MOBILITY, SOCIAL.

absolute poverty  See POVERTY.

absolutism (absolutist state)  A strong and centralized form of state typical of societies in the process of transition from *feudalism* to *capitalism* and in which power is concentrated in the person of a monarch who has at his or her disposal a centralized administrative apparatus. The label has been applied to a wide variety of *states*, ranging from 16th-century Tudor England to 19th-century Meiji Japan. This definition is not uncontroversial: the label has also been applied to Tsarist Russia, where the transition was from feudalism to *communism*, and some would deny that Japan was ever a feudal society in anything other than the loosest sense. A useful overview can be found in Perry Anderson’s *Lineages of the Absolute State* (1974).

There has also been great controversy over the role that absolutist states played in the transition to capitalism. Many historians have seen the absolutist state as preparing the way for capitalism and have sometimes preferred the term
‘enlightened despotism’. (Others, however, have limited this term to the promotion of Enlightenment rationalism in states such as Prussia and Austria. Most Marxists have (at least until relatively recently) tended to see absolutism as an obstacle to the development of capitalism. The problem that both parties to this dispute have had to address is the variability in the historical outcomes. Within continental Europe, for example, the rise of absolutist states appears to have been associated with both a rapid transition to capitalism in the West, and an intensification of feudal domination in the East.

For Max *Weber (General Economic History, 1919–20) and for non-Marxist scholars more generally, an explanation for the progressive role played by the absolutist or ‘rational state’ can be found in the immense contribution that these regimes made to the increasing predictability of action within their territories as they bureaucratized their own administrations, introduced elements of the rule of law, monopolized the legitimate use of force, and used this force to extend their jurisdiction throughout society. Weber’s response to the divergent outcomes of absolutism in Eastern and Western Europe was to portray what happened in the East as a delay rather than a regression, and to explain it as the result of the state’s lack of allies in the wider society, which in turn reflected the more general economic and cultural backwardness of these societies.

The response of Marxists (such as Maurice Dobb, Eric Hobsbawm, and Perry Anderson) to this line of argument, has been to suggest that it owes more to the tendency amongst non-Marxists to accord analytical privilege to the political realm, than it does to sound historical research. Given that the absolute monarchs and their most powerful supporters were always representatives of the feudal nobility, so Marxists have argued, it is the short-lived absolutisms of Western Europe (and especially of England and Holland) that require explanation, rather than the long-lasting ones of the East. The explanation that they provide revolves around the bold and controversial claim that the majority of continental states experienced a prolonged economic crisis during the 16th century, a crisis from which England and Holland were spared. As a result, the feudal nobility in every society except those two was able to crush or constrain its capitalist rivals. For this reason, it was possible for the bourgeois classes of England and Holland to gain an early advantage over their potential competitors, an advantage that they enhanced still further by overturning their absolute monarchies in relatively short order. Putting to one side the many empirical objections that this thesis has encountered, it is important to note that it rests on an analytical privileging of the economic realm that is arguably no more justified than the privileging of the political realm to which its proponents have rightly objected. Perhaps the most successful exception to both strictures is A. Lublinskaya’s, French Absolutism: The Crucial Phase, 1620–1629 (1968).

**abstracted empiricism** A term coined by C. Wright Mills in The Sociological Imagination (1959) to refer to the work of those sociologists who equate a strong and rigid *empiricism with science and make a fetish of survey-generated numerical data and quantitative research techniques. Mills saw this as having become the dominant style of social research in the United States during the
1940s and 1950s. It is empirical research abstracted from theoretical reflection. While Mills recognized the importance of empirical data, including numerical data and statistical analysis, in sociological work, he insisted that they are not sufficient for sociological analysis. Sociological accounts must always be theoretically informed. Mills held that *surveys, in particular, tend to restrict data to those concerning individuals and their attributes and so make it difficult to conceive of social *structure or to undertake comparative historical analyses. A fascinating historical account of the origins of abstracted empiricism will be found R. Bannister, *Sociology and Scientism: The American Quest for Objectivity, 1880–1949* (1987).

**accommodation** See ASSIMILATION.

**accounts** See VOCABULARIES OF MOTIVE.

**acculturation** See ASSIMILATION.

**accumulation** See CAPITAL ACCUMULATION.

**acephalous** A term used to describe the political system of societies without centralized state authority—such as, for example, traditional African lineage political systems (see J. Middleton and D. Tait, *Tribes without Rulers*, 1958). Authority is wielded at the level of the clan, lineage, or lineage segment. For this reason these ‘headless’ societies are often referred to by the alternative term ‘segmented’.

**achieved status** See STATUS, ACHIEVED.

**achievement** The successful accomplishment or performance of a socially defined task or goal. Talcott *Parsons* (in *Social Theory and Modern Society*, 1967) suggests that modern societies use indices of achievement—examination credentials or success in role-based tasks—rather than ascriptive criteria to recruit, select, and evaluate individuals for particular *roles. However, research demonstrates the continued influence of *ascription in social *stratification, notably in relation to such factors as race and sex. There is an interesting cross-disciplinary discussion of the concept and interpretation of achievement, its relationship to creativity and innovation, and its role in explaining economic growth in England and Japan since the 17th century, in Penelope Gouk (ed.), *Wellsprings of Achievement* (1995). See also ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION; MERITOCRACY; STATUS, ACHIEVED.

**achievement motivation** Defined as the need to perform well or the striving for success, and evidenced by persistence and effort in the face of difficulties, achievement motivation is regarded as a central human motivation. Psychologist David McClelland (*The Achieving Society*, 1961) controversially hypothesized that it was related to economic growth and, for a period during the 1950s and 1960s, a lack of achievement motivation was widely proposed as explanation for the lack of economic development in the Third World. This was most notable among certain American *modernization theorists, and their thesis
was much criticized by *dependency theorists such as Andre Gunder Frank (Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution, 1969). See also WORK ETHIC.

**act (action, social act)** See action theory; meaning; Parsons; Weber, Max.

**actionalism** A term generally associated with the name of French sociologist Alain Touraine, and not to be confused with the ‘action frame of reference’ (see ACTION THEORY) proposed by Talcott Parsons. Beginning in the 1960s, Touraine developed a radical new theoretical framework, most fully described in The Self-Production of Society (1973). In his own words, Touraine aimed to ‘replace a sociology of society with a sociology of actors’. His purpose was to overcome what he saw as a false division in sociology between objective and subjective, or system and action approaches. Actionalism places the social actor at the centre of theoretical attention, including theories of structural and historical phenomena. Actors are not simply the components of social systems, but the agents of those systems. Groups and collectivities such as social classes are treated not as mere categories but as dynamic sets of relationships among social actors. This dynamic aspect of actionalism is what Touraine calls historicity (a term adapted from Jean-Paul *Sartre) and referring to the ability of a society to act on itself, and the quality of history as a human activity. The sociologist is an agent of historicity—not a neutral observer—and has a stake in the conflicts of his or her society.

This led Touraine to the method of ‘sociological interventionism’, in which sociologists study social change movements by participating in them directly. An actionalist sociology, Touraine believes, is diverse and full of conflicts, but is more legitimate because of its active engagement in social change processes.

In concrete terms, the actionalist approach attempts to explain how social values are shaped, and thus how social *change is accomplished, by identifying in each historical epoch the ‘historical subject’ (collective actor) that carries the capacity for accomplishing revolutionary change by organizing itself into a social movement. In his earlier studies, Touraine argued that historical subjects attain the necessary self-awareness through the experience of productive work, seeing the key social movement expressing the historical subject of capitalism as organized labour. However, in later studies he broadened his conception of ‘production’ and extended the theory to other social movements, including those organized by women, students, nuclear protesters, and nationalists. Touraine’s analysis of social movements can be found in his The Voice and the Eye (1978).

**action frame of reference** See action theory.

**action research** A type of research in which the researcher is also a change agent. It is often used in local communities or by consultants working in companies, as part of the change process itself. The research subjects are invited to participate at various stages of a relatively fast-moving sequence of research-action-research-action. There is an iterative process of investigating a problem, using *case-study methods, loosely defined; presenting the analysis, with one or more proposed solutions, to the subjects or group leaders; deciding which course of action to follow and implementing it; followed by further investigations to
assess the outcomes and identify unanticipated problems and possible solutions
to them; and finally followed by further action to refine and extend the new
policies or activities. The process can be extended indefinitely, as the original
focus of concern gradually moves to other related areas. The British community
development programmes of the 1970s are an interesting example (see particularly the Coventry CDP Final Report, 1975).

**action theory (action frame of reference)** These terms are not interchangeable but are closely related and carry a number of implications about the way we regard sociology as a science. It has been common, for example, to juxtapose action to structure as alternative starting-points for sociological investigation. Action theories are those that start from or see the major object for sociology as human action. A defining quality of action is that, unlike behaviour, it carries a subjective meaning for the actor. These approaches, therefore, concern themselves with the *meaning of action and its *interpretation. Sociology gives a rational, coherent account of people’s actions, thoughts, and relationships. Action theories include Weberian sociology, phenomenological sociology, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, rational choice theory, and structuration theory (all of which are dealt with under separate headings in this dictionary).

The action frame of reference is associated with the name of Talcott *Parsons, whose theory starts with a systematic analysis of action that sees the social actor as choosing between different means and ends, in an environment which limits choice both physically and socially. The most important social limitations on choice are *norms and *values. From this, Parsons built up an elaborate model of the *social system, and his theory stressed the determining role of norms and values rather more than the choosing actor. Critics of Parsons such as John *Rex (Key Problems of Sociological Theory, 1962) have rejected this view but have retained the underlying action frame of reference as the basis of their own action theories.

Action theories in contemporary sociology have raised three different concerns. First is the nature of *rationality and rational action itself. This arises from Weber’s work and poses questions about the possibility of causal explanations of action. (Are the reasons for doing something a cause in the same way that heating a piece of metal causes it to expand?) It also addresses the issue of whether there are any absolute criteria of rationality, or whether sociological explanations are always in some sense culturally relative. *Rational choice theory takes up some of these problems in a more substantive way. The second concern is the taken-for-granted rules and stock of knowledge that underlie action—a theme pursued notably by ethnomethodology and phenomenology. The third, addressed by symbolic interactionism, is the learning and negotiation of *meaning that goes on between actors. Many important approaches are reviewed in Ira Cohen, ‘Theories of Action and Praxis’ in Turner (ed.), The Blackwell Companion to Social Theory (2000).

**actor (social actor)** See action theory; agency; self; subject.
adaptation

**adaptation** A term widely used in evolutionary theory to describe the outcome of the process of natural selection. Genetic variations in biological species are seen as selected on the basis of their capacity to promote or inhibit survival in a particular environment. Those variations that allow a species to survive do so by allowing them to adapt to the pressures and opportunities of their particular environment. In much social *evolutionism a similar approach was adopted, with cultural innovations being seen as the objects of environmental selection and as the means through which social groups may be able to adapt to their physical and social environment. Talcott Parsons took adaptation as one of the four functional prerequisites of any system of action—the others were goal attainment, *integration, and latency, forming the so-called AGIL scheme. See also functionalism.

**Addams, Jane** (1860–1935) Addams was an American sociologist of central importance to the work of the *Chicago School in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A powerful influence on many other women in sociology, such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Emily Greene Bate, in 1889 she set up a social settlement in Chicago, Hull House to support social work and community activities. This was partly inspired by London’s Toynbee Hall, but was more woman-influenced, more egalitarian, and less religious. Addams argued that one of the main problems for women was trying to manage the conflicting demands of family and society, and she believed social settlements were one way to resolve the problem. Hull House was an important sociological centre for the University of Chicago, and also attracted other leading social theorists, Marxists, anarchists, and socialists. A spokeswoman for women and working-class immigrants in particular, Addams was a cultural feminist who saw female values as inherently superior to those of men, and argued that a more productive and more peaceful society could be built by drawing on, and integrating, such values. Her commitment to pacifism made her a social pariah during the First World War, although in 1931 she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. See Emily Cooper Johnson (ed.), *Jane Addams: A Centennial Reader* (1960), and Mary Jo Deegan, *Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School* (1989).

**SEE WEB LINKS**
- A classic article by Jane Addams on the idea of the social settlement: ‘A Function of the Social Settlement.’ (Subscription)

**addiction** See drinking and alcoholism; drugs.

**administrative theory** (*classical administrative theory*) An early form of *organization theory, pioneered mainly by Henri Fayol (1841–1925) in his *Administration industrielle et générale, 1916), which was concerned principally with achieving the ‘most rational’ organization for coordinating the various tasks specified within a complex *division of labour. The translation of this book into English as *General and Industrial Management* (1949) implies that Fayol was concerned mainly with business management, although he himself made it clear that his ideas about management were intended to apply to all formal organizations, including political and religious undertakings. Expressing the French
administration’ as ‘management’ has also led to the alternative designation of this approach as the ‘classical school of scientific management’, more recent exponents of which include Lyndall Urwick and Peter F. Drucker.

Fayol identified the key functions of management as those of forecasting and planning. The most rational and efficient organizations were, in his view, those that implemented plans that facilitated ‘unity, continuity, flexibility, precision, command and control’. Universal principles of administration could be distilled from these objectives. These include the key elements of the scalar chain (authority and responsibility flowing in an unbroken line from the chief executive to the shop floor); unity of command (each person has only one supervisor with whom he or she communicates); a pyramid of prescribed control (first-line supervisors have a limited number of functions and subordinates, with second-line supervisors controlling a prescribed number of first-line supervisors, and so on up to the chief executive); unity of direction (people engaged in similar activities must pursue a common objective in line with the overall plan); specialization of tasks (allowing individuals to build up a specific expertise and so be more productive); and, finally, subordination of individual interests to the general interest of the organization. This list is not exhaustive, but illustrates the key proposition of administrative theory, which is that a functionally specific and hierarchical structure offers the most efficient means of securing organizational objectives (see M. B. Brodie, *Fayol on Administration*, 1967).

Classical administrative theory, like its near-contemporary the *scientific management* approach, rests on the premise that organizations are unproblematically rational and (effectively) closed systems. In other words, organizations are assumed to have unambiguous and unitary objectives that the individuals within them pursue routinely by obeying the rules and fulfilling their role expectations according to the prescribed blueprint and structure. Moreover, in the attempt to maximize efficiency, it is only variables within that structure that need to be considered and manipulated. The interaction of the organization with its environment, together with the various factors that are external to the organization but nevertheless have consequences for its internal functioning, are systematically ignored. Clearly, both perspectives take a rather deterministic view of social action, since each assumes that individuals will maximize organizational efficiency, independently of their own welfare, and with no thought for the relationship between the collective goal and their own particular purposes. *Human Relations Theory* in organizational analysis, an otherwise diverse group of writers and approaches, is united by its opposition to precisely this assumption. Despite such criticisms, the classical theory of administration has exerted considerable influence on the fields of business studies and public administration, and it still provides the basic concepts that many managers use in clarifying their objectives.

**adolescence** First introduced as a concept in social psychology by G. Stanley Hall (in *Adolescence*, 1904). The term has been used to refer to the emotional and behavioural states supposedly associated with becoming adult; the phase in the *life-cycle before the physical changes associated with puberty are socially recognized; and the transition in status from childhood to adulthood.
Typically, in modern industrial societies, young people are sexually mature well before society acknowledges them as adults in other respects; and, because of education and training, they remain dependent on parents and guardians. Consequently, adolescence has been seen as a time of peak emotional turbulence (see J. S. *Coleman, *The Nature of Adolescence, 1980). Sociologists do not see this as an exclusively biological process in which physical change itself brings about behavioural change. Rather, biological maturation is recognized as real but also as socially constructed in relation to social norms and values. This means that adolescence itself is a culturally relative condition. In the recent past in Europe children frequently had to move into adulthood as soon as they could do useful work and without passing through a stage of adolescence.

Anthropologists too describe numerous examples (especially in *age-set societies) where the transition to adulthood is abrupt, marked by clear *rites of passage, and relatively free from alleged adolescent problems. Surveys and other field studies in the industrialized West itself have cast doubt on the ideas that adolescence is typically any more stressful than any other stage in life or that the majority of teenagers are rebellious. The treatment of adolescence as a social problem may say more about the stereotypes of youth in the adult world and indicate a *moral panic about *youth culture (see Frank Coffield et al., *Growing Up at the Margins, 1986). For an overview of the literature see Patricia Noller and Victor Callan, *The Adolescent in the Family (1991).

**Adorno, Theodor Wiesengrund** (1903–69) A leading member of the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research, who worked in America during the Second World War, returning to West Germany after the allied victory. He was a man of immense learning, and complex, often obscure and difficult ideas. His work covered aesthetic theory, literary and musical theory, general cultural criticism, social psychology, and philosophy. A major work was (with numerous others) *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), a (much criticized) empirical and theoretical investigation into the psychological roots of authoritarianism.

With other members of the Frankfurt Institute he engaged critically with Marxism and sought to incorporate a sophisticated conception of culture and individual psychology into the revisionist strands of Marxism that were developed by such writers as *Lukács. His aesthetic and cultural criticism and his philosophy were concerned with form rather than content: the form of a work of art, or of a system of ideas, offered the clearest demonstration of the limits and contradictions imposed upon us by society, as well as of the possibilities it offers. He particularly developed this idea in relation to music and wider trends in culture, where he saw a polarisation between artistic culture and the development of popular, mass culture and *mass society (see R. Witkin, *Adorno on Music, 1998; *Adorno on Popular Culture, 2002). His own difficult writing style was allegedly an attempt to avoid what he saw as the false integration of his ideas into modern industrial society. Perhaps the clearest statement of his view of modernity can be found in *Minima Moralia* (1951), a collection of aphorisms, which state that the notion of totality was once part of a liberating philosophy, but over the last century has been absorbed into a totalizing *social system, a
real or potentially *totalitarian regime. For examples of his cultural criticism see *Prisms* (1955) and, with Max Horkheimer, *The Culture Industry Revisited*, ed. J. Bernstein (1992). Adorno’s introductory lectures on sociology from 1968 have been published as *Introduction to Sociology* (published 2000). See also AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY; CRITICAL THEORY.

**SEE WEB LINKS**

- A selection of extracts from works by Adorno on music and the culture industry.

**advocacy research** One kind of descriptive *policy research, carried out by people who are deeply concerned about certain social problems, such as poverty or rape. Their studies seek to measure social problems with a view to heightening public awareness of them and providing a catalyst for policy proposals and other action to ameliorate the problem in question. Critics sometimes suggest that advocacy research studies bend their research methods in order to inflate the magnitude of the social problem described, and thereby enhance the case for public action to address the issue. See Neil Gilbert’s article: ‘Advocacy Research and Social Policy’, *Crime and Justice* (1997).

**affect (affective, affectivity)** An affect is an emotion. In sociology the use of the term generally implies that an action is being or has been carried out for emotional gratification. Affectivity versus *affective neutrality is one of Talcott Parsons’s so-called pattern variables for the classification and analysis of societies. This was used to explore the relationship between cognitive and emotional action orientations and social relations. For example, in their discussion of *Class Awareness in the United States* (1983), Mary R. Jackman and Robert W. Jackman discuss ‘affective class bonds’; namely, ‘the issue of whether subjective social class encompasses a feeling of emotional attachment’, rather than being merely a matter of nominal identification. See also AFFECTIVE INDIVIDUALISM.

**affective individualism** A change in family life, said to have accompanied the demographic, industrial, and capitalist revolutions that occurred in 18th-century England, and has since been experienced widely in other modernized and modernizing countries. The term affective individualism describes the formation of *marriage ties on the basis of personal attraction, guided by norms of romantic attachment rather than being arranged by parents.

A number of authorities (including L. Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800*, 1977) have argued that the 18th century saw a revolution in familial norms. Hitherto, families (even nuclear *families) were deeply embedded in a wider network of community involvements (including close relationships with other kin), so that the family was not a major focus of emotional attachment and dependence for its members. Among other things, therefore, sex was instrumental (necessary to propagate children) rather than a source of pleasure; as indeed was marriage itself (which was undertaken for economic or political reasons, rather than feelings of romantic attraction). For reasons connected with ‘industrialization (the precise causality varies between accounts), this form of family life gave way rapidly to the ‘closed domesticated nuclear form’, characterized by intimate emotional or affective bonds, domestic privacy,
affine

a preoccupation with love and with the rearing of children for expressive rather than instrumental reasons. By extension, this process is said to have accompanied the spread of *capitalism and industrialization throughout the globe.

The theory of affective individualism as an invention of modern societies has been strongly challenged—most notably by Alan Macfarlane (see *The Culture of Capitalism, 1987)—mainly on the grounds that it posits as revolutionary a series of changes that were incremental and long pre-dated the processes of industrialization. See also FAMILY, SOCIOLOGY OF.

affine (affinity) See KINSHIP.

affirmative action See POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION.

affluence See EMBOURGEOISEMENT.

affluent worker See EMBOURGEOISEMENT.

ageing, sociology of The physiological process of growing older has vital social and cultural dimensions which affect what is often seen as a purely biological inevitability. Age is also a cultural category and its meaning and significance vary both historically and cross-culturally. The sociology of ageing did not feature in standard sociology textbooks until recently. Like sex or gender, age tended to be seen as a purely ‘natural’ division, or else as a ‘problem’ reserved for social policy. By contrast, considerable sociological attention has been paid to *youth culture.

In Western capitalism, a wage-labour system means fixed retirement from external production, thus categorizing the aged as non-productive, and a burden. In research priorities, *gerontology, with its medical model of ageing, has been influential. Sociological research in Britain has focused on the aged as isolates or in state institutions. Demographic changes—with increasing longevity, a declining birth-rate, and a greater proportion of the population over 65 in the West—have stimulated both a *moral panic and new interest in the consumer and political potential of the elderly.

Stereotyping and an assumed homogeneity among the aged are to be challenged. Class, race, and gender, as well as culture, counter biological factors. For example, old age is not perceived as an impediment for males with supreme political power in either communist or capitalist states. In numerous articles on the social relations of old people, Ethel Shanas has criticized what has been termed the acquiescent functionalism of much writing on ageing and the family life of the elderly, a tradition which legitimates *ageism by excluding the elderly from the *labour market and other significant social *roles. By contrast, Shanas’s own research seems to demonstrate that ageing is a process of *deprivation, leading to what has been called ‘structured dependency’ (see Shanas et al., *Old People in Three Industrialised Societies, 1968, and Shanas and M. B. Sussman (eds.), *Family, Bureaucracy and the Elderly, 1977).
There is growing research interest in this field, not only in the experience and ethnography of the aged, but also in the specific constructions of ‘old age’ across cultures and through time (see, for example, M. W. Riley, ‘On the Significance of Age in Sociology’, *American Sociological Review*, 1987).

**ageism** Discrimination, or the holding of irrational and prejudicial views about individuals or groups, based on their age. It involves *stereotypical assumptions about a person’s or group’s physical or mental capacities and is often associated with derogatory language. These are most commonly applied to the elderly. Organizations such as the Grey Panthers have emerged in the United States to combat *discrimination against the elderly and to fight for their *rights.

**age sets (age grades)** Broad age-bands that define the social *status, permitted *roles, and activities of those belonging to them and that include all the members of the society in the particular age category. Transitions from one age grade to the next are often major collectively organized social events with *rites of passage marking the change of social status and role. Although the term has sometimes been applied in the modern industrial context, it is more commonly used in reference to pre-industrial societies where an age-grade system of stratification (dividing members into youths, maidens, elders, and so forth) is superimposed on the organizing tribal, lineage, or clan structure, and class differences do not exist.

**age stratification** A system of inequalities linked to age that involves the formation of *age sets. As a form of *stratification, it is most usefully distinguished from mere inequality. In Western societies, for example, both the old and the young are perceived and treated as relatively incompetent and excluded from much social life as distinct statuses, but they do not comprise unified and cohesive social strata. *See also ageism.*

**agency** The term agency is often juxtaposed to *structure and is often no more than a synonym for action, emphasizing implicitly the undetermined nature of human action, as opposed to the alleged determinism of structural theories. If it has a wider meaning, it is to draw attention to the psychological and social psychological make-up of the actor, and to imply the capacity for willed (voluntary) action.

Sociological theories are often characterized by the relative emphasis they place on agency or structure—and in terms, therefore, of an agency versus structure debate. Some recent theorists have intervened in the debate in a conscious attempt to transcend this *dualism. The French sociologist Pierre *Bourdieu is a good example. His insistence that the objective and subjective aspects of social life are inescapably bound together leads him to challenge the dualism of macro versus micro and structure versus agency (Outline of a Theory of Practice, 1977).
aggregate

Another writer to have addressed this issue is Anthony *Giddens in his theory of *structuration. Similarly, the American sociologist Jeffrey Alexander argues for a multidimensional sociology that brings together the two levels of analysis, most notably in his four-volume *Theoretical Logic in Sociology* (1984). See also action theory; structuration.

aggregate Large collections of people may act as groups, with some degree of common purpose, but they may also act as non-organized aggregates. For example, an audience or crowd may be said to be an aggregate, in so far as its members lack any organization or persisting pattern of social relationships. The term is also used more broadly in reference to research or analysis that deals only with aggregate data, which consist of statistics produced for broad groups or categories (for example certain types of persons, households, or companies), and in which the characteristics of individual respondents (persons, households, or companies) are no longer identifiable. See also collective behaviour; microdata.

aggregate data See aggregate (collectivity).

aggression Acts of hostility, injury, violence, or extreme self-assertion. There are several competing theories as to why people may become aggressive. Many of these are biological. Thus, for example, the philosopher Thomas *Hobbes argued that people were by nature violent and avoided a ‘war of all against all’ only by considerable ingenuity and effort. Many schools of psychology share this assumption, and argue that aggression is obviated by exhaustive processes of education or *socialization, combined with a generous measure of *social control. That is, social learning is not sufficient, and people must be continually rewarded for their civilized behaviour and punished for unacceptably aggressive conduct.

Most sociological theories of aggression root it not in the biological substructure or psychological superstructure of the individual, but in his or her relationship to the social environment. Probably the most popular of these is the so-called frustration-aggression hypothesis or theory, which states that aggressive behaviour results when purposeful activity is interrupted (see the classic statement in J. Dollard et al., *Frustration and Aggression*, 1939). Thus, for example, children may attack other children who take their toys from them. This theory has, however, been criticized for its inability to explain the circumstances under which frustration leads to outcomes other than aggression. (Some children may simply sulk quietly under these circumstances.) The frustration-aggression thesis has also been identified with the earlier work of Sigmund *Freud, who argued that frustration—the blocking of pleasure-seeking or pain-avoiding activities—always leads to aggression, either towards the perceived source of interference, or (if inhibited) displaced onto another object. Freud later suggested that aggression was the product of a death instinct (called Thanatos) that operates alongside the life instinct that he called libido or Eros.

A third group of theories—learning theories—view violence as the result of successful socialization and social control. That is, aggressive behaviour in
general and violent behaviour in particular occur where they are expected, even in the absence of frustration. For example, members of a *subculture may learn to behave in accordance with *norms of violence which have been presented to them as socially desirable, as in cases where the use of force (such as fist-fighting) is associated with masculinity. Similarly, soldiers at the front in times of war and teenagers in a *gang may feel violence is acceptable and the done thing, because they have been brought up to believe this to be the case, expect to win approval and prestige if they fight well, and wish to avoid censure should they 'chicken out'. See also DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION.

agnate (agnation) In Roman law, *agnati were a group of males and females who were related through a common ancestor, and thus came under a single family authority. The modern use in social anthropology relates to *patrilineal (or male) descent, but the element of male authority has been lost. An agnate is thus a blood relative in the *patrilineal (or male) line. Agnation refers to a kinship system in which relationship is traced exclusively through the male line. In current anthropological usage the term *patrilineal is preferred.

agrarism Agrarian societies are those that combine horticulture and animal husbandry in systems of farming. *Agrarianism also refers to the romanticization of the rural farm as the ideal place for family life. See also RURAL SOCIOLOGY.

agreement, method of See MILL, JOHN STUART.

agribusiness A large-scale *capitalist farming and food-processing organization and enterprise (producing fertilizers, pesticides, or machinery) that shares many characteristics of other advanced industries. These include, for example, the use of advanced science and technology, techniques of mass production, and extensive vertical and horizontal integration of processes and *corporations. Thus, for example, one might find a frozen-food corporation, having long-term contracts with an array of large farms, using computers to plan production of highly specialized produce to order, and being supplied with inorganic fertilizers and other materials by a company also owned by the food corporation. These are increasingly organized on a global scale and with a global division of labour. The effects of agribusiness in the United States are discussed in Richard Merrill (ed.), Radical Agriculture (1976) and Susan George, How the Other Half Dies (1976). See also RURAL SOCIOLOGY.

agriculture, sociology of See RURAL SOCIOLOGY.

AIDS The Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome is a complex of symptoms and ultimately deadly infections caused by the Human Immuno-deficiency Viruses (HIV). An initial period of high infectivity is followed after some three months by the appearance of HIV antibodies that signal a reaction to the HIV infection and on which the main tests for the condition are based. Following what are often years of symptom-free living, the body finally succumbs to what
are normally rare and unusual diseases—especially PCP (Pneumocystis Carinii Pneumonia) and KS (Kaposi’s Sarcoma). The main vehicles of transmission are the bodily fluids, especially blood (blood-transfusion, intravenous drug uses, and vertical transmission from mother to child) and semen, chiefly by means of penetrative sexual intercourse (homosexual or heterosexual). UNAIDS distinguishes three zones and patterns of infection: Asia (now the principal growth area of infection), the African continent (initial discovery and primarily heterosexual in form), and industrialized Western nations (where the pandemic was recognized and defined in the 1980s). In the West, transmission was primarily by homosexual intercourse, and intravenous drug needle-sharing, but transmission is now primarily heterosexual. By 2010 an estimated 39 m people had been infected by HIV (over a half of whom were women and two-thirds of whom were in Sub-Saharan Africa) and over 20 m had died in 20 years. Rapid advances in treatments now make the infection chronic rather than acute in the West, but they are expensive and rarely available where most needed outside the West.

Sociology has contributed in various ways to the understanding and control of AIDS/HIV infection. Studies of sexual networks of transmission were crucial for identifying the virus in 1982. It has also informed national and large-scale studies of sexual and drug-taking behaviour, both KABP (Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviour and Practices) and more innovative and qualitative research necessary to find out and monitor the prevalence and incidence of high-risk behaviour and risk-taking activity. Techniques to identify and sample ‘hidden populations’ such as non-gay-identified men who have sex with men and illegal drug-taking activity have depended chiefly on sociological and anthropological methodologies. Theories of risk-taking have also developed from early reliance on the Health Belief Model to contextual and strategic aspects and collective and community response.

**alcoholism**

A United Nations site providing statistical and other information on HIV/AIDS.

**alcoholism**  See drinking and alcoholism.

**alienation**  In the most general terms, this concept describes the estrangement of individuals from one another, or from a specific situation or process. It is central to the writings of Karl *Marx, and Marxists have explored the philosophical, sociological, and psychological dimensions to his argument. (These are most usefully expounded in Istvan Meszaros, *Marx's Concept of Alienation*, 1970, and John Torrance, *Estrangement, Alienation and Exploitation*, 1977.)

Alienation as a philosophical concept has its roots in *Hegel. It was Hegel’s view of the movement of ideas through history and their externalization, objectification, and reappropriation in knowledge that provided Marx with his revolutionary imperative. Turning Hegel on his head and building a *materialist vision, Marx argued that labour defines the ‘species being’; the needs, powers, and potential of human beings. It is human labour power that is externalised and objectified in the form of material objects and social relations. This alienation of labour dehumanizes people and is reappropriated on a fully human basis only
with the advent of *communism, which represents the complete return of indi-
viduals to themselves as social beings.

This philosophical conception of alienation permeates Marx’s writings, though there has been much debate over the extent to which his early concerns continued to shape his later arguments. However, sociological discussion of the term relates more to his argument that externalisation and estrangement are consequences of social structures that oppress people, denying them their essential humanity. Alienation is an objective condition inherent in the social and economic arrangements of *capitalism. All forms of production result in objectification, a process in which people manufacture goods that embody their creative talents yet come to stand apart from their creators. Alienation is the distorted form taken by that humanity’s objectification of its species-being. Under capitalism, the fruits of production belong to the employers, who expropriate the surplus created by others and in so doing generate alienated labour. Marx attributes four characteristics to such labour: alienation of the worker from his or her ‘species essence’ as a human being rather than an animal; alienation between workers, since capitalism reduces labour to a commodity to be competitively traded on the market; alienation of the worker from the product itself, which is appropriated by the capitalist, and so escapes the worker’s control; and, finally, alienation from the act of production itself, such that work comes to be a meaningless activity, offering little or no intrinsic satisfaction. The last of these generates the psychological discussion of alienation as a subjectively identifiable state of mind, involving feelings of powerlessness, isolation, and discontent at work—especially when this takes place within the context of large, impersonal, bureaucratic social organizations.

It is impossible to extricate Marx’s ideas about alienation from his wider sociological discussion of the *division of labour, the evolution of private *property relations, and the emergence of conflicting *classes. In the Marxian terminology, alienation is an objectively verifiable state of affairs, inherent in the specific social relations of capitalist production. However, many researchers have tended to neglect these structural considerations, and have focused on its specifically cognitive and attitudinal characteristics. The ‘psychological state’ of alienation was said by Melvin Seeman (*On the Meaning of Alienation*, American Sociological Review, 1959) to comprise the dimensions of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, normlessness, and self-estrangement. In a famous study of factory workers, Robert Blauner attempted to link these dimensions of subjective alienation to particular types of work situation, arguing that the technologies associated with craft, machine, assembly-line, and continuous-process production show a curvilinear association with alienation. That is, ‘in the early period, dominated by craft industry, alienation is at its lowest level and the worker’s freedom at a maximum. Freedom declines and the curve of alienation… rises sharply in the period of machine industry. The alienation curve continues upward to its highest point in the assembly-line technologies of the 20th century… in this extreme situation, a depersonalised worker, estranged from himself and larger collectives, goes through the motions of work in the regimented milieu of the conveyer belt for the sole purpose of earning his
alliance theory

bread... But with automated industry there is a countertrend... automation increases the worker’s control over his work process and checks the further division of labour and growth of large factories’ (Alienation and Freedom, 1964). At this juncture, the discussion of alienation becomes part of a larger debate about the subjective experience of work generally, and *job satisfaction in particular. See also WORK, SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE OF.

**alliance theory** Generally associated with the structuralist anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, the theory argues that in *kinship systems, inheritance and the continuation of the vertical line (descent) are less important than the horizontal links (alliances) and relationships of reciprocity and exchange that are brought about by marriage between different groups.

**Allport, Gordon W.** (1897–1967) A leading American social psychologist who became head of the Harvard Department of Psychology in 1938. His most significant contribution was a theory of *personality that highlighted the *self and the ‘proprium’, the latter defined as ‘all the regions of our life that we regard as peculiarly ours’ (see Becoming, 1955). He also undertook studies of the importance of *prejudice as a historical and cultural, as well as a psychological, phenomenon, reviewed the importance of *personal documents in social science (such as his collection of Letters from Jenny, 1965), and he championed the *ideographic method.

**altercasting** A concept introduced by Eugene A. Weinstein and Paul Deutschberger (Sociometry, 1963) and used within *role theory and *dramaturgical sociology to describe the process of the casting of the other (alter) into a particular role. It highlights the fact that the way in which one acts towards others has a definite pattern and may constrain what the other can do.

**alternative movement** See SOCIAL MOVEMENTS.

**alternative technology** See APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGIES.

**Althusser, Louis** (1918–90) One of the most original and influential of 20th-century Marxist social philosophers, Louis Althusser provoked a spectacular, but deeply controversial renewal of Marxist scholarship across a whole range of humanities and social science disciplines. His most important work, and the height of his influence, spanned the 1960s and 1970s. Viewed in political terms, his project was to provide an analysis and critique of the Stalinist distortion of Marxism. Althusser differed sharply from many contemporary Marxist critics of *Stalinism in refusing to employ the rhetoric (as he saw it) of merely *humanist moral condemnation. Instead, a ‘rigorously scientific’ analysis of the causes and consequences of Stalinism was seen to be a necessity, if political opposition to it was to be effective.

The quest for a scientific approach to the understanding of history took Althusser in two directions: first, to a rereading of the classic texts of the Marxian tradition; and, second, to a philosophical consideration of the nature of science, and how to distinguish it from other forms of knowledge or discourse (see
ideology. Althusser’s view of science was an ambitious attempt to recognize science as a social practice in which knowledge is produced, and so as a part of the history of those societies within which it is conducted. At the same time, Althusser retained from the *materialist tradition of Marxism the insistence that the real world exists prior to, and independently of, our historically and socially produced knowledge of it. Ideology also alludes to this independently existing reality, but does so, according to Althusser, in a way quite different from science. In ideology, individual ‘subjects’ are provided with a way of imagining or recognizing themselves and their relation to the society in which they are situated. This mode of recognition—or misrecognition—serves primarily to orient practical conduct. In the case of the *dominant ideology, it does so in ways that tend to reproduce and preserve the prevailing system of social domination.

Althusser’s view of science was put to work in his re-reading of the classic Marxian texts. The most famously controversial outcome of this process was the proclaimed ‘epistemological break’ between the earlier (pre-1845) and mature writings of Marx. The philosophical humanism of the early Marx, according to which history was to be understood as a process of progressive human self-realization through the concept of *alienation, was rejected as a prescientific ‘theoretical ideology’. Only after Marx’s ‘settling of accounts’ with his earlier philosophical position did the beginnings of a new and scientific approach to the understanding of human history emerge in his writings. This new approach— *historical materialism—did not arise fully formed, and Althusser and his associates employed a method of ‘symptomatic reading’ to recover the basic structure of concepts (the ‘problematic’) that underlay Marx’s science of history. During the 1960s Althusser and his close colleagues produced a series of texts (*For Marx, Reading Capital, and Lenin and Philosophy* were probably the most influential) in which rigorous definitions and applications of these concepts were attempted. In part, this was a matter of reworking already well-established Marxian concepts such as forces and relations of production, modes of production, ideology, the state, and social formation (all of which are treated separately in this dictionary).

Amidst this reworking of established concepts, Althusser was also addressing long-standing lacunae and failings in Marxist theory. First, there is the question of *economic determinism* (or ‘economism’). Drawing on indications in texts by Marx and Engels themselves, together with then influential *structuralist ideas, Althusser advanced a view of social wholes as ‘decentered structures in dominance’. This means that *societies are seen as ordered combinations of economic, ideological, and political practices, none of which is reducible to any of the others, and each of which has its own specific weight in the shaping of the whole (*structural causality*).

The view of history as a linear sequence of modes of production through which humankind passes *en route* to communist self-realization had become identified with Marxist orthodoxy. Althusser rejected this as a *historicist ideology, and claimed to uncover an anti-historicist view of history as a ‘process without a subject’ in Marx’s later writings. For Althusser, the major historical transitions are always contingent, always exceptional outcomes of the *overdetermination or
altruism

‘condensation’ of a multiplicity of contradictions affecting a social order. Accordingly, the quasi-religious certainty that ‘history is on our side’ should have no place in a Marxist understanding of history.

Althusser’s most controversial position was his stand against ‘theoretical humanism’: his view of the relation between subjects and society. Not only is the view of history as a process of human self-realization to be rejected, but so also is any notion of autonomous individual agency, as the source or basis of social life. Individuals are ‘bearers’ of social relations, their sense of *self an outcome of the social process of ‘interpellation’ (or ‘hailing’), which is itself the *modus operandi of the dominant ideology. Althusser’s apparent denial of individual autonomy provoked much criticism.

These Althusserian ideas were influential in fields as diverse as literary and film criticism, political sociology, anthropology, feminist social theory, epistemology, cultural studies, and sociology of development. From 1967 onwards, however, Althussssser produced a spate of self-critical writings, many bearing the imprint of the radical student movement of the time. Althusser appeared to retract his earlier commitment to a theory of the nature of science, viewing philosophy rather as a practice of mediating between science and politics. Along with this went a deepening of his scepticism concerning the scientific status even of much in the mature writings of Marx himself. This is discussed in Ted Benton, *The Rise and Fall of Structural Marxism* (1984).

As his autobiography reveals, Althusser had always been psychologically unstable. A period of deep depression in 1980 resulted in his killing his wife Hélène, and he spent the final decade of his life in obscurity, most of it in a Paris mental hospital.

altruism

A term introduced by Auguste *Comte to refer to behaviour that takes account of the interests of others, usually treated as in opposition to egoism, selfishness, and *individualism. There are extensive theoretical and empirical research literatures in social psychology, economics, political behaviour, and sociobiology (as well as sociology) on altruism, its sources and consequences, and on whether altruistic behaviour is ultimately reducible to and explained by egoistic motives. Research on altruism is also relevant to exchange theory and *rational choice theory, public policy-making, and the voluntary sector. Studies have focused on blood donation; acts of bravery in wars and other conflicts; spontaneous acts of helping strangers in public situations compared to help offered to family and friends; the willingness of citizens to tax themselves for the benefit of others; participation in voluntary non-profit organizations; and giving money to charities.

Research seems to confirm that people do have regard to the interests and needs of others, make sacrifices for their children and even non-kin, and contribute to *public goods. Other social animals also display altruistic behaviour (for example, birds give predator alarms) and some research has suggested that there is a hereditary, genetic component in altruism. Sociobiologists have identified selection processes that lead to the establishment and perpetuation of ‘altruistic’ genes in populations. In addition, socialization in the family and
community encourages people to adhere to public-spirited values and engage in helping behaviour. People who do voluntary work generally give altruistic reasons for becoming involved in such activities (such as a desire to help others). But self-oriented reasons are often simultaneously present, such as the desire to gain work experience, enjoyment of social contacts, and an interest in the particular activity in question. For some people, involvement in charity work confers the prestige, power in the community, and self-fulfilment that others obtain from employment. Similarly, studies of corporate philanthropy conclude that charitable donations are good for business, with enlightened self-interest rather than altruism being the driving factor in firms’ public activities. In many cultures, gift-giving is used to enhance prestige, or even define a person’s social status.

Economists are concerned with the ‘free rider’ problem in the provision or use of public goods, such as the problem of the person who benefits from public TV but does not contribute his or her share of the costs through taxes, or the country that regularly exceeds its allocated fishing quota and so depletes fish stocks for all other countries fishing in the same seas. Sociologists are concerned rather with the development of trust and co-operation in relationships, and the impact of social norms and group identity on decision-making in social dilemmas. These issues are often studied through decision-making in the Prisoner’s Dilemma game, with variable results from short-term studies.

Research based on Prisoner’s Dilemma simulations has shown that, in the long run, altruism and selfishness are not always or necessarily mutually exclusive choices. In his Evolution of Cooperation (1984) R. Axelrod showed how cooperation can evolve in a society of completely self-interested individuals, in effect that altruism and individualism are not necessarily in conflict in human society where public goods are of benefit to all, including people who do not use them directly. Axelrod carried out a series of computer simulations to assess the effectiveness of various strategies in Prisoner’s Dilemma, an issue which is usually studied with laboratory experiments of short duration. Contrary to expectation, one of the simplest strategies, named tit for tat, emerged repeatedly as the winner, owing to a combination of being nice, retaliatory, forgiving, and clear. By using computer simulations of the competing strategies, the game could be run for a much longer time and with a larger number of diverse players than in laboratory experiments, thus approximating to evolution in the long term. For a useful overview of relevant literature see J. A. Piliavin and H.-W. Charng, ‘Altruism’, Annual Review of Sociology (1990). See also gift relationship; suicide.

**altruistic suicide** See suicide.

**ambivalence** The coexistence, in one person, of opposing emotions or attitudes. Sigmund Freud often refers to the individual oscillating between love and hate for the same object or person. In sociology, the dual consciousness thesis posits a subordinate class that holds apparently inconsistent beliefs or values, resulting in an ambivalent attitude to some of the central institutions in society.
amnesia, retrograde

amnesia, retrograde  See retrograde amnesia.

amoral familism  Social action persistently oriented to the economic interests of the nuclear family. In a controversial account of poverty in a village in southern Italy (The Moral Basis of a Backward Society, 1958), Edward C. Banfield argued that the backwardness of the community was to be explained 'largely but not entirely' by 'the inability of the villagers to act together for their common good or, indeed, for any end transcending the immediate, material interest of the nuclear family'. This was attributed to the ethos of 'amoral familism' that had been produced by the combination of a high death rate, certain land-tenure conditions, and the absence of the institution of the extended family. Banfield’s thesis provoked considerable debate about the nature of 'familism' and the role of 'culture generally in preventing or facilitating economic development (see development, sociology of).

amplification of deviance  See deviance amplification.

analysis of variance  See causal modelling, variation (statistical).

analytical Marxism  A term sometimes applied to the writings of sociologists and social theorists who attempted during the 1980s and 1990s to revitalize European and North American Marxist sociology by combining the methodological tenets of Marxism with a variety of alternative approaches. Key figures are Erik Olin Wright, Jon Elster, and John Roemer. Individual members of this loosely defined group have, to varying degrees and at different times, adopted the positivist covering law account of causal explanation (see cause)—Wright’s work has sometimes been referred to rather disdainfully as ‘multiple-regression Marxism’—methodological individualism, and rational choice theory. Their commitment to abandoning some of the philosophically untenable positions of earlier Marxisms is neatly captured in their self-description as ‘No Bullshit Marxists’. Critics claim that, when the objectionable principles of Marxism (such as its historicism and economic determinism) are jettisoned, nothing that is distinctively Marxist remains (since all that seems to hold the members together is a commitment to clarity). For a sympathetic overview see Tom Mayer, Analytical Marxism (1994).

analytic induction  A method of qualitative research introduced by Florian Znaniecki that employs a systematic and exhaustive examination of a limited number of cases in order to identify similarities and so produce generalizations. Donald Cressey, who employs the method in his book Other People’s Money (1953), suggested the stages of analytic induction are: defining the field; hypothesizing an explanation; studying one case to see if it fits the facts; modifying the hypothesis or the definitions in the light of this; and reviewing further cases. According to Cressey, ‘this procedure of examining cases, re-defining the phenomenon and reformulating the hypothesis is continued until a universal relationship is established’. See also grounded theory; induction; symbolic interactionism.
anarchism An array of philosophical and political positions arguing that human societies function best without government or authority, and that suggest that the natural state of people is one of living together harmoniously and freely, without such intervention. Anarchy is said not to lead to chaos but to ‘spontaneous order’. The philosophy takes many forms and covers the whole political spectrum from extreme right to extreme left, the former seeking to diminish the influence of the *state in order that *free-market principles might prevail, the latter arguing that the state will wither away under true *communism. Proponents of *voluntary associations and mutual aid fall somewhere between. Good overviews of the theory of anarchism can be found in texts of that name by David Miller (1984) and Alan Ritter (1980).

In modern times, Jean-Jacques *Rousseau’s romantic claim that we are born free but then everywhere found in chains is one of the first statements of anarchism, whilst the first person to evolve a systematic theory of anarchism was the English rationalist William Godwin. During the 19th century, Pierre-Joseph *Proudhon (influenced in part by Godwin) developed a theory of anarchism that provided much of the basis for French *syndicalism, arguing for the ideal of an ordered society of small units, functioning without central government, and organized instead on the federal principle of ‘mutualism’—or equitable exchange between self-governing associations of producers. Proudhon’s disciple Mikhail Bakunin, in dispute with Karl Marx, favoured the destruction of state power and advocated violence to achieve this end. He too insisted that the reconstruction of society has to be achieved from the bottom upwards by free associations or federations of workers. Like Proudhon, Bakunin maintained that all political parties are ‘varieties of absolutism’, and so was opposed to organized political action by a revolutionary vanguard on behalf of the *proletariat. The extent to which anarchism challenges other political philosophies on the right and left alike is evident in Peter Kropotkin’s observation that ‘Throughout the history of our civilisation, two traditions, two opposed tendencies have been in conflict: the Roman tradition and the popular tradition, the imperial tradition and the federalist tradition, the authoritarian and the libertarian tradition’ (Modern Science and Anarchism, 1912). Kropotkin, a Russian aristocrat, was himself an advocate of a ‘communist anarchism’ which was opposed to centralized mass production, and favoured instead an ideal of small communities in which industry and agriculture would be combined and an education allowing each individual to develop to his or her full potential would be integral to the production process. Like most anarchists he tended to idealize primitive communities in his writings.

Anarchist influences are often evident in contemporary discussions of *communes and communalism, ‘direct action’, workers’ control, decentralization, and federalism. Anarchist philosophy and practice has also played a role (usually a minor one) in the *trade-union movement, the Spanish Civil War, the Hungarian Uprising of 1956, the events of May 1968 in France, in Gandhian techniques of non-violent protest, and in much latter-day terrorism.

An interesting link with social *ecology is made in the writings of the Canadian anarchist Murray Bookchin. After thirty years of political activism, beginning with

Although rarely acknowledged as such, much social scientific writing can be seen as embodying elements of anarchist thought. This includes the *symbolic interactionists* and their view of society as spontaneous order, the *anti-psychiatry* of Thomas Szasz, the free-market views of *laissez-faire* economics, the anti-systemic stress on decentered power in *Michel Foucault*, and the theories of *post-structuralism* and *postmodernism.*

**anarchy, epistemological** See *METHODOLOGICAL PLURALISM.*

**ancestry** See *DESCENT GROUPS.*

**androgyne** An androgyinous individual is one who unites the characteristics of both sexes. Androgyne has been of interest to some sociologists who study *gender* because it makes problematic the taken-for-granted assumptions of what it is to be a man or a woman. Examples include Harold Garfinkel’s case-study of ‘Agnes’ or Michel Foucault’s historical dossier on Herculine Barbine. More commonly it provides the subject-matter of much science fiction (see e.g. M. Piercey’s *Woman at the Edge of Time*). Some feminists advocate cultural or psychological (rather than physical) androgyne as an alternative to *patriarchy.* Androgyinous styles have long been embraced in popular culture, especially since the 1960s, epitomized in singers such as David Bowie, Freddie Mercury, Michael Jackson, and Annie Lennox.

**animism** See *TOTEMISM.*

**Annales School** An influential school of French historians, formed around the journal *Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations*, which was founded by Lucien Febvre and Marc *Bloch* at the University of Strasbourg in 1929. The Annales School attempted to develop a ‘total history’ as a critique of existing historical methodology, which offered merely a chronology of events. They turned attention away from political history towards a macro-historical analysis of societies over long time-periods. The Annales School, which included Maurice Halbwachs, André Siegfried, Fernand *Braudel*, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, and Georges Duby, had the following characteristics: it was interdisciplinary; it was concerned to study very long historical periods (*la longue durée*) and social structure; some members of the School employed quantitative methods; and they examined the interaction between geographical environment, material culture, and society.

The work of the original members is represented by Bloch, who attempted a total analysis of medieval society in his *Feudal Society* (1961). The two most influential works in the later period have been Braudel’s study of the Mediterranean (*The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II,*
1949) and Le Roy Ladurie’s analysis of fourteenth-century village life (*Montaillou*, 1975). The School has influenced historical sociology, especially the *world-system* theory of Immanuel Wallerstein (see, for example, his three-volume study of *The Modern World-System*, 1974, 1980, and 1989). Critics have argued that the Annales School neglected political processes. The Annales approach has similar interdisciplinary concerns to *historical materialism*, the historical sociology of Max *Weber* in his *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilisations* (1924), and the *sociology* of Norbert *Elias* in *The Court Society* (1969).

**Anomie**

An absence, breakdown, confusion, or conflict in the *norms of a society*. The term *anomia* is scattered throughout classical Greek writings, where it may be linked to the adjective *anomos*, meaning ‘without law’. It has since assumed a wider and often negative connotation of breakdown and catastrophe. In sociology the term is most frequently identified with the work of Émile *Durkheim* and Robert *Merton*.

In Durkheim’s writings the concept appears prominently in *The Division of Labour in Society* and *Suicide*. In the former, anomie emerges through society’s transition from mechanical to organic solidarity. Normally, an increasing *division of labour* brings about social integration through organic solidarity, but if economic change is too fast for the growth of moral regulation to keep pace with increasing differentiation and specialization then an abnormal or pathological division of labour occurs. This is the *anomic division of labour*. The argument is further developed in the discussion of suicide, where anomie is one of the four causes of suicide identified. Anomic suicide occurs in organic societies when economic depression or boom leads to a lessening of normative regulation. At such times, people are less closely locked into their society and their basic desires may become limitless and confused. At this point, anomie results in a psychological state of disorder and meaninglessness. The concept is often contrasted with Marx’s idea of *alienation*.

Robert Merton’s work shifted the meaning somewhat. Merton wanted to produce a sociological account of *deviance*: of how social structures and cultural values exert definite pressures to conform, yet create disjunctions and contradictions that make deviance a necessary outcome. In his classic essay on ‘Social Structure and Anomie’ (*Social Theory and Social Structure*, 1957), he discusses the American Dream of ‘log cabin to White House’, the truly open society where enormous upward social mobility and financial rewards are possible. According to Merton, the American value-system creates almost universal striving for success, especially economic success, and specifies a range of normatively approved means for securing this goal (most notably, educational attainment and hard work). However, the structure of economic resources in that society enables only certain privileged groups and classes to succeed through these means. This creates feelings of relative *deprivation* among many poorer individuals, who then turn to various forms of individual deviance that seem to offer alternative means to the same desired ends. In other words anomie occurs as a disjunction between means and goals. The true conformist will be the person...
who has access to both the legitimate means and the approved goals. However, in a celebrated typology of modes of individual adaptations to anomie, Merton also discusses innovation (keeping goals, but rejecting legitimate means, as in theft); retreatism (rejecting or withdrawing from goals and means, as in drug use); ritualism (keeping to legitimate means becomes a goal in itself, as in the case of a slavish bureaucrat); and, finally, rebellion (rejecting both means and goals, and substituting new ones, as in political radicalism).

Merton’s theory has been much criticized for assuming too much consensus and social integration, but it has been very influential, especially in theories of crime and delinquency. For example, in Albert Cohen’s theory of *status frustration (Delinquent Boys, 1956) and R. Cloward and L. Ohlin’s theory of differential *opportunity structures (Delinquency and Opportunity, 1961), delinquency is seen as the outcome of a situation of strain or anomie in the social structure. The concept of anomie has also been applied to a range of other areas, discussed critically in a volume edited by Marshall B. Clinard, Anomie and Deviant Behaviour (1964), and more recently in Marco Orrù, Anomic: History and Meanings (1987). See also subculture.

**anthropology** See social anthropology.

**anthropomorphism** Attribution of human characteristics to things that are not human.

**anticipatory socialization** In contrast to more formal training, anticipatory *socialization involves the informal adoption of *norms or behaviour appropriate to a *status not yet achieved by the individuals concerned, so providing them with experience of a *role they have yet to assume. For example, children may anticipate parenthood by observing their parents as role models, and the careerist may anticipate promotion by emulating the occupational behaviour of his or her superiors.

**anti-naturalism** See naturalism.

**antinomianism** The belief that one’s religious commitments or faith exempt one from the legal or moral codes of the wider society (hence ‘anti-norms’). Antinomianism has been a characteristic of particular *sects throughout the history of Christianity. Most notably, certain radical Protestant sectarians of the 16th and 17th centuries extended the Calvinist doctrine of predestination in this way, arguing that those who possessed an inner certainty of their own election are no longer capable of sin and are therefore freed from the restrictions of conventional conduct. More recent examples include the Oneida Community in the 19th century, and the Children of God in the present day. Antinomianism is usually associated with unorthodox sexual or marital practices, such as plural marriage (the Oneida Community) or sexual activity outside marriage (the Children of God), the latter being justified on the grounds that it brings others to salvation.
**anti-psychiatry** A term coined in the 1960s for writers who are highly critical of the ideas and practice of *psychiatry. Precisely who is included within this group (which is always theoretically and politically heterogeneous) tends to vary. Frequently mentioned are the radical libertarian Thomas Szasz, the more left-wing, existentialist-inclined Ronald *Laing and his colleague David Cooper, and the Italian mental health reformer Franco Basaglia. Two sociologists who have written on mental illness—Erving *Goffman and Thomas Scheff—are also often included, as is Michel *Foucault. All of these writers, from their divergent stances, view madness and *mental illness as socially constructed, and emphasize the way in which psychiatry functions as an agency of *social control that constrains and coerces individuals, especially in institutional contexts.

The work of Szasz is typical. In *The Myth of Mental Illness* (1961) he forcefully denounced the application of the language of illness to human thought and conduct, regarding it as mystifying processes of social control. He held that mental illnesses (except for organic disorders) are ‘problems in living’ and are to be analysed in terms of social rules and role-playing. Numerous subsequent books reaffirm his message, calling for private, contractual psychiatry to replace state coercion.

In the United States and United Kingdom, acceptance of policies of *community care largely predated 1960s anti-psychiatry. In Italy, however, anti-psychiatry was an important influence on the reforming programme that culminated in the radical legislation of 1978, which introduced community care on a national basis.

**anti-urbanism** An intellectual strand of social science writing that is critical of the city as a social form. Negative attitudes to urbanization—and the ‘pastoral myth’ of the countryside—predate the industrial revolution. However, as Robert Nisbet has observed, ‘revulsion for the city, fear of it as a force in culture, and forebodings with respect to the psychological conditions surrounding it’ date from the 19th century. While some radicals (notably Karl *Marx and Friedrich *Engels) saw aspects of urbanization as socially progressive, for liberals and conservatives it posed problems of *social control. Classical sociology reflected these concerns. According to Nisbet, ‘the city…form[ed] the context of most sociological propositions relating to disorganisation, alienation, and mental isolation—all stigmata of loss of community and membership’ (*The Sociological Tradition*, 1966).

The presumed breakdown of traditional *communities in urban societies was a powerful theme in the work of Auguste *Comte, Frédéric Le Play, and Émile *Durkheim. More specifically, anti-urbanism affected the development of rural and *urban sociology: Ferdinand *Tönnies’s suggestion that cities were prime locations for *gesellschaftlich (instrumental and associational) social relations was developed by Georg *Simmel (*The Metropolis and Mental Life*, 1903), whose work strongly influenced the *Chicago urban sociologists. Raymond Williams (*The Country and the City*, 1975) has shown that this has also been a theme in literary and historical writing, each generation feeling that it is uniquely poised at the point of communal breakdown.
Contemporary sociology largely rejects anti-urbanism. It is now generally recognized that the growth of cities, and the varied forms of social association occurring within them, are both consequences of the emergence of modern industrial societies. The city, in other words, is 'a mirror of...history, class structure and culture' (R. Glass, *Clichés of Urban Doom*, 1989). See also COMMUNITARIANISM, COMMUNITY STUDIES.

**apartheid** See SEGREGATION.

**applied sociology** See POLICY RESEARCH.

**appropriate technologies** Because of the permanent over-supply of labour in contemporary developing societies, some sociologists (and economists) have argued that the labour-saving (often capital-intensive) techniques of production that are associated with technological innovation and development in the West, are inapplicable in most *Third World contexts. Rather, the labour surplus suggests a bias in favour of labour-intensive and capital-saving techniques, exemplified in 'appropriate' (sometimes called 'alternative' or 'intermediate') technologies. The example of China is often cited in this context, since the particular combination of the factors of production in that country has encouraged governments to build roads using large numbers of people armed with shovels, rather than fewer people equipped with (expensive) bulldozers. All manner of goods and services can be produced by labour-intensive technologies, which offer full employment, self-sufficiency, and (possibly indirectly) greater equality. However, because capital-intensive methods of production promise higher net output and therefore higher rates of growth, they are often favoured despite yielding a lower volume of present employment. See also TECHNOLOGY.

**aptitude** See ABILITY.

**Ardrey, Robert** (1908–80) Author of a series of best-selling books on human and animal nature (*African Genesis*, 1961, *The Territorial Imperative*, 1966, and *The Social Contract*, 1970). In the 1950s he became deeply interested in R. A. Dart's discoveries of fossil hominids in Kenya, and combined a view of humans as descended from 'a race of terrestrial, flesh-eating, killer apes' with evidence on territoriality, dominance, and aggression in non-human animals to argue for the instinctual basis of human nature. The popular reception of Ardrey's work was undoubtedly connected with its politically conservative response to the challenges and conflicts of the 1960s, and it remains an exemplar of the biological reductionism to which many sociologists object. See also SOCIOBIOLOGY.

**aristocracy** See UPPER CLASS.

**aristocracy of labour** See LABOUR ARISTOCRACY.

**arithmetic mean** See CENTRAL TENDENCY (MEASURES OF).

**arms control** See DISARMAMENT.
Aron, Raymond (1905–83) Professor of sociology at the Sorbonne from 1955 to 1968 and for some years a prominent member of the *Mont Pelerin Society (although he later resigned). He was instrumental in introducing German sociology (especially Tönnies, Simmel, and Weber) to French social science in his *German Sociology (1935). He also wrote an influential introduction to sociological theory (Main Currents in Sociological Thought, 1960 and 1962) in which he gave a special emphasis to the work of Alexis de *Tocqueville. Aron disagreed profoundly with *Marxism as a social science, and it was partly on these grounds that he was often a target of criticism from within the dominant Marxist paradigm in post-war French social philosophy. Aron, by contrast, was more impressed by the work of Max *Weber, an influence that is evident in publications such as Eighteen Lectures on Industrial Society (1956). He played an important part in the debate that followed the student protests of 1968 (see The Elusive Revolution, 1968), and also wrote more generally about the nature of power, political elites, and political organizations. He had a specific interest in the work of Vilfredo Pareto on elites.

Aron’s work is distinctive because of the attention that he gave to international relations and war—topics that have been rather neglected by sociologists. This interest is reflected in Peace and War (1962) and Clausewitz (1985).

**artefacts, statistical and methodological** A statistical artefact is an inference that results from *bias in the collection or manipulation of data. The implication is that the findings do not reflect the real world but are, rather, an unintended consequence of *measurement error. When the findings from a particular study are deemed to be—at least in part—a result of the particular research technique employed (see research design), rather than an accurate representation of the world, they are sometimes said to be a methodological artefact.

**asceticism (this-worldly)** See PROTESTANT ETHIC THESIS.

**ascribed status** See ASCRPTION; STATUS, ACHIEVED.

**ascription** In allocating *roles and *statuses, or imputing allegedly natural behaviours, cultures make varying use of kinship, age, sex, and ethnicity. Such ascribed characteristics cannot be changed by individual effort, although *social movements and *states attempt periodically to challenge the disadvantages and *stereotypes arising from nepotism, *ageism, *sexism, and *racism. See also ACHIEVEMENT; PARSONS; STATUS, ACHIEVED.

**Asiatic mode of production** Of all Karl Marx’s conceptions of the modes of production that he considered to have provided the *base for the various forms of society known to human history, this was perhaps the least developed, and is certainly the one that has given rise to the most controversy. The term ‘Asiatic society’ has sometimes been used to refer to all non-Western social forms other than ‘primitive-communism’ and slavery, whilst at others it (or its more common synonym *oriental despotism) has been seen as applicable only to the cases of Japan and China. Underlying this referential variation was a
conceptual variation. Especially in their earlier work, Marx and *Engels stressed the dominant role that the *state played in such societies because of its monopoly of land ownership, its control over irrigation systems, or its sheer political and military power. At other times—and this is what allowed them to broaden the range of societies to which the term was applied in most of their later work—they suggested that it was the communal nature of landholding that isolated the inhabitants of different villages from one another and so made them prey to state domination.

The subsequent status of the concept among Marxists and non-Marxists alike has varied with changes in the political climate. Between the two world wars, the idea was disavowed by Soviet-influenced Marxists, who probably saw it as an obstacle to the Soviet Union’s political ambitions in and for the Far East. In the Cold War climate of the 1950s, Karl Wittfogel disinterred the concept in his Oriental Despotism (1957), suggesting that the real reason for its unpopularity in the Soviet Union was the uncomfortable similarity between it and the reality of Stalin’s Russia.

During the 1960s the concept excited some interest on the part of Western Marxists, who hoped that it might provide them with a means of avoiding a Eurocentric conception of social development. In the 1970s, however, such hopes were exposed to a barrage of criticism from structuralist Marxism, largely explaining the concept’s current eclipse. For example, Perry Anderson subjected the concept to a major critique in his Lineages of the Absolutist State (1974), while Barry Hindess and Paul Hirst made it the object of a (rather more controversial) theoretical critique in their Precapitalist Modes of Production (1975). Finally, Edward Said delivered what appears to have been the coup de grâce, by arguing that, in formulating the concept, Marx and Engels were the unwitting bearers of a noxious discourse that he termed ‘orientalism’ (see his 1979 book of the same name).

assimilation A term synonymous with acculturation, used to describe the process by which an outsider, immigrant, or subordinate group becomes indistinguishably integrated into the dominant host society. In early American studies of race relations (such as those of Robert *Park), the term was contrasted with accommodation (whereby the subordinate group simply conformed to the expectations of the dominant group), competition (in which it set up its own values in opposition to the mainstream), and extermination and exclusion (which saw no room for interaction between subordinate and dominant groups). Assimilation implied that the subordinate group actually came to accept and internalize the *values and *culture of the dominant group. This view of the process developed in part out of American concerns about the growing number of immigrants to that society, and has been criticized for exaggerating the importance of the values of the dominant group, and for neglecting the ability of new or subordinate groups both to affect these values (thereby creating a *melting-pot culture) or else to live alongside it while adhering to its own values (in a *multicultural society).

association See PLURALISM; VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS.
associational democracy  *See pluralism.*

**association coefficients** A number used to indicate the degree to which two *variables or attributes are related. Two basic types are covariation measures and dis/similarity measures. Statistical associations and measures of *correlation are not in themselves evidence of causal relationships, which must be identified by theoretical reasoning and models. In practice, statistical associations are often treated as equivalent to establishing causal links, with textbooks warning against *spurious correlations. Statistical measures become less important in the research process as our knowledge of causal mechanisms becomes more complete, although they remain useful for assigning quantitative values to a model of a causal process.

**asymmetrical causal processes** An irreversible or one-way causation process. Once A has been set in motion and caused B, the new situation becomes permanent, and cannot be reversed by eliminating or reducing A after the event. For example, breaking and frying an egg produces an omelette, but the process cannot be reversed to produce an unbroken raw egg from an omelette. Asymmetrical causal processes are more common in the social world than in the physical world, invalidate many of the assumptions underlying statistical inference and social statistics, and pose special problems in *policy research. See Stanley Lieberson, *Making it Count* (1985).

**atomism** A philosophical position that views the world as composed of discrete atomistic elements, and reduces knowledge to observation of the smallest of these. For example, individual human beings may be seen as the elements of social structures and social institutions. In strict atomism, the basic elements do not have causal powers: the relations between them are external and contingent. However an atomistic view of society may be combined with a *voluntaristic explanation of social phenomena.

**attitudes** Variously defined as an orientation (towards a person, situation, institution, or social process) that is held to be indicative of an underlying *value or belief, or, among those who insist that attitudes can only be inferred from observed behaviour, as a tendency to act in a certain (more or less consistent) way towards persons and situations. Milton Rokeach’s much-quoted definition (*Beliefs, Attitudes and Values*, 1976) embraces both tendencies and describes an attitude as ‘a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner’.

Social psychologists and sociologists have invested a great deal of effort in the measurement of attitudes, opinions, and views and on the identification and measurement of the more deeply held and less volatile values that underlie them. Attitudes are studied both as a substitute for measuring behaviour directly and because they are (sometimes) assumed to predict behaviour. Some social scientists treat them as important variables in their own right, key features of the individual, as reflected for example in the so-called *authoritarian personality.

The sheer volume of attitudinal research is not difficult to explain. Consider, for example, the phenomenon of race discrimination. It is not easy to observe
instances of discrimination, and isolated incidents, while illustrative, may not be representative. The alternative in surveys is to ask people to report their behaviour, but this runs into difficulties with situations that have never arisen, or are purely hypothetical. The other approach is then to collect attitudinal data on people’s predispositions and stated values, the advantage being that the questions seem to be appropriate for everyone.

In reality, however, many people do not have well-developed or even superficial opinions on topics that may interest the sociologist. Some would argue that the idea of attitudes is closely tied to the culture of Western industrial society, in which citizens are regularly invited to express their views on public issues, both directly and through the ballot box. What is certain is that attitude scales developed in Western societies do not function in the same way in other cultures. Even a standard and simple “job-satisfaction question attracts a different pattern of response as soon as it is used beyond the confines of Western industrial societies—in Japan for example. There is some debate about the *ethnocentrism and broader cross-cultural validity of many attitude scales that have been developed over the past eight decades.

At the simplest level, attitude questions invite people to agree or disagree, approve or disapprove, say Yes or No to something. More sophisticated techniques for measuring attitudes include the well-established and easy to use Likert scale, Thurstone scale, semantic differential scale, and Guttman scale. A huge variety of personality tests, attitude and aptitude scales have been developed in the United States and Europe for commercial use by employers and recruitment agencies, as part of the staff selection process. Attitude scales of various types are sometimes used in *opinion polls, occasionally in simplified form. Attitude research shades into studies of reported behaviour, sociometric scales, the sociology of knowledge, research on motivations, preferences, aims and objectives, which are also causally linked to behaviour, and the whole range of social psychological research.

One of the longest-running disputes in social-scientific research concerns the relationship between attitudes and action. What are the behavioural implications of holding particular attitudes? This debate, which has taken place mostly among social psychologists, has culminated in the view that attitudes are merely one of the factors that influence behaviour (see Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein, *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior*, 1980). However, there is widespread disagreement both about where attitudes stand in this list of factors, and how they relate to the many other variables in the equation. After exhaustively reviewing the literature, Richard Eiser (*Social Psychology: Attitudes, Cognition and Social Behaviour*, 1986) was able to conclude only that ‘attitudes, in short, have behavioural implications’, and that ‘the question of which specific behaviours are implied by a particular attitude, however, will depend on circumstances, and is therefore an empirical one’.

For a useful summary of the major contributions to this debate, together with a discussion of other salient issues in attitude research, see Richard Eiser and J. van der Pligt, *Attitudes and Decisions* (1988). See also EQUAL APPEARING INTERVALS; PROTESTANT ETHIC THESIS.
**attitudinal consistency** See COGNITIVE CONSISTENCY.

**attribution theory** Attribution theory deals with the rules that most people use when they attempt to infer the causes of behaviour they observe. In general, people tend to attribute their own behaviour to the situation or circumstances (social *environment) in which they find themselves, while they attribute other people’s behaviour to *personality factors. An excellent sociological discussion of this phenomenon, as it emerges in the context of beliefs about the causes of poverty and wealth, will be found in James R. Kluegel and Eliot R. Smith’s Beliefs about Inequality: Americans’ Views of What is and What Ought to Be (1986).

**authenticity** A concept common in *existentialist philosophy, involving the idea of a life led in and through the recognition of our human condition (most importantly that we will die), and our total responsibility for our choices and actions (as opposed, for example, to the claim that society makes us what we are). See also EXISTENTIAL SOCIOLOGY.

**authoritarian (authoritarianism)** See AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY.

**authoritarian personality** A term coined by Theodor *Adorno and his associates through a book of the same name first published in 1950, to describe a personality type characterized by (among other things) extreme conformity, subservience to authority, rigidity, and arrogance towards those considered inferior.

Adorno and colleagues conducted extensive empirical research on anti-semitic, ethnocentric, and fascist personalities. In attempting to explain why some people are more susceptible to *fascism and authoritarian belief-systems than others, Adorno devised several attitude scales that revealed a clustering of traits that he termed authoritarianism. Several scales were constructed (ethnocentric, anti-semitic, fascist) and part of the interest in the study came from examining these scales. During interviews with more than 2000 respondents, a close association was found between such factors as ethnocentrism, rigid adherence to conventional values, a submissive attitude towards the moral authority of the in-group, a readiness to punish, opposition to the imaginative and tender-minded, belief in fatalistic theories, and an unwillingness to tolerate ambiguity. Intensive interviewing and the use of *Thematic Apperception Tests identified the authoritarian personality with a family pattern of rigidity, discipline, external rules, and fearful subservience to the demands of parents, which were analysed in Freudian terms.

*The Authoritarian Personality* is a classic study of *prejudice, *defence mechanisms, and *scapegoating. The term itself has entered everyday language, even though the original research has attracted considerable criticism. Among other weaknesses, critics have suggested that the Adorno study measures only an authoritarianism of the right, and fails to consider the wider ‘closed mind’ of both left and right alike; that it tends, like all theories of scapegoating, to reduce complex historical processes to psychological needs; and that it is based on flawed scales and samples. For a detailed exposition and critique see John Madge, *The Origins of Scientific Sociology* (1962). See also CRITICAL THEORY.
authoritarian populism

See POPULISM.

authoritative power See ORGANIZATIONAL REACH.

authority See CHARISMA; DOMINATION; LEGITIMACY; POWER.

autobiography See LIFE-HISTORY.

autocracy A regime in which power is concentrated in the person of a single individual—as, for example, in the case of ‘the Stalinist autocracy’. The term is thus loosely applied, and will be found in discussions of a variety of state structures and political regimes, including in particular *totalitarian, *fascist, *real socialist, and monarchical examples. See also STALINISM.

automation In theory, a workerless system of manufacture; in practice, a series of individual computer-controlled or robotic machine tools, with electro-mechanical link operations replacing transfer by hand. Research on the modern *labour process suggests that automation displaces, rather than replaces, human labour and skill—to maintenance, planning, distribution, and ancillary work.

average (averaging) See CENTRAL TENDENCY (MEASURES OF).

aversion therapy A therapy based on classical *conditioning, in which a maladaptive behaviour (such as drinking alcohol or smoking) is associated with an unpleasant event (for example an electric shock). It is now generally regarded as outmoded by other forms of therapy more acceptable to contemporary social values. See also BEHAVIOURISM.

avoidance relationships A generic term applied to certain potentially difficult or stressful affinal (‘by marriage’) secondary relationships in extended families. These relationships are, to a differing degree in different societies, subject to strain—either because of the potential for (threatening) sexual relations or because of lack of a specified role content for incumbents. Typically, strain is avoided by physical avoidance; by codifying the relationship so that it is subject to minute regulation of correct behaviour and precise requirements; or by ‘personalization’, whereby the parties involved are expected to create a working relationship, merely on the basis of their own goodwill and personalities. The custom takes many forms. Among the African Galla, for example, a man must not mention the name of his mother-in-law, drink from a cup she has used, or eat food prepared by her, although he can address her directly.

Where this custom of maintaining a respectful distance between certain relatives occurs, there is also frequently associated with it a directly contrary relation of familiarity, usually called a ‘joking relationship’. Thus, a man might have an avoidance relationship with his wife’s parents, but a *joking relationship with her brothers and sisters.

awareness context A concept developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in Awareness of Dying (1965), to facilitate analysis of ‘the total combination of what each interactant in a situation knows about the identity of the other
and his own identity in the eyes of the other’, and in this way to aid understanding of the social organization of knowledge and awareness.

**axiom (axiomatic)** An axiom is an assumption, postulate, universally received principle, or self-evident truth. Most sociological theories rest on one or more undemonstrated axioms, for example, that all human action is rational, or—as in the case of *Marxism*—that the class struggle is the motor of history. Some sociologists refer to such axiomatic beliefs as ‘domain assumptions’ or ‘metatheoretical beliefs’. Thus, for example, in *Metatheorizing in Sociology* (1991) the American sociologist George Ritzer takes social theories themselves as the object of study, classifying and comparing them to produce a history of sociology that traces the rise and demise of sociological paradigms and their central postulates.