

Programme:- Master in Sociology
Postgraduate Department of Sociology
Patna University, Patna

SEMESTER-II

Compulsory Paper:- C.C. 8 (Urban Sociology)
Unit II:- Theoretical Perspectives of Urban Sociology

Louis Wirth (1897-1952) U. of Chicago - micro-sociological

- Developed first urban theory in US, previous urban sociology comprised essentially descriptive studies
 - Focus on urbanism--urban lifestyle--more than on structure
 - Definition of city was that it was large, dense with permanent settlement and socially and culturally heterogeneous people, and so urbanism was a function of population density, size and heterogeneity:
- 1) ***Population size***: creates great diversity because large numbers of people coming together logically increase potential differentiation among themselves, and with migration of diverse groups to city; creates need for formal control structures, e.g. legal systems; supports proliferation of further complex division of labour specialization; organizes human relationships on interest-specific basis, i.e. "social segmentalization", where secondary relationships are primary, in essence urban ties are relationships of utility; creates possibility of disorganization and disintegration
 - 2) ***Population density***: intensifies effects of large population size on social life; manifests quality of separateness, e.g. economic forces and social processes produce readily identifiable distinct neighbourhood, "ecological specialization"; fosters a loss of sensitivity to more personal aspects of others, instead tendency to stereotype and categorize; results in greater tolerance of difference but at same time physical closeness increases social distance; may increase antisocial behaviour
 - 3) ***Population heterogeneity***: with social interaction among many personality types results in breakdown of the rigidity of caste lines and complicates class structure, thus increased social mobility; with social mobility tend to have physical mobility; leads to further depersonalization with concentration of diverse people.

Ernest Burgess' Concentric Zone Theory

- Cities grow and develop outwardly in concentric circles, i.e. continuous outward process of invasion/succession
- The jobs, industry, entertainment, administrative offices, etc. were located at the center in the CBD.
- Felt that zone development resulted from competitive processes, i.e. competition for best location in the city and

Zones:

1. Commercial center
2. Zone of transition
3. Working class residences
4. Middle class residences
5. Commuter zone

Homer Hoyt's Sector Theory (1939)

- City develops not in concentric circles, but in sectors
 - Each sector characterized by different economic activities
 - The entire city can be thought of as a circle and various neighborhoods as sectors radiating out from the center of that structure. These factors or principles direct residential expansion:
- 1) High grade residential areas tend to originate near retail and office centers.
 - 2) High grade residential growth tends to proceed from the given point of origin, along established lines of travel or toward existing retail office centers.
 - 4) High rent areas tend to grow towards areas which have open space beyond the city and away from sections enclosed by natural or artificial boundaries.

- 5) Higher priced residential areas tend to grow towards the homes of leaders in the community.
- 6) The movement of office buildings, banks and stores tends to pull higher priced residential neighborhoods in the same general direction.
- 7) High rent neighborhoods continue to grow in the same direction for a long time.
- 8) Deluxe high rent apartment areas tend to gradually appear in older residential areas near the business center (gentrification, downtown condos and high rent lofts).
- 9) Real estate developers may bend the direction of high grade residential growth, but they cannot develop an area before its time or in another direction very easily.

Harris and Ullman's Multiple Nuclei Theory (1945; more advanced stage of urbanization):

- Cities do not have a single center, but have many "minicenters"
- Similar activities locate in the same area and create minicities within the larger city
- Distribution of housing of certain type and value along communication corridors
- Topography: higher land, better (more expensive) housing
- Effect of adjacent land on housing quality
- Certain areas/activities tend to locate where they are most: effective, desirable and financially feasible

More contemporary research has since found that:

- tolerance in the city is more dependent upon levels of education and wealth and regional differences in US
- anonymity and privacy are important to city dwellers encouraging a live and let live attitude

- many bonds override anonymity, e.g. ethnic bonds, kinship, occupation, lifestyle, other shared interests, with cities encouraging alternative types of relationships
- technological advances stimulate urban connectedness, e.g. telephone, email
- proliferation of voluntary associations has provided areas for the establishment of primary relationships of urbanites
- people's perceived needs for space are a learned behaviour not biological basis
- urban pathology has other probable causes, e.g. poverty, unemployment, racial discrimination
- humans have a superior ability to adapt
- relationship between stress and mental and physical pathology is dependent not so much on the nature of the stress but on the individual's perception of it
- there is a difference between public demeanour and private lives of city dwellers.