

Urban sociology

“Urban sociology is the sociological study of life and human interaction in metropolitan areas. It is a normative discipline of sociology seeking to study the structures, processes, changes and problems of an urban area and by doing so provide inputs for planning and policy making. In other words it is the sociological study of cities and their role in the development of society. Like most areas of sociology, urban sociologists use statistical analysis, observation, social theory, interviews, and other methods to study a range of topics, including migration and demographic trends, economics, poverty, race relations and economic trends.

The philosophical foundations of modern urban sociology originate from the work of sociologists such as Karl Marx, Ferdinand Tönnies, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Georg Simmel who studied and theorized the economic, social and cultural processes of urbanization and its effects on social alienation, class formation, and the production or destruction of collective and individual identities.

These theoretical foundations were further expanded upon and analyzed by a group of sociologists and researchers who worked at the University of Chicago in the early twentieth century. In what became known as the Chicago School of sociology the work of Robert Park, Louis Wirth and Ernest Burgess on the inner city of Chicago revolutionized the purpose of urban research in sociology but also the development of human geography through its use of quantitative and ethnographic research methods. The importance of the theories developed by the Chicago School within urban sociology have been critically sustained and critiqued but still remain one of the most significant historical advancements in understanding urbanization and the city within the social sciences.”

Wikipedia. *Urban sociology*. [online] Available at: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_sociology> [Accessed 16 September 2014].