THE SOCIAL FACT

RALF DAHRENDORF

CLASS AND CLASS CONFLICT IN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY (1959)

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Sivarajavel IAS Academy 's

THE SOCIAL FACT
 is a monthly bulletin for sociology current affairs which tries to give aspirants a new dimensions in their sociology preparations. The Magazine has been designed in such away that the reading experience is enriching and insightful for the readers.

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HEAD OFFICE
No.97, AF Block, Shanthi Colony, 12th Main Road,
Anna nagar West, Chennai – 600 040
Ph: 9626364444

TIRUNELVELI
No.106B, 3rd floor, Gilgal Complex, VOC ground opposite,
Palayamkottai - 627 002.
Ph: 9626252500

TRICHY
No.143, 4th Floor,Lakshmi Complex, Salai Road,
Thillai Nagar, Trichy - 620 018.
Ph: 9751500300 / 9786500300

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INSIDE THIS SOCIOLOCIAL BULLETIN

Connecting the dots :
Sociology is a process in making. Everyday newspapers and weekly have many important news, which have sociological angle in subtle form. This chapter helps you to connect those dots and give a clear picture of the reality.

Sociology Explained :
World is one for sociology. Many authors explains social problems and social changes in length and breath through their research. This chapter collects and compiles those articles which are related to our syllabus.

Perspectives :
Beauty of Sociology, as a social science, is its capacity to offer different perspectives of a same topic. This chapter analyses a current topic with an unique social perspectives.

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CONNECTING THE DOTS

- *A Class 11 student in Uttar Pradesh was allegedly beaten up by his school principal after he drank water from a bottle kept on a table. A case has been registered against seven persons, including the principal, under Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act :* **Ambedkar through his work "Annihilation of caste " says how marginalisation is legitimised in order to sustain the dominance of the 'upper castes'. He advocated that people belonging to the 'lower castes' can achieve parity with other members of the society only when they build self-respect, get educated.**

- *In 2022, start ups like Byjus, Ola, Unacademy, Vedantu, Chargebee, White hat jr, announced lay-offs. The reasons included restructuring, cost-cutting, automation among others but the most important reason for the mass lay-offs is the lack of unions for the employees in the start ups:* **unions are typically associated with manual labour, while IT employees are associated with "elitism" and "professionalism". They have competitive compensation pay packages, supposedly good conditions of work and a mechanism to address grievances.**

- *The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) on Monday evaded a direct question from Odisha's Congress MP, Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka, on the number of requests for Scheduled Tribe status pending with the Union government and appropriate authorities :* **Sociologists like Xaxa criticised the government for their lack of efforts towards the upliftment of tribals. Former Tribal Affairs Secretary Hrusikesh Panda also said that the existing procedure for scheduling was too "cumbersome" and "defeats the Constitutional agenda of affirmative action and inclusion".**

- *40% of the world's 60 million child marriages take place in India according to the National Family Health Survey. India has the 14th highest rate of child marriage in the world, according to the International Center for Research on Women :* **Despite the efforts by various Governments and civil societies, this social menace still exists. Child marriage is a complex issue. It is rooted in gender inequality and the belief that girls and women are inferior to boys and men. It is made worse by poverty, lack of education, harmful social norms and practices, and insecurity and amplified by Patriarchy.**

- *The Delhi High Court has stayed proceedings under the Protection of Women against Domestic Violence Act in a case where a man moved a local court accusing his wife of adultery, taking a prima facie view that protection under the DV Act is not available to the husband :* **It is justified by the concept of positive discrimination towards vulnerable communities, Diluting the original intent of the act will help in aggravating the violence against women as Crimes against women in India increased by 15.3 per cent in 2021, according to recently-released NCRB data.**

- *As per All India Survey on Higher Education data, Student enrolments went up by 7.5% in 2020-21 but proportion of SC, OBC, Muslim enrolments down compared to the previous year; number of colleges increased by 1,453; teachers belonging to SC and ST communities continued to be under-represented; 75 women teachers to every 100 male ones across institutes in country :* **Andre Beteille finds out that there is a gender, caste regional gaps in the educational consumption in India. Yogendra Singh considers that education has been operating as a vehicle for the rise of modern India.**

- *Shumang Leela is a traditional form of theatre in Manipur where the roles of women are all played by men, called Nupi Shabis. In the case of women's theatre groups, the roles of men are played by women. Shumang Leela translates to "courtyard performance". It is performed in an open courtyard surrounded by spectators on all four sides :* **A gender bender is a person who dresses up and presents themselves in a way that defies societal expectations of their gender, especially as the opposite sex**

- *Many tens of thousands of Israelis took to the streets in mass rallies on Saturday evening against the government's legislative efforts to dramatically weaken the High Court of Justice and secure political control over judicial appointments :* **The new politics moves away from people relying upon elites to represent them. In the new politics, social movements encourage everyone to become involved in campaigns over certain issues. The members of new social movements are often suspicious of leaders and want to retain democratic control over their own organizations.**

- *The study of 129,826 young adult men living in four cities -- Chicago, Philadelphia, New York City and Los Angeles -- in 2020 and 2021 found that men ages 18 to 29 in the most violent zip code of Chicago and Philadelphia faced a higher risk of firearm-related homicide than US soldiers who were deployed to Afghanistan :* **Gun Violence is the most prevalent social issue in USA, among many reasons the presence of strong lobby behind the laws, is what preventing the state to take action against the violence. (Pressure groups influence in politics)**

- *Young singles campaign for politically aligned love on dating apps. Beyond listing one's political affiliation, some users are more explicit about it in their bios. In a dropdown menu option, one user lists "talk Marxism for hours" as an activity to do together :* **Influence of Politics in the family life. Family as an institution lost various functions to others institutions like Schools, Care home, government. Now the politics also taking some other functions such as emotions, away from family.**

- *Twitter's Considering Charging Brands $1,000 Per Month for its New Gold Checkmark and for the individuals twitter is planning to charge ₹650 per month in India for the Blue tick :* **In twitter blue tick is used for authentication in practical purpose but latent way it is seen as a social status. Now by charging an amount for that features, social status are now dictated by the economic power. In other words commodification of social status is happening in social media.**

- *Experts say that it could also hinder the student's ability to solve their own problems. Chat GPT could be a worry for the teachers as it would leave no room for creativity :* **The above opinion is the dysfunctional aspect of the chatGPT(Learning illiteracy) but if we speak from Functional aspect, chatGPT is the replication of how social changes affects education. In modern society people are no longer need to solve problems manually like how Einstein like scientists did in 19-20th century, so chatGPT is mere extension of that sophistication.**

- *On February 25, the students and the officials of the University of Delhi (DU) will wear the Indian angavastra, a stole-like garment draped over the shoulders, at the 99th convocation ceremony, instead of the typical black robes :* **Religious revivalism is a well known concept. The above incident is the example of cultural revivalism in the society. Cultural revivalism refers to the formation of group identity around a common culture, where a claim is forwarded that the aspects of culture with which the group identifies have been recovered after losses due to colonization, forced or voluntary relocation, oppression, or modernization.**

- *As Chennai-based The Cherian Foundation turns 20, its popular wig donation campaign enters its 10th year, with about 1,500 cancer patients benefiting from it so far. All the accumulated hair is then washed, treated, woven into wigs and given free of cost to cancer patients from underprivileged families. :* **Here, Civil societies acts as a moral support for the vulnerable people. The idea of civil society can be understood as intersecting emotions, discourses and practices and can add to the body of scholarly work that nurtures and values everyday life as a lens through which to view wider social processes.**

A PICTURE TO PONDER

*"What is a village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance,
narrow mindedness, caste and communalism"
~ Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.*

SOCIOLOGY EXPLAINED

BRANDING RACISM

Paper 1: Stratification and Mobility

Paper 1: Dimensions: Stratification based on race

In Sociology, we often talk about how race is a social construct. Rather than being a fixed system of classification rooted in biological difference, racial difference is (and has always been) created through social interactions, policy, and cultural meaning-making. Who is included in specific racial categories is fluid and context-dependent, constantly shifting over time. Medical and biological scientists are increasingly beginning to agree with this sociological understanding of race. For something allegedly rooted so firmly in genetics, there is surprisingly little evidence to suggest that race is a good measure for genetic heterogeneity.

When we contend that race is a social construct, we can start noticing the ways in which race and racial difference are constantly being negotiated, (re)defined, and solidified by social processes and institutions. How corporations brand and advertise their products is a particularly interesting way in which meaning-making happens around racial difference. As they market their products to consumers through advertising, corporations attach social meanings to their products.

A shoe brand doesn't sell shoes just because people need shoes; rather, the brand sells shoes because they convince consumers that there is a desirable lifestyle associated with the shoes (e.g., a life of being active, free, "cool", or rebellious). In this sense, brands both reflect our cultural marketplace and influence what we think is desirable and how we create meaning. Race has long been an issue in advertising, branding, and other forms of public meaning-making. Popular representations of racial difference, such as images seen in advertisements, serve to enhance and stabilize the distinctions we place around racial groups and to naturalize racial difference. An illustrative example of this is this McDonald's advertisement from the 1970s. At the time, companies were trying to broaden their consumer base and began including Black Americans in advertisements to appeal to more diverse audiences. In the McDonald's ad, the text under an image of a Black family enjoying a meal at one of their restaurants says "Do your dinnertimin' at McDonald's" – an obvious and stereotypical appeal to African American vernacular of the time.

More recently, Quaker Oats announced they would change their 130-year old brand of "Aunt Jemima Syrup" which had featured an image of a Black woman. After public criticism, Quaker Oats was forced to grapple with the fact that their brand's origin was based on the "mammy" racial stereotype – an enslaved woman often depicted as heavy set, bossy, and fiercely dedicated to her White household. Ads and brands like these, and the stereotypes they are embedded in, are representations of racial difference that feed into and help solidify the racial hierarchy and classification system. Brands and advertisements have also contributed to racial meanings through their depictions of White people. For example, Abercrombie & Fitch are notorious for the ways in which their advertisements have focused on selling not just clothes but an image of elite whiteness as desirable and something to strive for.

As Dwight McBride argues in his book on the topic, the company effectively made a brand out of White privilege and commodified it as a desirable lifestyle that consumers could attain by purchasing their clothing. Images in catalogues and other advertisements almost exclusively showed extremely fit, attractive, White models described as "All American" and as having "natural beauty" – completely erasing any ethnic or racial diversity in the U.S. The brand's reverence for whiteness was also evident in their discriminatory hiring practices for store attendants, which ultimately led to a class-action lawsuit that reached a $40 million settlement.

Sadly, excluding people of color from advertisements is not unique to Abercrombie & Fitch. In a recent study of the product catalogues from two of the most prominent electric guitar brands in the U.S. between 1955-1982, Ali Chaudhary finds that Black people were systematically excluded from product images; despite the fact that Black celebrity guitarists popularized the instrument during this time. The article, published earlier this year in Sociological Forum, argues that these advertisements are reflective of the racist, segregationist ideas around racial hierarchy and difference that were widely circulating in that era. In featuring almost exclusively White guitarists and associating electric guitars with White masculinity, the prominent Black guitarists who shaped much of the music at the time were rendered non-existent and irrelevant to the music industry.

What these examples all show is that just about any commodity can be branded and advertised in ways that play into racist stereotypes and serve to solidify Whites' standing in the racial hierarchy. While corporations may seem to be becoming more socially aware these days, much is still left to do to ensure that people of color have fair and positive representation in not just the advertisements themselves but also the creative process behind them.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF LUCK

Paper 1:   Scope of the subject and comparison with other social sciences

We say good luck to each other in everyday life. We have expressions like "Better to be lucky than good" and "See a penny pick it up, all day long you'll have good luck." To explain the misfortune of a loved one, we sympathetically remark: "If it wasn't for bad luck, they'd have no luck at all." We might explain our favorite team losing a game because "that's the way the ball bounces," suggesting it was a matter of bad luck, or that the opposing team won because they caught a lucky break. Luck means something to us. This article is by Todd Schoepflin who explains Sociology of luck and ask some thought-provoking questions like Do you think the sociology of luck matters for our understanding of social class inequality? What are ways we can study luck that you can think of? Are there expressions that refer to luck, or lucky symbols, that are meaningful to you? What examples of luck can you identify from your life?

I've been more aware of songs and expressions that mention luck since reading the article "A Sociology of Luck" by Michael Sauder, published in Sociological Theory in 2020. Luck is part of our popular culture and in our social interactions, but one place it barely exists is in sociology. In sociology, we don't really talk about luck. For Sauder, this omission is an oversight. We can understand why luck isn't a part of our sociological analysis. Sociology is a social science. I mean, you can't measure luck. But it's relevant to an understanding of our experiences and how we explain inequality.

Think of our usual narrative in American society about how individuals succeed or fail. Within our individualistic culture, we lean on the meritocratic frame. You worked hard, scrapped, hustled, and persevered. You relied on talent and ingenuity. Grit and determination made a difference. You earned, and now own, your success. Those who haven't succeeded just need to work harder. If they don't make it, they don't have enough ability or work ethic. But how accurate is it to mainly explain our fortunes and misfortunes through the frames of hard work and persistence? Sauder writes:

If sociology fails to acknowledge the importance of luck (however important we determine this importance to be) or offer luck as a framework for understanding differential outcomes, meritocratic frames stand on firmer ground. Why is luck excluded from sociological analysis? In sociology, we focus on structural causes of inequality and emphasize how we are shaped by our social environment. We examine the impact of our opportunities, networks, resources, and institutions. As Sauder says, "the influence of luck is at odds with the field's emphasis on structures and institutions; the untamed randomness of luck is often seen as antithetical to the search for social patterns"

But luck is a part of our social world and is worth studying. We can explore people's perceptions of luck and how people apply the idea of luck to make sense of their everyday lives and their social world. So, what does Sauder mean by a lucky event or occurrence? He says, "I define a lucky event or occurrence as one that involves chance, is consequential (either beneficial or harmful), and is at least partially outside the control of the person or people affected by it". I agree with Sauder when he says we are subject to events outside of our control that in some way shape our life experiences. For example, I agree with him when he says we have no control over a tornado that damages our home and property. And we can recognize the luck that is required by the life changing outcome of winning a big lottery.

As a personal example of luck, I can think of a time I could've been in a serious car accident. I was idle at a stoplight when a car came around a bend at an extremely high speed. They just missed hitting me. In my side view mirror I saw the car spin out of control and roll over. Later, I saw a news report that the person was fleeing police. Wasn't I lucky that they didn't hit me? In some cases it could be skilled driving that prevents a car accident, but wouldn't it sometimes be a matter of luck?

One of my favorite points Sauder makes in the article is that those who are higher up in the social class system are more able to absorb the impact of an unlucky event. Luck has a way of revealing one's social class position. He gives us good examples to consider. Suppose your child gets sick and the next day you lose your job. Or you fall on the ice and suffer a serious injury. For a lower income person without savings and health insurance, such events could be devastating. But they might only be temporary setbacks for those who have sufficient economic resources, health insurance, and access to good quality jobs. Another point he makes that I appreciate is how much it matters when a person enjoys a lucky success early in their career. In other words, the timing of luck matters greatly. This was certainly the case for me.

At the beginning of my career in academia, at Niagara University, I was plugging along as an adjunct in multiple departments and then had a series of one-year teaching appointments in the Criminal Justice department. I longed for a tenure-track position in the sociology department. But it was a tiny department, with only two full-time Sociology faculty members. What were the chances that someone would leave, or retire? And then suddenly, to my surprise, there were two openings, and I was hired for one of them. Many times, in accounting for my own situation, I've said "right place, right time" but when I think of it now, isn't that just another way of saying I was lucky?

Sure, I had the credentials to be considered, and I had support from colleagues and administration to get the job. But two jobs coming available at the start of my career at a place five minutes from where I grew up where my friends and family live, in a profession in which tenure-track jobs are on the decline and difficult to secure in sociology? I'd say that's pretty lucky. It'd be wrong for me to claim it was totally hard work and persistence that got me where I am today. My career story is one of work, help, mentorship, opportunity, and luck.

If we were to study luck, how might we do so? Sauder suggests good questions to explore. We can ask people if they see luck as an important factor in their own life and in other people's successes and failures. Do perceptions of luck vary by employment status, or political affiliation, or type of job? Do people agree or disagree with an expression such as "you make your own luck"? Are people inclined to recognize luck as being a part of sports and other games more so than in job pursuits or other contests related to economic status? If so, why?

Before ending, I want to say something about agency. Agency is an important idea in sociology. As Sauder points out, it is often viewed as the countervailing force to social structure. We have power and decision-making ability, and we exert influence on our social structures. We don't want to say our behavior is completely determined by structural forces. Sauder encourages us to consider to what extent agency and luck intermingle. He writes: "Chance influences the very thoughts and actions of individuals to whom we attribute agency…Factors based on luck are interwoven with the attributes that we associate with and sometimes even define as agency" His point is we should think about how luck interacts with structure and agency.

RITUALS, RITES, AND HABITS

Paper 1:   Sociology as Science

Paper 2: Robert K. Merton - Ritualism

What distinguishes a ritual from a habit? This is a question that I return to at the end of each calendar year as many seasonal traditions play out privately and publicly. How is a ritual more than just a shared habit? If a habit is an individual behavior that results in some sort of reward, a ritual is a shared pattern of behaviors; we might think of habits as residing within the realm of psychology and rituals within sociology. Both habits and rituals can be meaningful to those who perform them and bring a range of rewards, or they might be automatic and something we don't give much thought to either way.

Holiday season is filled with rituals, regardless of what specific holiday(s) one might celebrate. Here are just a few examples of commonly practiced rituals: 1.Having a feast with specific foods each year 2. Gathering with family and/or close friends for said feast, often involving travel. 3. Listening to holiday-themed music.4. Holiday-themed decorations. 5. Shopping for gifts. 6. Exchanging gifts. 7. Sending and receiving cards in the mail, often with photos or updates of highlights from the sender's previous year. Rituals typically serve a social function; if we think about the rituals listed above, they mainly connect people with one another, often people who are not part of one's day-to-day life. This might be the one time of the year where people see family members that they are not particularly close to or have much in common with. As a result, another ritual has emerged: complaining about having to see family during the holidays, leading to a host of tips for how to deal with one's racist uncle at Thanksgiving.

Just because a ritual exists, it doesn't mean we all enjoy it or even get anything out of it. While some people certainly do—even if it is just because it connects them back to a memory of a time when they enjoyed these rituals—some people might find these rituals empty and not personally meaningful. Sociologist Robert Merton wrote about what he called ritualism, where we don't necessarily buy into the celebrated goals of society but still go through the motions nonetheless. It seems likely that many people are at best ambivalent about the holiday season. A 2019 poll found that the majority of respondents (88 percent) thought that they holiday season was the most stressful time of the year. More than half within this poll were concerned about the financial stress that often comes with gift exchanges and gatherings.

In a 2021 Experience Camps/Harris Poll, more than one in three Americans surveyed said they did not feel like celebrating the holidays this year. The poll found that 42 percent of 18-24-year-olds and 52 percent of 25-40-year-olds reported that they did not want to celebrate, largely due to feelings of grief. So back to my original question: are celebrating "the holidays" at the end of the year a set of shared rituals that connect us to one another, or for a lot of people, habits that we don't give much thought to (or both)? There isn't one answer to this question; for many people these are important rituals that help them feel close to others, manage the rhythm of life events and the calendar year, and provide reasons to get together. Many people (but not all) have time off work and the end of the year can be a break from the normal routine. Others might have mixed feelings, enjoying some aspects of the season, but say, wishing that the pressure to buy gifts for others was lessened, or preferring not to see ads for holiday-related shopping in late October. Some might just assume ignore the whole thing.

The end-of-year holidays reflect the sociological concept of cultural scripts: ways of behaving that are expected of us in specific social contexts. Thinking critically about these cultural scripts, especially aspects of these scripts that cause stress or unhappiness, might help us sort out if we want to keep practicing particular rituals.

In some cases, we might feel as though we don't have a choice—rituals are social, not just personal. For instance, not going to a family member's holiday gathering could have serious ramifications that are larger than just one meal. Extenuating circumstances, like having to travel a long distance, illness, or in COVID times, concerns about possible exposure, can reduce the pressure to conform to such cultural scripts.

The holiday season and the break from the past that the COVID pandemic brings may give us an opportunity to decide which rituals each of us want to keep, and which have become habits that we might want to leave behind; these decisions are both personal and social.

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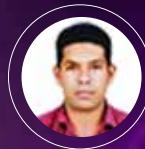
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MEDIA AND ITS COVERAGE OF "VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN"

Paper 1 : Dimensions : Gender

Paper 2 : Violence against women

There is a familiar pattern of reporting crimes against women. The pattern does not highlight the structural ways in which these crimes become more probable. Instead, it sensationalises the crimes, highlighting the individual case details in a manner of resounding middle-class families of the threats of Westernised modernity. The gruesome murder of Shraddha Walker has yet again laid bare the familiar patterns of news reporting violence against women. The underlying message of such reporting has implications of how women experience risk, choices and urban spaces in India. This article, written by Smriti Singh in EPW, engages with the issue of news media reporting of violent crimes against women and discusses the larger implications of media framing for women and the society. News coverage of crimes against women is not reporting on structural ways that crimes against women become more probable. Instead, they are appealing to the middle-class fathers watching the news coverage. The strategy to do this is simple, invoke symbols of consumption (consumer goods) that the fathers (providers) can most associate with their daughters. Crudely, fathers are being drawn into the news coverage by subtle messaging of scooty and mobile phones as purchases that they have thought about in the context of their daughters.

Further, city spaces and night time are invoked as active participants in the crime that one cannot negotiate against but only accommodate. The coverage achieves fearmongering among the patriarchs of the family (inspiring greater control and surveillance in the name of safety) by highlighting how "unsafe" and non-negotiable the outside (city/street) is as opposed to the controlled space of the home. This makes the whole discourse about meeting increasingly unsafe cities and aggressively controlled-surveilled homes for women. The excruciating examination of the victim's choices (a shift from an examination of her dress and company) is speaking to the middle-class patriarch about how naïve and incapable their daughter is of making good choices, and how the choices of a daughter must be carefully supervised for them to be protected. This becomes a father (protector) against all the other men, a cultural trope celebrating "daddy's little girl." The coverage, even about crimes against women, is masculinist.

Media attention to reporting and coverage of crimes against women in India has been one of the hard-fought battles of the women's movement during the 1980s. The recognition for heterosexual violence on women and the demand for legal remedies did the hard task of making visible crimes against women in public discourse through the medico-legal framework Perhaps a carryover effect of this medico-legal framing of violence is reflected in the news media but sparingly, if ever cited experts or organisations working on issues of gender-based violence News channels were state-sponsored and restricted themselves to a factual while restrained coverage. The political control and censorship of news media during this time were a matter of great debate. Post-liberalisation India reimagined everything from news, audience, context and importantly the new modern Indian woman.

Not only was India being imagined through the globalised lens of consumerism and individuality but news media had also importantly transformed from being a "state's mouthpiece" to one being run as a business model. This had important consequences in the manner in which we came to understand what we call news and reporting. In this new model of news media, editorial and advertising functions were merged and targeted advertising and tracking consumer activity became the primary ways of driving "sales" or revenue. The situation has only worsened with the emergence of social media which competes with media channels as a source of information and broadcast The resulting competition further pressures the news media to pander even more aggressively to popular discourse (uncritically) to keep viewers happy.

This is where it ties up with post-liberalisation modern India and its modern Indian women. The viewership comprises an India that is ready to claim its rightful position in the world while simultaneously reconciling with what that might mean for gender roles and the Indian woman. The desire to be competitive and modern, like the modern and advanced West, creates anxieties of Western influences on Indian women. This is reflected in a mediated position of "respectable modernity" and respectable femininity espoused for the modern Indian woman, who adheres to patriarchal expectations of being a dutiful daughter while making her mark in the globalised economy. This provides a happy departure from the Western modernity and its corrupting influence on young girls imagined by the new India.

As a result, pandering means mourning the "daughter(s)" who were consuming, educated and ready to participate in the world economy, awaiting their marriage (fixed by their parents) as ideal victims. The other route reporting takes, to keep its viewership hooked, is to poke at the fears and anxieties of Western-inf-luenced modern woman, along the lines of "look what happens when you choose live-in arrangement in defiance of the parental control."

This kind of strategy goes a bit further in stoking at the fears and anxieties by employing shock value of disturbing details when reporting crimes against women. The media coverage individualises each crime as a case study of choices and consequences of the new Indian woman, unconstrained and free. Such a coverage is meant to appeal to the existing anxieties of masses about their uneasy relationship with modernity and gender in news media, where structures are imagined to have become insignificant—for reporting on crimes against women, certainly. This amounts to cherry-picking and selective mourning of ideal victims (mostly savarna, middle-class, educated women in their sexual primes) while stories of non-ideal victims fall through the cracks. These disturbing patterns of media coverage of crimes against women have bec-ome glaring in the wake of Shraddha Walker's gruesome murder by her live-in partner, when such similar crimes (of women's bodies chopped by the murderer) in the same month did not garner this kind of sensationalist language and attention.

What Is Too Much Detail?

My phone has been buzzing for days with every single development in this case. What the live-in partner did days after her murder, how was she murdered, what were the partner's water bills and refrigerator purchased, how many pieces were she chopped into, what did she say on her IM chat to her manager, what did the father do when the partner confessed his crime. News media coverage, both print and broadcast, at this point, feels less like news and more like a crime drama. The frenzied coverage of every aspect of the crime by news media outlets offering sensationalised details about the crime is unlike the coverage of any other crime, especially those committed in the same week. This level of toxic interest in the details can be seen in only two instances, when it involves celebrities (especially women) and when the crimes against women are brutal or when it can be politicised to service a larger ideological agenda.

Such a coverage of disturbing details and headlines meant to trigger shock and anxiety panders itself to masculine anxiety about the new Indian women. It frames the modern Indian young woman through what Laura Mulvey had termed the male gaze of patriarchal spectatorship, that is, women are framed through a lens of male gaze that scrutinises every choice and action. How much detail is too much detail when reporting on a crime that is violent and brutal? Absolutely no guidelines limit this predatory, voye-uristic gaze of the coverage of violent crimes against women in India. And, their empathising with the mourning father or reconstructing her life choices as naïve or ill-informed does not make obsessing on details not voyeuristic. It was true when the details of the 2012 Delhi gang-rape case were being obsessively shared by the news media, it was true of the Hathras rape case (where the middle class only became empathetic-enraged when the mourning father were invoked). At this point, the lack of appropriate regulation or at least some guidelines limiting graphic disclosures of brutality and violence against women become glaringly obvious. Almost as obvious as the need for a discussion on the role that news media coverage of crimes against women plays in setting the threshold of speech and acts of violence.

In the wake of the 2012 Delhi gang rape, a promotional photo shoot by a Mumbai photographer infamously drew upon the case as an inspiration. Soon after, a five-year old was gang-raped and murdered near Delhi which mimicked the brutality of the 2012 case. What role did this obsessive coverage, of brutality in the 2012 case, play in shaping this crime? Was it a mere coincidence? What role did it play in setting the threshold of shock value and in lowering the threshold of fear at which we operate? The case never made it to the feverish pitch of reporting that the 2012 Delhi case did. The reason perhaps, it happened too soon after and the news channels were fatigued by voyeuristic coverage and did not find anything new to obsess over.

There is an urgent need for discussion on the obsessive-voyeuristic coverage of crimes against women who do not want to report a crime but instead use women's bodies to build a culture of fear. The coverage's other obsession has become more sophisticated now. We are not the sexists who discuss what she was wearing or who she was with (unless she is a woman of "less honour"). So, instead, we painstakingly discuss her choices: Why did Walker not leave? Why did she not tell her parents/police? Why did she come to Delhi? Did she not go against her parents' wish to live with this boy? She made a mistake in falling in love with a Muslim boy. This is why modern educated women should not choose live-in relationships. This is what happens when girls do not listen to their parents and fall in love. This is why marriages are better than living-in.

Victim-blaming is now focused on drawing up the hierarchy of choices and presenting adult women as naïve, unsuspecting, incapable of making safe choices, and needing guidance from father figures. The news media coverage is not concerned about making choices safer for women but highlighting how making independent choices comes at a cost to women. The cost cannot be mitigated in any way and therefore is an unchangeable fact. As a result, women must make independent choices circumscribed by the costs they may have. There is zero deliberation on how must state and society structurally support women's independent choices instead of making them vulnerable. News media coverage is playing up her choice to live-in with her murderer. Such coverage is, of course, incident-focused and suffers from selective amnesia that can account for an increasing trend of murder (including abetment to suicide, dowry murder, caste-based rape-murder) as a crime against women The lack of a support structure for the victim is not the focus of her vulnerability. The focus instead is her choice of living-in.

Initial news media reports mentioned that Walker's family had cut all ties with her when she had decided to live-in with her partner, because they disapproved of her choice. The father was contacted by a friend as he was concerned about having had no contact with her for a long time. The father only got to know of suspicious circumstances in October 2022. The news media coverage selectively chose to stay silent about the fact that her family had stopped all communication with her because she chose her partner.

The family's refusal to support their daughter's choice or, least of all, provide her with the social support that a family must owe their children, increased her vulnerability. The fact that she has nowhere to return to, and admitting that she made a mistake to her parents would have meant personal costs, and hence further entrapped her in an abuse intimate partner relationship. In a culture where making mistakes is a privilege owed only to sons, girls face immense pressure to justify their choices so as to not be further patronised and shamed.

What says that a similar pressure to "live with the consequences of one's choice" in the face of such a strong family disapproval did not make her susceptible? Additionally, nowhere has the news media coverage discussed the provision for counselling and legal support from the crime against women cell, for those who face intimate partner violence at the hands of their live-in partners. In the Walker case, the victim had reported the fear of violent death in 2020, and despite that, there was no one to reach out to or seek help from the state bodies. The lack of support structures for live-in couples combined with the rampant social stigma against living-in has meant that instances of intimate partner violence are inadequately dealt with. For women facing intimate partner violence, the choice is between staying silent or facing stigma and judgment, and most women choose the former over the latter. The susceptibility that comes from silence is a major factor in an escalating pattern of violence against women.

'Mourning Dad'

Nowhere is the patriarchal patronising of women more glaring than in the news media coverage of the mourning father's grief, loss and sentimentality. Walker's father's reaction to hearing her partner confess has been given dedicated space. His disapproval of his daughter's partner (with a generous helping of Islamophobia), his grief, the confirmation of his fears about his disappeared daughter, and the pain of realising how brutally his daughter was killed have all been amply covered by news media. The discourse predictably paints this to be a father versus the other man. The two men are being painted in contrast of the mourning father versus the heartless and cold love interest.

The coverage has repeatedly focused on the father versus love interest of the woman angle. How the unrelated man hurt the father seems to be the running discourse, with reporting focusing on how the father was a witness to daughter's partner confessing to the crime. The coverage at this point has less to do with the victim and more to do with her father, who is being presented as having been "right all along." An idea that should make all middle-class fathers more closely police the choices of their daughters and more aggressively oppose them in the name of protecting her. The news media selectively chose to gloss over the fact that her family was also unsupportive and a toxic space for her. The family's ex-communication of her contributed to her vulnerability by being left with no space or home to go back to.

But, it seems a lot easier to paint this as the loss of one father than as the failure of a state and society. The mourning dad's relatability with the spectator dads is an important criterion in featuring the mourning of the dad. There have been other dads of non-ideal victims like Dalit girls raped and murdered in the past year in Uttar Pradesh alone whose mourning (or being denied the ability to mourn) their loss has not stirred the media and their audience as much.

GREETINGS

Paper 1 : Sociology - The discipline

Human connection starts with a friendly smile and a warm hello. How does it feel to greet someone and not have the greeting returned? In this perspective article, Cornelia Mayr talks about how she understand 'Greetings' as a part of our society and its impact in the place we are living I regularly visit the local ladies' gym, and often have contact with mothers and grandmothers. One granny occasionally brings her five-year-old grandchild with her, a young girl who does not greet nor react to warm greetings. You might presume that the child is too shy to greet a stranger. Can you really be too shy to greet? Is it a must to greet people when we do not feel that we want to do so? The social greeting etiquette made me think of the meaning of this common ritual in everyday interactions.

Greeting is one of the basic functions of socialization and the first step in connecting to people at a more personal level. We do not typically think much of the intricacies of greeting behavior. When we pass an acquaintance at work, at the university, in the grocery store or in other public places, we exchange "passing greetings." We may simply nod our heads and say "Hello!" "Good afternoon!" "Good morning!" or "Good evening!" (Depending on the time of the day). We may state a trivial question meant to be a friendly greeting, such as "How are you?" "How was your weekend?" When meeting someone for the first time we may respond with "it's a pleasure to meet you" or "it's nice to meet you," sometimes accompanied by a polite handshake (or elbow bump). Everyday life is full of many more ways to greet someone; these examples cover just the tip of the iceberg.

Sociologists try to understand the meanings and differences in greetings among various cultures, age groups, gender relations, hierarchies, and levels of familiarity. They observe specific situations and ask what makes a person choose a certain greeting over another. What forms of greetings are considered (in) appropriate for use in formal or informal situations and why? Early approaches to study greeting rituals can be found in Adam Kendon's film and video observations. As greetings "have an important function in the management of relations between people, Erving Goffman refers to these rituals as "supportive interchanges" Another way to contemplate greeting norms is the following: consider some of the ways in which these supportive units of social interaction are challenged. Try to use a different greeting every time you meet someone. What social sanctions did you encounter when you failed to greet someone properly? It is through these incidences of norm breaking that we can see the (un)spoken "little ceremonies of greeting and farewell," according to Goffman

Now let me return to the questions at the beginning: Can you be too shy to greet? Is it a must to greet people when we do not feel to do so? In his book, Norbert Elias points to civilizing processes and teaches us the modes of learned cultivated human behavior and manners. Elias used historical etiquette books of Germany, France, England, and Italy which, from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century onwards, gave guidance about codes of conduct that were socially acceptable among the middle and upper classes. These "manners books" told how to behave properly within specific situations in order to avoid physical and social penalties. Many codes of conduct have become more demanding standards of emotional self-control. People developed stronger internalized self-restraints and intensified the control over their emotions. Elias originally referred to this as the "pleasure balance," indicating the tension between the socially necessary self-control and the gratification of one's individual desires

The cultivated and refined manners are especially relevant to a discussion of the ways people manage their emotions in order to be polite and act in socially desired ways. Much like we learn how to behave properly, we learn what and how to feel properly. How our emotional knowledge is acquired and experienced is shaped by processes of socialization. A famous example of emotional socialization present Arlie Hochschild's performance of "emotion work" and "feeling rules." For a greeting ritual to establish a good rapport, it must raise the level of controlled emotions that, in turn, positively affects the shared mood, mutual acknowledgement, and relationship. Conversely, when someone is just not in the mood for greeting, we break this rule of interaction.

Shyness, as Susie Scott defined, can be seen as a lack of "social skills" necessary to perform as the person or others would wish. In this sense, feeling too shy to greet can ostensibly challenge the social norm of a polite recognition or formal expression of goodwill. The shy person might simply be perceived by other as to "lack" the social and emotional skills to exchange a greeting. However, as Norbert Elias, Arlie Hochschild and Susie Scott's study indicate, we can learn tactics for disguising our emotions. The question of whether it is a must to greet when you do not feel to do so may arise other questions: do our emotions have agency? Can emotions be a reason and/or an excuse not to follow the proper rules of conduct? When and where do we categorize emotions and distinguish between acceptable, "civilized" and unacceptable, inappropriate emotions? Can you think of examples?

RALF DAHRENDORF

- Dahrendorf, (1 May 1929 – 17 June 2009) was a German-British sociologist, philosopher, political scientist, and liberal politician.

- Dahrendorf was a class conflict theorist who still represents one of the best efforts to incorporate the insights of Marx and Weber into a coherent set of theoretical propositions.

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- During his political career, he was a Member of the German Parliament and Parliamentary Secretary of State at the Foreign Office of Germany. He served as director of the London School of Economics as well

- Major works:
  Class and class conflict in Industrial Society (1959)
  Essays in the theory of society (1967)