**Introduction**

**What is Sociology?**

 Before attempting to define what sociology is, les us look at what the popular conceptions of the discipline seem. As may be the case with other sciences, sociology is often misconceived among the populace. Though many may rightly and grossly surmise that sociology is about people, some think that it is all about “helping the unfortunate and doing welfare work, while others think that sociology is the same as socialism and is a means of bringing revolution to our schools and colleges” (Nobbs, Hine and Flemming, 1978:1).

The first social scientist to use the term sociology was a Frenchman by the name of Auguste Comte who lived from 1798-1857. As coined by Comte, the term sociology is a combination of two words. The first part of the term is a Latin, socius- that may variously mean society, association, togetherness or companionship. The other word, logos, is of Greek origin. It literally means to speak about or word. However, the term is generally understood as study or science (Indrani, 1998). Thus, the etymological, literal definition of sociology is that it is the word or speaking about society. A simple definition here is that it is the study of society and culture.

Although the term “sociology” was first used by the French social philosopher august Comte, the discipline was more firmly established by such theorists as Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Max Weber (Nobbs, Hine and Flemming, 1978).

Before going any further, let us note that the concepts “society and “culture” are central in sociology. While each concept shall be dealt with later in some detail, it appears to be appropriate here to help students differentiate between these two important concepts. Society generally refers to the social world with all its structures, institutions, organizations, etc around us, and specifically to a group of people who live within some ype of bounded territory and who share a common way of life. This common way of life shared by a group of people is termed as culture (Stockard, 1997).