



19.ASSESSMENT

Self-check Questions

1. Which characteristic of social structure is best exemplified by the persistence of the caste system in India over centuries, despite individual mobility within it and the changing lives of its members?

- a) It is an abstract and intangible phenomenon.
- b) It is not a monolithic whole but made up of parts and sub-parts.
- c) It is relatively permanent through time.
- d) It is dynamic, but its basic form shows little change.

2. Herbert Spencer's analogy of society as a biological organism primarily highlights which aspect of social structure?

- a) The inherent conflict between social classes for resources.
- b) The independent and isolated nature of social institutions.
- c) The differentiation of parts (institutions) that perform specialized functions for the maintenance of the whole.
- d) The rapid and unpredictable changes in social norms.

3. According to Durkheim, which of the following is the defining feature of a "social fact" and, by extension, a key aspect of social structure?

- a) Its psychological dependence on individual consciousness.
- b) Its susceptibility to individual free will and choice.
- c) Its externality to the individual and its coercive power.
- d) Its purely symbolic and interpretive nature.

4. A social ecological understanding of social structure would most strongly critique which inherent assumption of traditional, overly rigid structural models?

- a) That social structure is entirely a product of individual agency.
- b) That social structure is inherently abstract and intangible.
- c) That social structure exists independently of its environmental context.
- d) That social structure is composed of interrelated parts.



5. When Durkheim described societies with mechanical solidarity, what was a primary characteristic of their social structure?
- a) High levels of individualism and specialized roles.
 - b) Integration based on interdependence among diverse parts.
 - c) Strong collective consciousness due to homogeneity and low division of labor.
 - d) Legal systems focused primarily on contracts and individual rights.
6. Radcliffe-Brown would argue that the "functional unity" of social structure implies that every part of a society must always contribute positively to its overall stability.
7. The statement "social structure is an abstract and intangible phenomenon" implies that its effects on individuals are also intangible and cannot be empirically observed.
8. Herbert Spencer's concept of social evolution, as applied to social structure, suggested a progression from undifferentiated, simple forms to more complex, differentiated ones.
9. Durkheim believed that in societies characterized by organic solidarity, the "collective conscience" completely disappears, giving way entirely to individual autonomy.
10. One of the core characteristics of social structure is that its constituent parts can be fully explained and understood in isolation, without reference to the larger structure they belong to.

Answers to Self-Check Questions

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- 1. c) It is relatively permanent through time.
 - 2. c) The differentiation of parts (institutions) that perform specialized functions for the maintenance of the whole.
 - 3. c) Its externality to the individual and its coercive power.
 - 4. c) That social structure exists independently of its environmental context.
 - 5. c) Strong collective consciousness due to homogeneity and low division of labor.
 - 6. False
 - 7. False
 - 8. True



9. False

10. False

Short Answer Questions

Q1. Explain how the characteristic "Social structure is not merely the sum of its parts, but there is a definite arrangement between parts" is demonstrated by either Durkheim's concept of the division of labor or Spencer's idea of structural differentiation.

Q2. Based on Durkheim's work, briefly describe how a society transitioning from mechanical to organic solidarity would experience a change in its dominant form of social structure.

Q3. Distinguish between a "status" and a "role" as fundamental constituents of social structure, providing a brief example to illustrate how their interaction shapes the structure.

Long Answer Questions

Q1. Compare and contrast Herbert Spencer's organic analogy of social structure with Durkheim's concept of the social organism (particularly in societies with organic solidarity). Discuss the key similarities and differences in their understanding of how the parts of society relate to the whole and contribute to its stability.

Q2. Social structure is relatively permanent through time, yet it is not static but dynamic." Discuss this seemingly contradictory characteristic in detail. Use examples to illustrate how social structures can maintain their basic form over long periods while simultaneously undergoing continuous, subtle changes that adapt them to evolving circumstances.