Lesson 02: Origins of Sociology

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<td>Origins of Sociology</td>
<td>Positivism: the application of the scientific approach to the social world.</td>
<td>Auguste Comte: Founder of Sociology, Positivism</td>
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<td>Verstehen and Social Facts</td>
<td>Social Integration: the degree to which people feel a part of a social group.</td>
<td>Karl Marx: believed that the engine of human history is class conflict.</td>
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<td>Sexism in Early Sociology</td>
<td>Class Conflict: Marx’s term for the struggle between capitalists and workers.</td>
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<td>Values: the standards by which people define what is desirable or undesirable, good or bad.</td>
<td>Max Weber: disagreed with Marx that economics was the central force of social change and addresses the Protestant et</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Objectivity: totally neutral.</td>
<td>Emile Durkineau: English social scientist who discovered Comte’s writing and translated his works into English. She was also an active advocate of the abolition of slavery. hic.</td>
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<td>Replication: repeating a study in order to test its findings.</td>
<td>Jane Addams: co-founder of Hull-House, an applied sociologist and winner of the Nobel prize.</td>
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<td>Verstehen: a German word used by Weber that is perhaps best understood as “to have insight into someone’s situation.”</td>
<td>W.E.B. Du Bois: dedicated his life to studying race relations; first African American to earn a Harvard Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Applied Sociology: the use of sociology to solve problems, from the micro level of family relationships to the macro level of crime and pollution.</td>
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<td>The Power Elite: the term coined by C. Wright Mills to refer to the top leaders of business, politics, and the military who make the major decisions in America.</td>
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LESSON SUMMARY

- Sociology emerged in the mid-1800s in Western Europe, during the upheavals of the Industrial Revolution. Early sociologists who focused on the changes that were then occurring in Europe were Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber.

- In the early years, few women received the advanced education required to become a sociologist, and women like Harriet Martineau who did become sociologists were largely ignored.

- Sociology became established in North America by the end of the nineteenth century. Within U.S. sociology, there has always been a tension between basic sociology and attempts to reform society. Two early sociologists who combined sociology with social reform were Jane Addams and W. E. B. Du Bois.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Section 2, you will:

5. Discuss the social changes—and the changing social conditions—that fostered the development of sociology as a distinct academic discipline in the middle of the nineteenth century. (3)

6. Identify and critique the sociological contributions of the following mid-to-late nineteenth and early twentieth century European sociologists: Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Harriet Martineau. (3—6)

7. Understand how and why levels of social integration may affect rates of suicide and how Emile Durkheim’s nineteenth-century study of suicide helped to demonstrate how social forces affect people’s behaviors. (5)
the contributions of women sociologists during this period were received and evaluated by their male
8. Discuss why there were so few women sociologists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and how counterparts. (6)

9. Trace the history of sociology in North America from the late 1800s to the present time, identifying the specific sociological contributions of the following American sociologists: Jane Addams, W. E. B. Du Bois, Talcott Parsons, and C. Wright Mills. (6—9)

10. Understand the historical tensions and ongoing debates in North American sociology between social reform and social analysis and how the sociological contributions of Jane Addams, W. E. B. Du Bois, Talcott Parsons, and C. Wright Mills fit into the tensions and debates. (8-10) analysis and what role applied sociology plays in this debate. (10)

11. Discuss the current state of American sociology as it relates to the debate between social reform and social
II. The Origins of Sociology

A. Sociology emerged as a result of changes in European societies that were taking place at that time: (1) the Industrial Revolution, in which traditional society and culture were transformed; (2) the American and French revolutions, out of which new ideas about the rights of individuals within society were accepted; and (3) the application of scientific methods to find answers for questions about the natural order and our social world.

B. Auguste Comte coined the term sociology and suggested the use of positivism—applying the scientific approach to the social world—but he did not utilize this approach himself.

C. Herbert Spencer, another social philosopher, viewed societies as evolutionary, coined the term the survival of the fittest, and became known for social Darwinism.

D. Karl Marx, founder of the conflict perspective, believed that class conflict—the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie—was the key to human history.

E. Emile Durkheim studied the social factors that underline suicide and found that the level of social integration, the degree to which people are tied to their social group, was a key social factor in suicide. Central to his studies was the idea that human behavior cannot be understood simply in individual terms but must be understood within the larger social context in which it occurs.

F. Max Weber defined religion as a central force in social change; for example, Protestantism encourages greater economic development and was the central factor in the rise of capitalism in some countries.

III. Sexism in Early Sociology

A. In the 1800s, women were assigned the roles of wife and mother. Few were able to acquire the education required to become sociologists, and those who did were ignored.

B. Harriet Martineau was exceptional. She studied social life in Great Britain and the United States and eventually published Society in America two to three decades before Max Weber or Emile Durkheim were even born.

IV. Sociology in North America

A. Sociology was transplanted to the United States in the late nineteenth century, first taking hold at the University of Chicago, the University of Kansas, and Atlanta University.

B. Jane Addams was active in promoting social reform. In 1889, she founded Hull House, a settlement house that served the needs of Chicago’s urban poor. Sociologists from the nearby University of Chicago were frequent visitors.
C. W. E. B. Du Bois was the first African American to earn a doctorate at Harvard University. He spent most of his career at Atlanta University, where he conducted extensive research on race relations in the United States. He was committed to social action, helping to found the NAACP.

D. During the 1940s, the focus shifted from reform to theory; Talcott Parsons developed abstract models of society to show how the parts of society harmoniously work together. In the 1950s, C. Wright Mills urged sociologists to get back to social reform. He saw imminent danger in the emergence of a power elite within the United States.

E. Recently, there have been attempts to blend sociological knowledge with practical results through the development of applied sociology.

1. Applied sociologists work in various social settings.
2. Applied sociology is not the same as social reform because the goal is not to rebuild society but to bring about change in a limited setting.

**KEY TERMS**

After studying the Lesson, review the definition for each of the following terms.

**positivism:** the application of the scientific approach to the social world (4)

**science:** requires the development of theories that can be tested by systematic research (3)

**social integration:** the degree to which people are tied to their social groups (5)

**sociology:** the scientific study of society and human behavior (4)

**theory:** a general statement about how some parts of the world fit together and how they work; and explanation of how two or more facts are related to one another (10)

**Values:** the standards by which people define what is desirable or undesirable, good or bad.

**Objectivity:** totally neutral.

**Replication:** repeating a study in order to test its findings.

**Applied Sociology:** the use of sociology to solve problems, from the micro level of family relationships to the macro level of crime and pollution.

**The Power Elite:** the term coined by C. Wright Mills to refer to the top leaders of business, politics, and the military who make the major decisions in America.

**Procedure**

1. PowerPoint Lesson 2
2. Students form groups and choose sociologist from lesson.
3. Student assign themselves research on the topic of:
   a. Biography
   b. Education
   c. Pictures
   d. Why they are famous
4. Students create display highlighting career of chosen sociologist
5. Students present and hang displays about the room