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**SociologicalYOU - Chapter 1 PPT Audio Lecture Transcript**

**SociologicalYOU** by Angela Thompson and Keith Whitworth

This is Next-Gen Introductory Sociology.

Welcome to Chapter 1: Introduction – Understanding Sociology.

There are five modules in this chapter and for each chapter throughout the textbook.

The first module is always Sociological Perspective. This is defined as the process of understanding and explaining how individuals and groups interact within society.

The second module is always Social Structures. Social structures are the distinctive

and stable arrangements of social patterns that form the society as a whole.

Module 3 is about Social Problems. Social problems are defined as the societal level conditions that harm segments of society.

Module 4 is the sociological imagination. This is the ability to see the details of our own lives in the context of larger social structures as opposed to merely personal choices or personal troubles.

Finally, Module 5 is always Social Change. Social change refers to the social forces that change the organization and social structures of society.

Please note that this PowerPoint does not cover every key term in chapter one. Please make sure you read your textbook to see what is not covered in the PowerPoint.

As we review the contents of this chapter, I would encourage you to

consider the following **Points to Ponder**:

First, what is sociology and how was it developed?

Second, what are the basic theories and vocabulary within sociology.

And finally, how is sociology relevant to your life?

Considering these points should help you think critically about the contents of

Chapter 1.

**Module 1: The Sociological Perspective**

To begin learning about sociology, it's important to have an understanding of two key terms.

First, society. For our purposes, society is defined as a large group of people

associated with a shared culture and social institutions.

That definition leads us to social institutions. Social institutions are defined as structures in society providing the framework for governing the behavior of individuals in a community or society.

August Compt is considered the father of sociology. He coined the terms positivism and sociology, and in doing so set the stage for the development of the discipline.

Let's consider these two key terms.

First, positivism. It is defined as the authentic and valid knowledge of the social world

found only through scientific and empirical pursuits.

On the other hand, sociology is the scientific study of social relationships, social institutions, and societies.

Compt’s idea was to study society using the same scientific processes that had been used within the natural sciences for centuries. His goal was to use the objective and empirical methods in his quest to find solutions for the social problems within society.

As you study sociology you will encounter a variety of sociological theories.

Sociological theory is a set of interrelated ideas that provide a systematic understanding of the social world. These theories and the social world are divided into macro and micro perspectives.

Macro sociology is a level of analysis focusing on social systems and populations on a large scale.

On the other hand, microsociology is a level of analysis focusing on individuals and small groups within the larger social system.

There are three theories presented in Chapter 1 that sociologists use to study the larger social world from either a macro or micro perspective. They are conflict, functionalist, and symbolic interactionist theory.

Beginning with conflict theory we find that it is a macro-level theory that focuses on exploitation and class struggles.

On the other hand, functionalist theory, while also a macro theory, is centered on the parts of society and the interdependence of those parts.

Finally, symbolic interactionist theory is a micro level of analysis that involves these symbolic meanings that are derived from social interactions and the development of the socialized self.

Let's compare and contrast the three sociological theories by considering the work of three theorists, beginning with Karl Marx.

Marx was a conflict theorist, as noted previously. Conflict theory is a macro theory based on class struggle and exploitation.

Two key concepts associated with Marx are the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

The proletariat are the majority in a society who are the poor property-less industrial working class.

By comparison, the bourgeoisie are the small minority who are the wealthy class in society.

Next, we have Émile Durkheim and functionalist theory.

Functionless theory is a macro view of how the parts of society serve to maintain stability. Functionalism identifies the functions of society, such as social institutions, which include family, education, religion, economy, and the government.

There are manifest and latent functions as well as dysfunctions within each of the social institutions.

Manifest functions are the intentional and formally sanctioned functions of social institutions and society.

Latent functions are unintentional and informally sanctioned functions of

social institutions and society.

Finally, dysfunction is the undesirable disruptions of social patterns resulting in negative consequences within the society.

Symbolic interactionism is associated with George Herbert Mead. As previously noted, symbolic interactionism is a micro view of how society is the product of interactions between people which occur via symbols that have distinct meanings.

The symbolic interaction perspective identifies the symbols and meanings associated with social interactions to better understand society as a whole.

A key concept associated with Mead is the socialized self.

This particular perspective contends that the self cannot develop apart from society.

Let's apply these three theories to the example of healthcare.

Conflict theory contends that millions of working poor Americans do not have access to health care due to the cost.

The U.S. is the only industrialized nation that does not provide healthcare for all citizens. This causes the gap between the poor and the rich to grow wider, as families go into debt to pay for medical bills.

By comparison, the functionalist theory looks at how healthcare functions in the society.

Hospitals, medical, professionals, and pharmaceutical companies serve to keep individuals healthy so all can work and earn wages to keep society functioning. If illness and disease are frequent and workers can't work, then the economy will suffer.

The symbolic interactionist approach looks at health care from a micro perspective.

The meaning of the doctor-patient relationship helps to understand the healthcare delivery system.

The doctor's lab coat, specialized knowledge, and language symbolize authority; thus, the patient is more likely to be compliant and passive in the treatment process.

When considering the sociological perspective, one must also consider how the work of Max Weber differs from the three main sociological theories. Weber gave us the concept of verstehen, an empathetic approach to understanding human behavior.

Verstehen is loosely translated as understanding or interpretation.

Weber believed that empathetic understanding is necessary during the process of studying groups of people, which differs from the scientific method.

Verstehen is similar to symbolic interaction but is much more participatory in practice.

Weber's indirect explanatory model of verstehen can be applied at the macro level but does not have similarities with conflict theory.

Contemporary theories offer us several approaches worth considering.

Beginning with feminist theory, we find this is a view pertaining to anti-oppression, gender relations, and gender inequality. Feminist theory is closely associated with conflict theory and focuses on the movement to empower women.

Applied sociology uses sociological theory, research, and methodologies to find solutions to problems in the society.

Queer theory is a critical view that rejects the traditional categories of gender, sex, and sexuality in contemporary society. Queer theory emerged from the feminist perspective and is centered on sexuality in areas such as gay, lesbian, and transgender rights.

Post-modern social theory is a critical view rejecting the historical scientific and structured means of investigating and interpreting the social world. The postmodernist social perspective refutes the traditional sociological theory and sets aside positivism for relativism.

**Module 2: Social Structures**

Society is made up of social structures. Specifically, social structures are the distinctive and stable arrangements of social patterns that form the society as a whole.

A few key points worth noting about social structures:

First, they organize behaviors of large groups of people.

Next, they're capable of coercing individuals and groups.

Additionally, they provide norms, rules, and practices.

They assign roles and power to individuals and groups, and they encompass large geographic areas.

Formal organizations, such as the United Nations Emergency Children's Fund, or UNICEF, and the National Organization for Women, also known as NOW, – these are not considered social structures.

The family, economic system, and the American value system are examples of social structures.

Social structures are not formal entities but organized behavior. They are coercive of individuals and groups, provide norms and rules, assign roles, and are geographically dispersed.

Let's take a moment to consider some of the sociologists who recognized social structures in their own practice of sociology.

First, there's Harriet Martineau. She was the first female sociologist. She did a pivotal study on society in America; her issues included gender race and class tensions, just to name a few, and she had an outsider's perspective on American culture.

She studied American social structure during a two-year visit, with one area being the American value system.

Next, we have Jane Addams. Her area was poverty and education, specifically as it related to the Chicago, Illinois area. Addams practiced sociology by establishing the whole house and recognizing that social structures, such as basic social services and education, were not readily available to poor immigrants in Chicago.

W.E.B. du Bois also recognized the importance of social structures in society. He was one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, also known as the NAACP.

He was the author of the talented tenth, in which he addressed the role of Black men and social change.

He was a civil rights activist and scholar. Du Bois worked to change social structures that perpetuated racism and discrimination in the United States.

Robert Merton was the author of *Social Theory and Social Structure.* Two key terms worth mentioning include bureaucracy and red tape.

Bureaucracy is defined as a hierarchical authority structure that uses task specialization, operates on the merit principle, and behaves with impersonality.

On the other hand, red tape is defined as adherence to excessive regulation and

conformity that prevents decision-making and change.

Merton wrote extensively about social structures and built upon Max Weber's work on bureaucracy as a form of social structure.

So how do social structures impact us today?

Let's consider the experience on college campus, where frequently there are incidents of binge drinking and sexual assaults. There are consistent and frequent messages within the media that depict women as sexual objects that contribute to this social behavior. On campus, sexual assaults often go unreported, as women can experience social stigmas and be ostracized for reporting an assault.

Alcohol is often involved in assaults, and campus culture often promotes the consumption of alcohol at social events by identifying and altering social structures that perpetuate the behavior. On campus, it would lead to lower crime rates

**Module 3: Social Problems**

This module gives us an opportunity to identify the role of sociology in understanding social problems.

Specifically, social problems are defined as the societal caused conditions that harm segments of society. A social problem is an issue that a segment of society feels ought to be changed.

There are two important key terms to consider when addressing social problems.

First, what are the objective conditions?

The objective conditions are the scope of the problem.

On the other hand, subjective concerns are people's feelings about a problem.

Sociology's role in understanding social problems involves measuring the objective and subjective conditions, evaluating the social context, and identifying possible policy solutions.

A social problem introduced in your textbook is that of human trafficking in the chocolate industry.

Three key terms worth considering around this problem include fair trade, sustainability, and sustainable development.

Beginning with fair trade, we find that it is an organizational movement and certification process to help producers in developing countries receive a fair price for their products with the goal of reducing poverty.

Providing for the ethical treatment of workers and farmers and promoting environmentally sustainable practices, sustainability is the idea that current and future generations should have equal or greater access to social economic and environmental resources.

And sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Chocolate and its relationship to human trafficking of children illustrates how sociology can be used to help us see a situation from a broader perspective and understand why it is an issue that society feels needs to be addressed.

Social inequality comes in a variety of forms and often results in social problems.

Social inequality is the unequal distribution of power, property, or prestige in a society. Examples include homelessness, health care, teen pregnancy, education and life expectancy.

A society's response to a social problem can be viewed in terms of its manifest

Function, latent function, or dysfunction. For example, the dysfunction of the U.S.

welfare system included a rule that penalized children if there was evidence

of a man in the home.

Different theoretical perspectives may be used to analyze the impact of policy solutions on social problems from a macro or micro level.

**Module 4: The Sociological Imagination**

This module explains the relationship between the sociological imagination and Durkheim's anomie.

Let's consider some key terms:

Sociological imagination is a means of understanding the relationship between our personal troubles and the public issues of society.

Personal troubles are matters experienced at the individual level.

Public issues are matters that impact society as a whole.

Anomie is the breakdown of individual and community social bonds. Backdrop of the sociological imagination, we find that anomie is linked to the personal troubles an individual may experience in their life outside of the individual.

Anomie is about of lack of social control in the society overall.

The economic crisis in Greece, as discussed in your textbook, illustrates how and why anomie may develop in a society and the impact anomie can have on a society's ability

to function.

**Module 5: Social Change**

In this module, we evaluate social change and globalization.

Social change refers to the forces that change the organization and social structures of society.

Globalization plays a key role in social change. Specifically, globalization is the worldwide integration of our cultural, economic, and political lives that result from ever-increasing levels of business, trade, and technology.

Globalization occurs across societies. This process has been occurring for generations with examples found in the Americas, Africa, Europe, and Asia.

Globalization spurs change within a society in both positive and negative ways, leaving societies to figure out how to balance their traditional culture with the new ideas and patterns of behavior offered by other countries.

These two maps illustrate globalization.

When looking at the maps, consider how sociology might be important to understanding the globalization process.

So, how can sociology be used to explain social change?

This is where applied sociology comes in. Applied sociology is the use of sociological theory, research, and methodologies to find solutions to problems in society.

Sociology can be used to understand people's behaviors in an ever-changing

social world via the field of applied sociology.

Applied sociology refers to the practical application of sociology in careers outside of academia. One of the skills important to an applied sociologist is the ability to translate knowledge, theory, and research in a way that is understood by the layperson.

When successfully utilized, applied sociology can be a tool to help people understand how and why they think, act, and feel the way they do towards one another.

This concludes the PowerPoint for **SociologicalYOU** Chapter 1 where we strive to connect sociology and YOU!

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