

You may ask
yourself: chapter 1:
the sociological
imagination: an
introduction



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Sociology the study of human society Sociological imagination the ability to connect the most basic, intimate aspects of an individual's life to seemingly impersonal and remote historical forces Social institution a complex group of interdependent positions that, together, perform a social role and reproduce themselves over time; also defined in a narrow sense as any institution in a society that works to shape the behavior of the groups or people within it August Comte invented "social physics" or "positivism" (said it arose from a need to make moral sense of the social order in a time of declining religious authority) Harriet Martineau English social theorist, first to translate Comte to English Karl Marx writings provided the theoretical basis for communism Max Weber advocated sociological analysis that allowed for the multiple influences of culture, economics, and politics Verstehen understanding. The concept of Verstehen forms the object of inquiry for interpretive sociology--to study how social actors understand their actions and the social world through experience (Weber) Emile Durkheim wished to understand how society holds together and the ways that modern capitalism and industrialization have transformed how people relate to one another Anomie a sense of aimlessness or despair that arises when we can no longer reasonably expect life to be predictable; too little social regulation (Durkheim) Georg Simmel established what we today refer to as formal sociology, sociology of pure numbers (small group interactions) WEB Dubois first sociologist to undertake ethnography in the African American community Double consciousness a concept conceived by WEB Dubois to describe the two behavioral scripts, one for moving through the world and the other incorporating the external opinions of prejudiced onlookers, which are constantly maintained by African Americans Jane

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Addams founded the first American settlement house, Hull

House Functionalism the theory that various social institutions and processes in society exist to serve some important (or necessary) function to keep

society running Conflict theory the idea that conflict between competing interests is the basic, animating force of social change and society in general

(Marx) Symbolic interactionism a micro-level theory in which shared

meanings, orientations, and assumptions form the basic motivations behind people's actions Postmodernism a condition characterized by a questioning of

the notion of progress and history, the replacement of narrative with

pastiche, and multiple, perhaps even conflicting, identities resulting from

disjointed affiliations Social construction an entity that exists because people

behave as if it exists and whose existence is perpetuated as people and

social institutions act in accordance with the widely agreed-upon formal files or informal norms of behavior associated with that entity Midrange theory a

theory that attempts to predict how certain social institutions tend to

function Micro-sociology sees to understand local interactional contexts; its

methods of choice are ethnographic, generally including participant

observations and in depth interviews Macro-sociology generally concerned

with social dynamics at a higher level of analysis--that is, across the breadth of a society

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