



Top 5 ...

Theoretical Perspective: the theoretical perspective of the researcher will always mean that the question of objectivity and value freedom will be raised. Whilst some sociologists, such as Weber suggest perspective and methodology can be separate, other such as **Gouldner** suggest that a form of committed sociology declaring intentions before research is necessary. E.g. Marxists will look at class, Feminists -gender

The Nature of Scientific Inquiry: The nature of scientific inquiry is to question without prejudice what is put before them and to test ideas and hypotheses whilst remaining neutral and objective. **Weber** argues that this is not acceptable to the sociologist – sociologists have a moral and ethical duty to ensure that their findings do not cause harm and to challenge political issues that do. Sociologists should be citizens first

Methodological Preference: The methodological preference of a researcher is another value that influences the idea of value freedom in sociological research. More modern Positivists prefer objective and scientific research and look to remain politically and morally neutral. Interpretivists on the other hand look to study society to understand the different perspectives and to challenge politics and hierarchies in society

Career Trajectories: Sociologists values may be challenged by their desire to pursue a career in academia. Funding bodies have areas of specific interest that do not always match up with the areas of interest of researchers. It can be argued that having little option over research topics means that sociological research is value free, however **Gouldner** suggests that funding is given for research into the interests of funding bodies.

Data Collection: **Weber** argued that sociologists should be objective in their collection of data – removing personal feelings and prejudices – either by using open questions to enable respondents to give their view, or by using others to conduct data collection for separate analysis. Weber also suggested that the interpretation of data is where unconscious bias and values may be present, and therefore these should be subject to peer review.

things to consider - values in Sociology