

SR 968-22 Sociological Methodology

Sandra M. Anderson

Omega Graduate School

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Professor: Dr. Joshua Reichard

Assignment #1 – Core Essential Elements

1. Select One (1) Core Essential Element from the Syllabus Outline:

a. Create a 350-word original discussion paper (with cited sources) during the first week of the term. Post this document in DIAL.

b. Professor will check for quality of content and word-count requirements. Grade assigned will be Credit or No Credit (CR/NC).

Course Essential Elements

Course Essential Elements (EE)

1. **Sociological Framework for Cultural Analysis**

2. Faith-Integrated Sociological Analysis

3. Interdisciplinary Approach to Social Analysis

4. Methods for Christian Social Change

Sociological Framework for Cultural Analysis

To understand America from a sociological framework is to understand America from a cultural framework. Americans may have embraced and been influenced by elements of Christianity, but American culture has been secular from the start. “So, the same people who invented personal computers, email, chemotherapy, defibrillator paddles, crash test dummies, traffic lights, carbon dating, swivel chairs, post-it notes, zippers, chocolate chip cookies, dental floss, credit and debit cards and the Ferris wheel also believe in angels, demons and the literal truth of the book of *Genesis* more fervently than do the populations of any other modern technological society” (Hartman, 2019). Hartman's work details different sociological theories and theorists and looks at the accomplishments above as a paradox. But there is no paradox. The answer is found in the scriptures. Jesus said, “I am the way the truth, and the life (John 14:6). God loves His creation and wants to work through His people, in his time and in His way to carry out His Kingdom plan (Ephesians 1; NASB, 2020; Hartman, A., 2019).

My understanding is increasing to better analyze how to best approach sociological problems from one of the sociological theories, functionalism, conflict, and interactionism, from my last two sociology classes. These theories provide a framework for diagnosing a problem, and all may be applicable. Learning to diagnose which theory may be more prevalent when analyzing different facets of a problem and devising targeted and specific solutions may yield a

better outcome. The Hidden Threads Book Summary gave increased insight in explaining that one school of social philosophy holds that human freedom should be prioritized and social systems should be held accountable for problems. Radical social transformation is the only way to address problems. An alternative perspective is attributing evil to the individual rather than the institution. When laws are upheld and social order is preserved, problems are resolved. These views help to pinpoint if the problem is with individuals, society, or both (Reichard, 2024, p. 1).

Chapter 4 in Hidden Threads looks at the American tradition. One that I would like to highlight is the Social Gospel. Social Gospel emerged in the United States in the eighteenth century (2024, p.7). However, the social gospel is a part of the gospel story. When God chose to come to earth, he came through commoners, as a carpenter's son. Mary and Joseph were not even revered enough in society to be given a decent room. Jesus was born in a stable with animals (Luke 2). Jesus said, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the sky *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Matthew 8:20). Jesus could not have been more clear in setting a priority for His followers. The New Testament instructed believers to take care of one another and the poor (John 17; Luke 22). Then the disciples asked, "Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or *as* a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You? Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do *it* for one of the least of these, you did not do *it* for Me, either' " (Matthew 25:45). As Christian believers we need to collectively come together and truly follow the one we call Lord, Jesus.

Works Cited

Hartman, A. (2019). *A war for the soul of America: A history of the culture wars*. University of

Chicago Press.

New American Standard Bible (NASB), 2020. *Lockman Foundation*. (Original work published

in 1960).

Reichard, J. (2024). *Hidden threads book summary*. Omega Graduate School.