

Chapter 3 Theories and Methods

Topic 3 Sociology and Science

Answers to QuickCheck Questions on page 195

1. Social phenomena that are external to and greater than the individual and that act on and constrain the individual's behaviour and consciousness.
2. Because they see large-scale social structures as the external cause of individuals' behaviour.
3. Meaningful social action.
4. Verstehen means empathy, or putting oneself in 'the shoes' of another. This allows the researcher to understand the subjective meanings of the actor's views and experiences.
5. Verificationism involves collecting evidence with the aim of proving a theory correct. Falsificationism involves attempting to prove a theory is wrong by seeking evidence that would falsify it.
6. A basic framework of assumptions, principles, methods and techniques set of principles shared by members of a scientific community, telling them what reality is like, what problems to work on and what sorts of answers they should find.
7. The paradigm defines the questions and in broad terms the answers, and the scientists work out how to reach the expected solutions.
8. Open systems are those in which the researcher cannot control or measure all the relevant variables; in closed systems the researcher can control and measure the variables (e.g. in a laboratory), so can make precise predictions.