**Glossary (list of terms in alphabetical order)**

**Chapter 1**

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| TERM | DEFINITION |
| Academic sociology | The way academic institutions describe and explain the social world. Characteristic are the systematic way of gathering knowledge, making explanations public  and subject to criticism, the development of coherent theories and rigorous testing. |
| Application question | Type of scientific question targeted towards applying scientific knowledge. |
| Background knowledge | The theories and observations that are known before the study commences. |
| Common sense | Everyday thinking, intuitions, beliefs and perceptions. |
| Comparative-case question | Question which includes some comparison of cases, such as multiple social contexts, multiple moments in time and/or multiple populations. |
| Cumulative science | The practice that theories and observations of earlier studies are incorporated in the work of successive studies. |
| Descriptive question | Type of scientific question targeted towards describing phenomena. |
| False theoretical question | Theoretical question which aims to explain something that does not exist. |
| Ill-defined question | Question which is vague and ambiguous. Such questions are contrasted with precise questions, which have clear interpretations. |
| Individual perspective | Type of explanation of human behavior which focuses on individual causes. |
| Literature review | Systematic overview of the theories and observations that are known (background knowledge), typically in a certain specialized field of research. |
| Macro level | Social contexts that are broader than meso-level units. Examples: nations, groups of nations, continents. |
| Meso level | Social contexts at the intermediate level. Examples: families, neighborhoods,schools, organizations. |
| Micro level | The level at which individuals operate. Commonly distinguished from meso level and macro level. |
| Normative question | Question that entails value judgments. |
| Personal trouble | Problem related to the personal life of an individual. Contrasted with social problem (public issue). |
| Precise question | Question which has clear interpretation. Such questions are contrasted with ill-defined questions, which are vague and ambiguous. |
| Private sociologists | The way human beings, in daily life, make sense of the social world. As such they are prone to, among other things, intuitive thinking, implicit reasoning,  development of incoherent and vague ideas, keeping knowledge private and searching for confirmations. Contrasted with academic sociology. |
| Proximate causes | Factors that are close to the phenomena to be explained. Proximate causes can be explained by ultimate causes. |
| Public issue | See: Social problem. |
| Question ingredients | Elements of a question which can be specified. These are: (1) behavior of interest, (2) social contexts, (3) period and (4) populations. |
| Scientific question | Question that does not entail value judgments. There are three types of scientific questions, namely: descriptive, theoretical and application. |
| Scientific relevance | Relevance of sociological work for the accumulation of sociological knowledge. |
| Social context | Social environment in which people are embedded. |
| Social intervention | Social policy measure. |
| Social phenomenon | Collective human behavior. |
| Social problem | Problem that: 1 goes beyond the personal troubles of the individual (it affects many people); 2 is an issue about which many people are concerned. Synonym: Public  issue. |
| Societal relevance | Relevance of sociological work for the understanding of social problems. |
| Sociological imagination | Type of explanation of human behavior which focuses on social causes. Synonym: Sociological perspective. |
| Sociological perspective | See: Sociological imagination. |
| Theoretical question | Type of scientific question targeted towards understanding phenomena. |
| Ultimate causes | Factors that underlie proximate causes. |