Chapter Two
METHODOLOGICAL PRE-SUPPOSITIONS

The data supplied by research, such as that which has enabled the cross-cultural survey given in the introductory chapter of this thesis, needs to be looked at through the prism of sociological theory if it is to become meaningful in this context. What has enabled scholarship to grow in the thickening 'forest' of contemporary research studies (sociological, anthropological, ethnological) on 'woman', is the development of the comparatively recent field of feminist sociological theory.

Feminist sociological theory has grown out of feminist theory in general. Feminism has a long history. From 1630 to around 1780, feminist writing appears as a thin but persistent trickle of protest; but from then onwards, feminist writing becomes a swelling tide of critical work involving increasing numbers of participants, and growing areas of critique. However, this growth has not been steady, since women as a vocal force are in a minority, and they have always found their protests subject to suppression by male interests and patriarchal power.
The basic feminist questions have been kept alive in a body of feminist theory formulated between 1960 and the present. These questions are rich in potential for sociological theory. Before going on to feminist sociological theory, a brief review of major feminist theories would be in order. These could be divided into three basic streams of thought:

i) theories of gender difference;
ii) theories of gender inequality; and
iii) theories of gender oppression.

Within each of these broad categories - difference, inequality, and oppression - there are further variations based on the answers to the question, "Why is women's situation as it is?"

I) THEORIES OF GENDER DIFFERENCE

Within the first category, the focus is on gender difference, and theorists in this stream see gender difference in three basic ways: bio-social conditioning, institutional socialization, and social-
psychological interfacing. This stream of thought has some influential contributions to modern feminist theory (1).

a) Biological explanations of gender differences traditionally worked around the 'seed-field' theme of sexual reproduction, have been the mainstay of conservative thinking on gender differences. Woman's inferior status in society is 'but natural', since it is rooted in her biology which 'makes her that way'. Freud traced the different personality structures of men and women to their different genitals and to cognitive and emotional processes that begin when children discover these psychological differences. Contemporary sociobiologists write of variable 'biogrammars' laid down in early hominid evolution that lead women to bond emotionally with their infants and men to bond practically with other men (2).

However, the biological argument has also been used in writings much more sympathetic to feminism. Serious attention has been given to the biological foundations of gender-specific behaviour, arguing that sociocultural arrangements should be made in society so as to make it possible for each gender to compensate,
through social learning, for biologically ‘given’ disadvantages (3).

b) Institutional explanations of gender differences also often lay great stress on women’s distinctive functions in bearing and caring for infants. This responsibility for mothering is seen as a major determinant of the broader sexual division of labour that links women in general to the functions of wife, mother, and household worker, to the private sphere of the home and family, and thus to a lifelong series of events and experiences very different from those of men. These theorists focus primarily on gender difference and its institutional roots, although some institutional theorists of difference accept the sexual division of labour as socially necessary (4), others would argue that the separate spheres for women and men may be embedded within broader patterns of gender inequality (5), or even of oppression (6).

c) Social psychological explanations of gender difference could be called socialization theory (7). It complements institutional analyses by exploring the social learning experiences that mold people in general but particularly young children for the separate
roles and institutional spheres of maleness and femaleness.

The recommendations that flow from these theories of gender difference center on the need for respect, except for the conservative, nonfeminist theorists, of course, who argue simply for the inevitability of difference and therefore for the need to yield to its demands. Theorists of difference typically demand that women's distinctive ways of being be recognized not as departures from the normal but as viable alternatives to male modes and that public knowledge, academic scholarship, and the very patterning of social life adjust to take serious account of female ways of being. Indeed at the most militantly feminist end of the continuum of this theoretical approach, we find a centuries old claim of feminism: that when a major infusion of women's ways becomes a part of public life the world will be a safer, more humane place for all of us.

II) THEORIES OF GENDER INEQUALITY

There are several theories of gender inequality, possibly the best-known being that of "Liberal feminism" and "Marxian femi-
nism". However, all the theories vary around a common core of interpretation, characterized by four main themes:

i) Men and women are not only differently situated in society, they are unequally situated. In particular, women get less of the material resources, social status, power and opportunities for self-actualization than the men who share their social location — be it a location based on class, race, occupation, ethnicity, religion, education, nationality, or any other socially significant factor.

ii) This inequality results from the organization of society, not from any significant biological or personality differences between women and men.

iii) All human beings — whether women or men — are characterized by a deep need for freedom to seek self-actualization and by a fundamental malleability that leads them to adapt to the constraints or opportunities of the situations in which they find themselves. To say that there is gender inequality, then, is to claim that women are situationally less empowered than men to realize
the need they share with men for self-actualization.

iv) Inequality theories all assume that both women and men will respond fairly easily and naturally to more egalitarian social structures and situations. They affirm, in other words, that it is possible to change the situation. In this these theorists contrast with the theorists of gender difference who present a picture of social life in which gender differences are, whatever their cause, durable, deeply penetrative of personality, and only partially reversible.

a) Liberal Feminism:

Within contemporary feminist theory, liberal feminism is a minority position (8). Yet, at the same time, liberal feminism is the most widely diffused approach within the contemporary women's movement in America: it undergirds much popular writing on careers for women, equal parenting, and the need for gender-free schooling for young children; it guides many of the policies initiated by the movement (9).
Explanations for gender inequality in liberal feminism deal with the identification of the sexual division of labour, the existence of separate public and private spheres of social activity, men's primary location in the former and women's in the latter, and the systematic socialization of children so that they can move into the adult roles and spheres appropriate to their gender. The private sphere is seen as consisting of an endless round of demanding, mindless, unpaid, and undervalued tasks associated with housework, child care, and the emotional, practical, and sexual servicing of adult men. The true rewards of social life — money, power, status, freedom, opportunities for growth and self-worth — are to be found in the public sphere. The system that restricts women's access to that sphere, burdens them with private-sphere responsibilities, isolates them in individual households, and excuses their mates from any sharing of private-sphere drudgeries is the system that produces gender inequalities.

The key forces of this system are identified by liberal feminists as being prejudices and discriminatory practices against women, taken-for-granted beliefs about the 'natural' differences between
men and women that suit them to their different social destinies. In other words, the real problem is sexism. On account of sexism, females are limited and maimed, from childhood on, so that they move into their adult roles and there dwindle from full humanness into the mindless, dependent subconsciously depressed beings created by the constraints and requirements of their gender-specified roles (10). Sexism, like racism, forces men and women into rigid characterological molds, denies the community the full range of talents available in the population, diminishes women, and poses a constant denial of those most cherished values of individual worth and freedom. Hence, society must be changed in order to eliminate sexism, and liberal feminists believe that most people can be educated to see the reasonableness of this feminist critique. Accordingly, they suggest various strategies for eliminating gender inequality.

b) Marxian Feminism

Marxian feminism brings together Marxian class analysis and feminist social protest. The foundation of this theory was laid by Marx and Engels. Although the focus of their concern was social
class oppression, they frequently turned their attention to gender oppression (11). According to them, woman's subordination does not result from her (presumably) immutable biology, but rather from social arrangements that have a clear and traceable history — arrangements that presumably may be changed. The relational basis for women's subordination lies in the family. Society legitimizes this family system by claiming that such a structure is the fundamental institution in all societies, which in fact, is a false claim, since there were no families of this type for much of human prehistory. Instead, people were linked in extensive kin networks — the 'gens' — large-scale associations among people sharing blood ties, traced through the female line, significant power resting in the hands of women. The factors that destroyed this type of social system are economic. Only with the destruction of property rights in the coming communist revolution would women attain freedom of social, political, economic, and personal action.

Taking off from here, contemporary Marxian feminists embed gender relations within the structure of the contemporary capitalist class system (12). From this theoretical vantage point, the quality
of each individual's life experiences is a reflection first of her or his class position and only second of her or his gender. Given this starting point, Marxian feminists acknowledge that within any class, women are less advantaged than men in their access to material goods, power, status, and possibilities for self-actualization. The causes of this inequality lie in the organization of capitalism itself.

Women, therefore, are unequal to men not because of any basic and direct conflict of interest between the genders, but because of the working out of class oppression, with its attendant factors of property inequality, exploited labour, and alienation. Consequently, the solution for gender inequality is the destruction of class oppression. This destruction will come through revolutionary action by a united wage-earning class, including both women and men - not women against men.

III) THEORIES OF GENDER OPPRESSION:

Gender oppression theories describe women's situation as the consequence of a direct power relationship between men and
women. Men, who have fundamental and concrete interests in controlling, using, subjugating, and oppressing women, effectively implement those interests. Women's situation, therefore, is centrally that of being used, controlled, subjugated, and oppressed by men. This pattern of oppression is incorporated in the deepest and most pervasive ways into society's organization, a basic structure of domination most commonly called 'patriarchy'. Patriarchy is not the unintended and secondary consequence of some other set of factors - be it biology or socialization or sex roles or the class system. It is a primary power structure sustained by strong and deliberate intention. In fact, gender differences and gender inequality—which are central to other feminists—are seen as by-products of patriarchy by theorists of gender oppression. Three major variants of this type of theory should be noted: psychoanalytic feminism, radical feminism, and socialist feminism.

a) Psychoanalytic Feminist Theory

As the name easily indicates, contemporary psychoanalytic feminists use the theories of Freud and his intellectual heirs, in their attempts to explain patriarchy (13). Although Freud himself was
notoriously patriarchal(14), these theorists manage to cull some of his basic insights and use them creatively, reworking his conclusions in a fundamental way. They emphasize the emotional dynamics of personality, emotions that are often buried deep in the subconscious and unconscious areas of the human psyche.

Psychoanalytic feminists operate with a particular model of patriarchy. Like all oppression theorists, they see patriarchy as a system in which men subjugate women, a universal system, pervasive in its social organization, durable over time and space, and triumphantly maintained in the face of occasional challenge. Distinctive to psychoanalytic feminism, however, is the view that this system is one that all men, in their individual daily actions, work continuously and energetically to create and sustain. Women resist only occasionally but are to be discovered far more often either acquiescing in or actively working for their own subordination. The puzzle that psychoanalytical feminists set out to resolve is why men bring everywhere enormous, unremitting energy to the task of sustaining patriarchy and why there is an absence of countervailing energy on the part of women.
In attempting to solve this puzzle, psychoanalytical feminists explain women's oppression in terms of men's deep emotional need to control women, a drive arising from near-universal male neuroses centering on the fear of death and on ambivalence toward the mothers who reared them. Women either lack these neuroses or are subject to complementary neuroses, but in either case they are left physically without an equivalent source of energy to resist domination.

b) Radical Feminism

Radical feminism see all of society as characterized by oppression. However, of all the systems of oppression in society, the most fundamental structure of oppression is gender — the system of patriarchy. This system is the least noticed and yet the most significant structure of social inequality. Central to these theories is the image of patriarchy as violence practiced by men and male-dominated organizations against women. Violence may not take the form of overt physical cruelty, but might take the form of more complex practices of exploitation and control: in standards fashion and beauty; in tyrannical ideals of motherhood, monogamy, chastity,
and heterosexuality; in sexual harassment in the workplace; in unpaid household drudgery and underpaid wage work.

Radical feminists have done significant research to support their thesis that patriarchy ultimately rests on the practice of violence against women (15). They claim that patriarchy exists as a near-universal social form ultimately because men can muster the most basic power resource, physical force, to establish control. Through the lens of radical feminism, we are given a visual representation of what patriarchy does — the image of woman mutilated and bleeding: rape, sexual abuse, sexual slavery, and the sadism of pornography are linked to historic and cross-cultural practices of witch-burning, the stoning deaths of adulteresses, female infanticide, Chinese footbinding, and Indian 'sati'. The theme of violence as overt physical cruelty lies at the heart of radical feminism's linking of patriarchy to violence.

An intense positive valuation of women is also central to radical feminism (16). As a result, there is deep grief and rage over their oppression. Radical feminists affirm woman's special worth in
defiance of a universal system that devalues her. They rage at woman's oppression by presenting a detailed and shocking catalogue of the offenses committed against her world-wide. They maintain that men create and maintain patriarchy not only because they have the resources to do so, but because they have real interests in making women serve as compliant tools. The defeat of patriarchy, say the radical feminists, requires that each woman recognizes her own strength and value and rejects patriarchal pressures to see herself as weak, dependent, and second class. This implies a basic reworking of women's consciousness, and new social alternatives to support this consciousness.

Radical feminism, thus incorporates arguments made by both Marxian and psychoanalytic theories, and moves beyond them.

c) Socialist Feminism:

Socialist feminism develops a portrait of social organization in which the macro-social structures of economy, polity, and ideology interact with the intimate, private, micro-social processes of human reproduction, domesticity, sexuality, and subjectivity to sustain a
multi-faceted system of domination, the workings of which are discernible both as massive social patterns and in the subtleties and details of interpersonal relationships. To analyze this system, socialist feminists shuttle between a mapping of large-scale systems of domination and a situationally specific, detailed exploration of the mundane daily experiences of oppressed people. Their strategy for change rests in this process of discovery, in which they attempt to involve the oppressed groups that they study and through which they hope that both individuals and groups, in large and small ways, will learn to act in pursuit of their collective emancipation.

Socialist feminism is a highly diverse cluster of theoretical writings unified more by a theoretical agenda and less by substantive theoretical conclusions. One might put it simply by saying that three goals guide all socialist feminism: theoretical synthesis, a combination of theoretical breadth and precision, and an explicit and adequate method for social analysis and social change (17). Social feminists seek to bring together what they perceive as the two broadest and most valuable feminist traditions: Marxian and radical feminist thought.
FEMINIST SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Feminist sociological theory is rooted in a base of feminist theory, and cannot be apprehended apart from it. Despite the many varieties of contemporary feminist theory, there is a consistent concern with the basic sociological question of how and why social organization takes the form it does in any particular society at any particular time.

Not all feminist thinking lends itself to sociological theory. Psychoanalytic theories, for instance, are more akin to psychological theory than to sociological ones. In fact, feminist theories of gender oppression which constitute the cutting edge — the dynamic and expanding frontier of contemporary feminist theory — are not much in vogue with feminist sociologists. Few sociologists have made important contributions to this literature, although a majority of contemporary feminist theorists are oppression theorists, and it is the area that has the richest and most innovative theoretical developments. Sociologists favour, instead, feminist theories of difference and inequality (18).
The logic of feminist sociological theory is best understood as a distinctive and radical form of dialectical thinking, which is closely linked to the assumptions that lie at the heart of feminism as a world view. At the core of a feminist dialectic is a sociology of knowledge. Persons construct their knowledge on the foundations of their situated experiences and interests.

Feminists, starting where Marx left off, have identified three crucial groups — owners, workers and women — whose life circumstances and relations with each other are only in part patterned by economic factors. Then as feminists have explored differences among women, they have discovered a multiplicity of differently situated groups of women. In tracing the relationships among all these groups, feminists have moved beyond a class model of domination to a vision of a complex system of unequally empowered groups relating through shifting arrangements of coalition and opposition. Within such a system the view that knowledge is anchored in and patterned by the knower's structurally situated vantage point leads one to the position that knowledge is itself the key problematic. The ultimate goal, of course, is practical action; hence theoretical
foundations are laid with the idea of seeking, above all, an "egalitarian discourse" — if we may adapt Jurgen Habermas's call for a "rational discourse" — that feminists believe will lead to a just and open society.

This particular version of the sociology of knowledge provides the philosophic basis for feminists' insistent valuation of the viewpoints of less privileged groups. The feminist dialectic not only stems from a feminist sociology of knowledge, but equally from women's daily experiences. The feminist dialectic also demands a restructuring of sociological practice to allow sociologists fully to capture the processes by which people, including sociologists, create social knowledge. In the end, as the feminist dialectic makes it clear, the social world is a construct created by the exchanges of people from all vantage points. Not all these people have an equal say in the final form construction takes, but they are all involved, even when invisible, in that construction.
THIS STUDY

These are the methodological pre-suppositions of this study. Within this context, this study expresses an understanding of Berger and Luckmann's sociology of knowledge (with its phenomenological roots) insofar as it may be applied to the social construction of womanhood. Looked at through the feminist lens, we begin from the assumption that womanhood in contemporary society is equivalent to 'powerless woman', where the social location of woman on a continuum whose two extremes are power and powerlessness will always be closer to the powerless extreme than the man's social location.

Seeing power and powerlessness as two extremes of a continuum lends itself better to the present sociological discourse than merely seeing power or powerlessness as a category by itself. Power cannot be assessed as an absolute quantity - it is always relative (19). Weber's definition, which is perhaps the most quoted sociological definition of power, indicates this approach. It says: "Power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his will despite resistance, regardless of the
basis on which this probability rests" (20). Weber speaks of power in terms of probabilities, not certainties. He locates power within social relationships, not as a quality of an individual.

Exercise of power within social relationships has been seen in terms of positive inducements that influence the behaviour of people, as well as negative sanctions that threaten and coerce people. Exchange theorists view power in terms of social exchanges (21). Power, then, is best viewed as the process by which some actors in social relationships are able to carry out their will by changing the balance of advantage of alternative courses of action for others in the relationship. Perhaps the best exponent of this idea among the exchange theorists is Peter Blau. Blau says that if one person is unable to reciprocate in full measure, he becomes indebted to his benefactor. Unreciprocal benefactions produce differentiation of status. A man who has resources at his disposal with which he can meet other people's needs, can use them to attain power over others, subject to four conditions: First, the other people must not have resources which the benefactor wants, or there will simply be mutual exchange. Second, the recipients must not be able to obtain
the benefit from any other source — the benefactor must have some degree of monopoly of power. Third, the recipients must be unable or unwilling to take the benefit by force. Fourth, they must not undergo a change of values which enables them to do without the benefit that they originally wanted.

Several sociologists have been concerned with power in terms of the power resources that generate power. Among the resources discussed by sociologists are income, property, sacramental and magical capacities, bureaucratic office, access to information, knowledge, scarce skills and charisma. Marx's thesis that economic resources are the basic source of power is ingeniously and meticulously well worked out. Weber, on the other hand, sees authority as a power resource, and lists out three types of legitimate authority: rational-legal, traditional and charismatic (22).

Of lesser impact are studies such as Riesman's "The Lonely Crowd", which traces the relationship between wants and power. Riesman seeks to show that changes in what Americans value had consequences for the types of power resource to which they respond.
and therefore for the distribution of power in American society (23).
Georg Simmel sees domination as a form of interaction, and analyses various forms of subordination and superordination. Seeing power in terms of its political expression in society is a recurrent focus of those sociologists who have dealt with the concept of power. C. Wright Mills, unlike Marx who envisaged power in the hands of the masses, visualized power in the hands of a small elite, only (24). Karl Manheim distinguished between what he called arbitrary power and functional power in his treatise on social planning (25). Parsons, restricts the meaning of power entirely to legitimate forms, advancing an analogy between the creation of political power and the creation of credit by the banking system (26).

Michel Foucault does not see power in terms of a conspiracy by the elite members of society, since a conspiracy would imply conscious actors, whereas he would rather see it in terms of structural relationships, especially relationships between knowledge and power. Foucault is concerned with how people govern themselves and others through the production of knowledge. He sees knowledge generating power by constituting people as subjects and
then governing the subjects with the knowledge (27).

Though the term is used often enough, sociologists do not find it easy to define exactly what they mean by 'power'. What is power and when is it not power? Sociologists have not been able to agree (28). Grappling with this problem, one sociologist used an enlightening analogy between power and physical energy. Power, like energy, is a useful concept, yet it is difficult to directly quantify or specify precisely; rather, its existence, nature and strength can only be inferred from its effects (29). The powerlessness of woman is inferred from her secondary position in society. Women's Studies show that the position accorded to women in society is normally secondary, and often grossly inferior.

In this study, we will understand powerlessness as Weber has defined it, and see it as relative to power on a power-powerless continuum. Following Weber still further, we could say that women are excluded from authority, the resource of power, whether it be rational-legal or traditional, except in exceptional cases such as the elderly woman in certain societies, or a younger woman exercising
authority by default (e.g. a wife ruling in the place of her dead husband) as already outlined in the first chapter of this study. Women may exercise charismatic authority in several societies, even patriarchal societies, as Mirabal, Indira Gandhi and Mother Teresa have done. But these are the exception to the rule (the ‘rule’ being the powerless woman).

This study is not concerned with proving that woman is powerless. This has been amply proved time and again, by studies such as those reviewed above. Instead, this study is concerned with the construction of powerless womanhood. The main aim of the study is to demonstrate the possibility of applying the sociology of knowledge to the construction of womanhood, for use in the development of feminist sociology. There is, therefore, a close examination of Berger and Luckmann’s theory, throughout. Application of this theory is done not in terms of empirical work, but by way of conceptual ‘translation’ into the feminist realm.
REFERENCES

1) See for instance these works:


Rossi has linked the different biological functions of males and females to different patterns of hormonally determined development over the life cycle and this, in turn, to sex-specific variation in such traits as sensitivity to light and sound and to differences in left and right brain connections. These differences, she feels, feed into the different play patterns in childhood, and also to the apparent fact that women are more predisposed to care for infants in a nurturing way than men.
Rossi's feminism leads her to argue for sociocultural arrangements that make it possible for each gender to compensate, through social learning, for biologically 'given' disadvantages, but as a biosociologist she also argues for rational acknowledgement of the implications of biological research.

(4) Berger, Brigette, and Berger, Peter, "The War over the Family: Capturing the Middle Ground" Anchor, Garden City, New York, 1983.


(6) Ruddick, op.cit.

Walum-Richardson, Laurel, "The Dynamics of Sex and Gender", Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1981.

The latter can be referred to for selected bibliographies on this subject.


Janeway, Elizabeth "Powers of the Weak", Morrow Quill, New
York, 1981.


This theory has been elaborated in recent times, by several feminists. See:


Reed, Evelyn "Problems of Women's Liberation" Pathfinder Press, New York, 1970. This book is fairly typical of this viewpoint, and can form a good starting point in a study of this perspective. The outlook is spelt out in clear, uncompromising terms.


Zaretzky, Eli "Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life"


(13) For exponents of this type of theory, see:


Kittay, Eva Feder, 'Womb Envy: An Explanatory Concept' in Joyce Trebilcot (ed.), op.cit.pg.94-128.

Dinnerstein and al-Hibri develop the psychoanalytic theory from the belief in man's fear of death. Fear of death, of the ceasing of one's individuality is something that everyone must confront, and experience terror in the process of confrontation. These feminist theorists argue that women, because of their intimate and protracted involvement with bearing and rearing new life, are typically far less oppressed than men by the realization of their own mortality. Men, however, respond with deep dread to the prospect of their individual extinction and adopt a series of defences, all of which lead to their domination of women.

Chodorow is among those who develops the second theme in psychoanalytical feminism, which centers on early child-
hood development and the fact that in all societies infants and children experience their earliest and most crucial development in a close, uninterrupted, intimate relationship to a woman — their mother, or mother substitute. This leads to feelings of ambivalence towards the woman, and the desire in men to control woman. Dinnerstein also develops this theme in some of her work.

(14) Freud acknowledged gender differences and gender inequality, but not gender oppression. Instead, he saw women as being second-class human beings whose basic psychic nature fits them only for a lesser life than that experienced by men. Feminist theorists, therefore, have to artfully follow through on directions implicit in Freud's theories, while rejecting his gender-specific conclusions.


Dworkin, Andrea "Our Blood: Prophecies and Discourses on


This comprehensive work has influenced the ideas presented in this section, a great deal.
For exponents of this point of view, see:


There are two distinct varieties of socialist feminism. The first focuses exclusively on women's oppression and on understanding it in a way that brings together knowledge (from Marxism) of class oppression and (from radical feminism) of gender oppression. The term most frequently used by these theorists for the system they describe is 'capitalist patriarchy'. Einstein and Hartman, from the above list, are exponents of this stream of thought, whereas the second stream is represented here by Frye, Lorde and Smith. This second variant of socialist feminism sets out to describe and explain all forms of social oppression, using knowledge of class and gender hierarchies as a base from which to explore systems of oppression centering not only on class and gender, but also
on race, ethnicity, age, sexual preference, and location within the global hierarchy of nations. The term that characterizes these theorists in the system that they describe is 'domination'.

(18) Major feminist theorists who have contributed to a woman-centered sociology are Smith, Bernard, Chodorow, Hartsock, Gilligan, Lorde, Rich, and Ruddick (op.cit.). From among these, the works of Dorothy Smith are pioneering ones.


(21) The major statements of Exchange Theory were made by Homans, Thibaut and Kelley, and Blau. See:

Homans, George C., "Social Behaviour: Its Elementary


This work of Blau's is the most pertinent to the present context of studies on power.

(22) Weber, Max op.cit. pg. 215. Weber distinguished three pure types of authority by the grounds upon which they claimed legitimacy. Rational-legal authority rested upon 'a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands'. Traditional authority rested on 'an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them'. Finally, charismatic authority rested on 'devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the
normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him'.


Parsons defines power as the 'generalized capacity to secure the performance of binding obligations by units in a system of collective action....power of A over B is in its legitimized form the 'right' of A, as a decision-making unit involved in the collective process, to make decisions which take precedence over those of B, in the interest of the effectiveness of the collective operation as a whole.' (pgs. 361,370).
(27) Foucault, Michel, “The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language”, Harper Colophon, New York, 1969. Foucault borrows heavily from Nietzsche, the philosopher of power. In fact, his orientation is best caught by the phrase ‘genealogy of power’. Looking over the sweep of history, Foucault does not see progress from primitive brutalness to more modern humaneness, but rather, he sees history lurching from one system of domination (based on knowledge) to another.

(28) Mennell, op. cit. pg.91.

(29) Oslen, Marvin E., “The Process of Social Organization” Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1968. pg.172. His actual definition is, “Power in social life is somewhat analogous to energy in the physical world.... We talk freely about the uses of energy and power, but when we attempt to specify more precisely what either of these phenomena is, we encounter difficulties. The main reason is that neither energy nor power can be directly observed or measured. Their existence, nature and strength can only be inferred...”