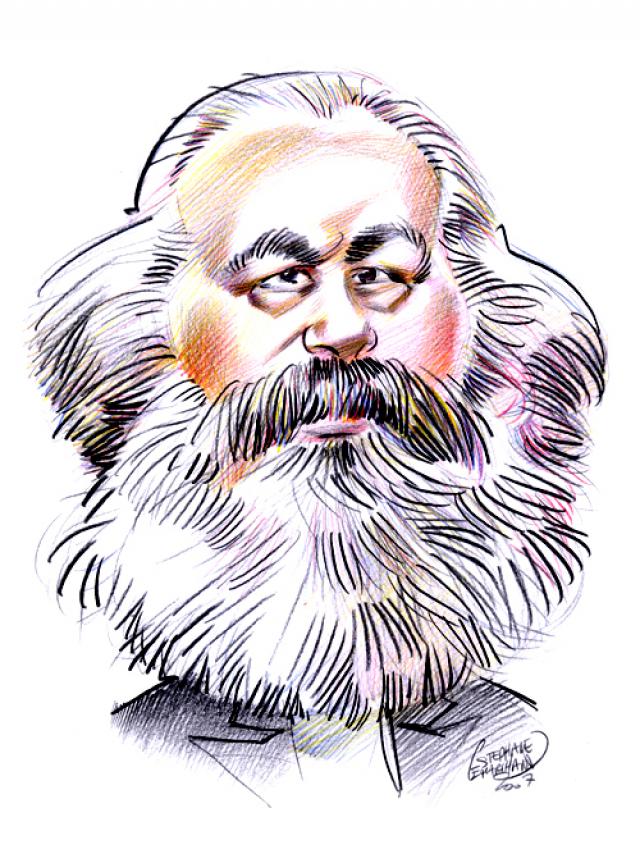
Year 2 Sociology

**Paper 3: Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods**



Theory

Booklet 1: Theory

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Class:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

These questions are on paper 3.

**Question 5 is worth 10 marks** - this takes the same form as the 10 mark questions no item questions you are familiar with from Paper 1 eg *Outline and explain* ***two*** *reasons why some sociologists choose to use official statistics in their research.*

**Question 6 is worth 20 marks** – this is a theory and methods essay question worth 20 marks. It is accompanied by an item. You may be asked about theory or methods in these questions.

**What the exam board expect you to know**

* quantitative and qualitative methods of research; research design
* sources of data, including questionnaires, interviews, participant and non-participant observation, experiments, documents and official statistics
* the distinction between primary and secondary data, and between quantitative and qualitative data
* the relationship between positivism, interpretivism and sociological methods; the nature of ‘social facts’
* the theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing choice of topic, choice of method(s) and the conduct of research
* consensus, conflict, structural and social action theories
* the concepts of modernity and post-modernity in relation to sociological theory
* the nature of science and the extent to which Sociology can be regarded as scientific
* the relationship between theory and methods
* debates about subjectivity, objectivity and value freedom
* the relationship between Sociology and social policy.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Questions may be based specifically on the following areas:** | Do I have completed Notes? | Have I made revision Notes? | Have I memorised this info? | Have I practised exam style questions? |
| The difference between consensus and conflict theories of society, including consensus theories such as functionalism, the New Right, and conflict theories, ie Marxism and feminism; the major variants of such theories, eg scientific and humanistic Marxism; liberal, radical, Marxist etc feminism.  **Marx, Gramsci, Althusser, Durkheim, Parsons, Merton**  The difference between structural theories such as functionalism and Marxism, and action theories; the main types of action theory, such as social action theory, symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology.  **Weber, Mead, Blumer, Becker, Goffman, Garfinkel** |  |  |  |  |
| The concepts of modernity and postmodernity, including variants such as late modernity.  **Baudrillard, Giddens, Beck, Harvey**  Modernist and postmodernist theories of contemporary society.  **Baudrillard, Giddens, Beck, Harvey** |  |  |  |  |
| Debates about the scientific status of sociology: positivist and interpretivist views.  **Durkheim, Weber, Glaser & Strauss, Atkinson**  Different views of the natural sciences, eg Popper, Kuhn, realism, and implications for sociology’s scientific status.  **Popper, Kuhn, Keat & Urry** |  |  |  |  |
| The relationship between theoretical perspective and preference for particular research methods and sources of data, eg positivism and quantitative data, interpretivism and qualitative data.  **Durkheim, Atkinson, Jack Douglas** |  |  |  |  |
| Concepts of objectivity, subjectivity, value freedom and ideology.  **Comte, Durkheim, Marx, Weber, Becker, Gouldner**  Different views of whether sociology can and should be objective or value free, eg classical sociology, value neutrality and committed sociology; relativism. |  |  |  |  |
| The difference between social problems and sociological problems; perspectives on social policy and on the role of sociology in relation to policy.  **Worsley, Comte, Durkheim, Marx, Murray** |  |  |  |  |

**Feminism (conflict)**

Possible questions

**10 marks**

Outline and explain two feminist views of the position of women in society.

**20 marks**

**Item B3**

*Feminist see Society as based upon conflict between men and women. In patriarchal societies, men are able to dominate and exploit women and ensure that Society is run in the interests of men. However, different feminists have different views about the causes of male dominance and what should be done about it.*

Applying material from item B3 and your own knowledge, evaluate the usefulness of feminist approaches in understanding Society.

**Item B12**

*All feminists argue that women occupy and subordinate position in society and all feminists wish to end the state of affairs. However, they differ about both the causes of the problem and it's solution. For example, liberal feminist argue that traditional attitudes and cultural stereotypes about women's abilities have kept them subordinated, but that changes in laws, policies and socialization patterns will gradually bring about gender equality. However, boats radical and Marxist feminist argue that women's oppression has deeper roots and requires more fundamental, revolutionary changes in order to end it.*

Applying material from item B12 and your own knowledge Evaluate the contribution of feminists to our understanding of society.

**Item B19**

Feminism is a conflict theory that sees Society as being divided by gender. Feminists argue but as a result of patriarchy, women are subordinated and oppressed by men. However, different feminist theories have different views on how gender inequality is caused and how women can be liberated from this oppression.

Applying material from item B19 and your own knowledge, Evaluate the usefulness of feminist approaches to our understanding of the role of women in society today.

**What you need to know about Feminism for paper 3**

Marxist, liberal, radical, intersectional, difference and post-structural feminism.

Evaluation of liberal feminism?

Feminism sees society as and seeks to describe, explain and change the position of women in society. All feminists oppose women’s but there are diasgreements among them about its causes and how to overcome it.

**Liberal or reformist feminism**

Concern with human rights and civil rights. Progress towards equal rights should come from gradual reforms.

Law and policies

Cultural change

Sex and gender Anne Oakley said there should be a differentiation between the 2 meaning that

Attitudes are

Overall liberal feminists are optimistic and believe in progress. They think that

Functionalists saw gender roles as being divided into instrumental roles (public) and expressive roles (private). Parsons saw men as and women as

Liberal feminists critique this and think that

Remember although liberal feminism critiques this functionalist view, it is the closest we get in feminism to ‘consensus’ theory. Why?

**Radical feminism** emerged in 1970s – key concept is patriarchy. Radical feminists believe that patriarchy is universal, is the most fundamental cause of inequality. Men are women’s enemy. All men oppress women and benefit from patriarchy. Solutions include separatism (living apart from men), consciousness raising and political lesbianism. Theorists are Susan Brownmiller (1976) who claims that fear of rape deters women from going out at night. Adrienne Rich (1981) who claims that men force women into narrow and unsatisfying ‘compulsory heterosexuality’. Germaine Greer (2000) argues for the creation of all female households.

Evaluation of Marxist feminism. Economics is in all areas of life so Marxist feminists are right to emphasise the role of capitalism in the oppression of women. BUT what about women’s subordination in non-capitalist societies? Unpaid labour may be important for Capitalism but why do women do it? Marxist feminism does not look enough at the ways that men oppress women (not just capitalism).

**An alternative dual systems feminism** looks at the economic system (capitalism) and the sex-gender system (patriarchy). Walby argues that capitalism and patriarchy are interrelated but the interests of the two are not the same so should be examined separately and capitalism is more powerful. Anna Pollert reminds us that patriarchy is just a descriptive term whereas capitalism is a system.

Bartlett claims we should look at non-economic factors to understand women’s oppression. Looks at **ideology** which maintains women’s oppression. Ideology presents the nuclear family and the division of labour as natural and normal. Patriarchy is very deeply rooted in our consciousness.

Marxism Feminism reject liberal feminist view and radical view. Instead they believe that women’s subordination is rooted in , although individual men benefit from women’s position, capitalism benefits the most. Women are unpaid homemakers so depend on the rest of the family. Cheap labour for employers (as there is an assumption they will depend on husband’s earnings). Reserve labour, reproduce workforce (nurture and socialise children to become workers), absorb anger Fran Ansley describes wives as ‘takers of shit’ – they soak up their husband’s frustration because of exploitation at work. Marxist feminists argue that if capitalism as overthrown then women’s lives would be better.

Evaluation of radical feminism?

**Evaluation of post-structural feminism.**

**Difference feminism**

Women are not just one group. Different classes / races have different experiences of feminism. Essentialism is the idea that all women share the same essence and this may not be useful. We should instead be focussing on diversity.

**Poststructural feminism eg Judith Butler** are interested in discourse (different ways of thinking). By defining others in certain ways the users of discourse gain power. If we can understand different discourses this may give us an understanding of the power relationships.

Give some examples of different discourses which may affect women.

[Kimberlé Crenshaw](https://time.com/5786710/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality/), an American law professor who coined the term in 1989 explained Intersectional feminism as, “a prism for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other,” in a recent interview with [Time](https://time.com/5786710/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality/).

“All inequality is not created equal,” she says. An intersectional approach shows the way that people’s social identities can overlap, creating compounding experiences of discrimination.

“We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigrant status. What’s often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts,” Crenshaw said.

Intersectional feminism centres the voices of those experiencing overlapping, concurrent forms of oppression in order to understand the depths of the inequalities and the relationships among them in any given context.

**Functionalism (consensus)**

Possible questions

10 marks

* Outline and explain two functionalist concepts.
* Outline and explain two arguments that suggest functionalist theories may have little to contribute to an understanding of society today.

20 marks

**Item B11**

*Functionalism is a consensus theory. It sees society is based on a set of shared values and this value consensus is the basis for social order. It is also a systems theory. It emphasizes the way the social system shapes social institutions and behaviour patterns of individuals. Society is seen as a system with its own separate existence and needs. However, some critics claim that functionalism understates the extent of conflict in society. Others argue that functionalism is too deterministic, portraying individuals as simply the puppets of the social system.*

Applying material from item B11 and your own knowledge, Evaluate the claim that functionalism understates both the extent of conflict in society and the ability of social actors to create Society through into action.

What you need to know about Functionalism for paper 3

The difference between consensus and conflict theories of society, including functionalism.

Suggested content………

Parsons

Durkheim

Value Consensus and Social Order

Parts of the Social System

System’s needs

Social Change.

Merton’s Critique

External Critiques

Useful mindmaps…..

1. What the theory is using Key Terms
2. Strengths and Criticisms

**Socialisation and social control**

Individuals need to be integrated into the social system.

PARSONS says this is done by

**Primary and secondary socialisation** (family, media, religion, education)

**Social control** positive sanctions to reward conformity. Negative ones to punish deviance.

**Key Concepts PARSONS**

Value consensus – everyone agrees on shared norms and values.

Social order – everyone agrees so there is order not chaos.

**Organic analogy**

PARSONS claimed that society is like a biological organism.

System – parts fit together like bits of the human body.

System needs – the needs must be met or an organism will die – same for society. Functionalism sees society as having basic needs which must be met to survive.

Functions – the function of any part of a system is the contribution it makes to meeting needs. Eg the circulation system in the body carried oxygen. The economy in society meets the needs for food and shelter.

**Overview**

Durkheim was the main theorist in 19th century but Parsons is also very important. We have met functionalist in crime, religion, family and education.

This is a MACRO theory (focussing on the needs of the whole society)

It is a STRUCTURAL theory (focussing on the needs of structures within society.

It is a CONSENSUS theory (based on agreement)

**PARSONS** a building block approach to describing society with the following bricks……

For Parsons, society is a system with its own needs. Which are AGIL…**adaptation** (members needs are met through economic sub-system) **goal attainment** (goals are set and resources allocated trough political sub-system) **Integration** (different parts must fit together – helped by religion, education and the media), **latency** (society is maintained over time but socialising individuals)

**Durkheim Anomie etc**

Traditional society was based on ‘mechanical solidarity’ with little division of labour. Industrial society brings division of labour, movement and a variety of norms. Social solidarity is weakened which leads to ‘anomie’ **or normlessness**.

Durkheim thinks society exists over and above its members.

Whole social system.

institutions

Status roles

Norms

Actions

For Parsons – 2 types of society – traditional and modern. Modern society has norms of self interest and people are judged by universalistic standards. Societies slowly evolve from one type to another. In a modern society the functions of kinship are replaced by political parties, schools churches etc

**Evaluation of Functionalism**

Merton’s internal critique of functionalism

1. Indispensability `
2. Functional unity
3. Universal functionalism

Difference between manifest and latent functions.

External critiques of functionalism.

Conflict perspective criticism **–** theorists such as Marxists criticism Functionalism as it is unable to explain conflict and change. Organic analogy is not a good one as organisms are stable and harmonious but society is not a harmonious whole according to Marxists. It is based on exploitation and divided into classes. If we are not critical of society we legitimize the privileged position of powerful groups.

Action perspective criticism – Dennis Wrong criticises the deterministic view of the individual. In functionalism individuals have no free will or choice, they are just puppets whose strings are pulled by the social system. The action perspective thinks that individuals create society by their interactions. Action perspective sees individuals as constructing society by giving meaning to their worlds rather than society existing above individuals as Functionalism suggests.

Postmodernist criticisms functionalism assumes society is stable and orderly but postmodernists claim there is a lot of diversity and instability in society. An overall theory is not possible as society is increasingly fragmented.

**New Right (consensus)**

Another consensus theory that often gets considered alongside functionalism is the New Right. Not everyone agrees that the New Right is a consensus theory (there is no consensus on it!). The ways in which it is a consensus theory are very similar to functionalism.

*Exam Hint: If you get a question about consensus theories, you can talk about the New Right, but to question the extent to which it is one would be considered a good analysis.*

The New Right combines neo-liberal economics (free markets and minimal government intervention) with more traditional conservative views on social issues (such as a traditional view on family life, school discipline and law and order).

The New Right, in many ways, shares the views of functionalists with the main difference being that they argue that, in the late 20th century in countries like the UK and the USA, society became dysfunctional: the necessary consensus broke down. The New Right argument is that a range of government policies, most notably those associated with the welfare state, undermined the key institutions that create the value consensus and ensure social solidarity.

An example of this is the family. The New Right argues that liberal left politicians and welfare policies have undermined the traditional nuclear family, particularly by creating a large increase in lone-parent families. They argue that this has led to inadequate socialisation, particularly for boys with no father figure. Charles Murray argues that this has led to the creation of an underclass.

New Right ideas were instrumental in changing modern conservatism in the 1970s and were highly influential on both Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. It would be possible to argue that the New Right is a political movement rather than a sociological theory; its observations on those groups in society with very different and conflicting norms and values can lead some to question whether it is a consensus theory. However, the New Right support a society like that envisaged by functionalists and support government policies which to try and change society in that way (such as tax breaks to encourage traditional nuclear families)

**Marxism (conflict)**

Possible questions

**10 marks**

* Outline and explain two criticisms of Marxist views of society.

**20 marks**

Marxists see society as based on conflict between social classes. Those who own the means of production are able to exploit those who do not and are also able to impose their views on society. However, different Marxists have different views about the nature of capitalist society and about how social change occurs.

Applying material from Item B2 and your knowledge, evaluate the usefulness of Marxist approaches in understanding society..

Marxist see class as a fundamental division in society, in which the proletariat are exploited by the capitalist owners of the means of production. The capitalist class maintain their dominance partly by force and partly by ideological control through the media, the education system and so on. However, Marxists predict that ultimately, the proletariat will overthrow capitalism by means of a revolution. For Marxists, social change is not the gradual evolutionary process seen by consensus theories. However, other sociologists argue that class is not the only basis for inequality and that revolutions have failed to occur in advanced capitalist societies.

Applying material from item B9 and your own knowledge evaluate the contribution of different Marxist theorists to understanding Society.

**What you need to know about Marxism for paper 3**

The difference between consensus and conflict theories of society, including gMarxism.

Suggested content………

Humanistic and scientific Marxism

Marxist concepts:

Mode of production

Economic base

Superstructure

How capitalism works through class consciousness, alienation and ideology.

Links to communism.

Criticisms of Marx

Gramsci and hegemony and evaluation

Althusser’ structural Marxism and criticisms of this,

Useful mindmaps….. 1. What the theory is using Key Terms

2. Strengths and Criticisms

Evaluation problems with determinism and predictions.

Evaluation – problems with Marx’s view of class

Important concepts. At the beginning of human history, no classes, no private ownership so no exploitation. Everyone works and everything is share. As soon as someone owns production then there is exploitation. **Ancient** society has slaves. **Feudal** society has serfs tied to the land. **Capitalist** society has free wage labourers.

**Capitalism** has a division between proletariat (who are legally free) and bourgeoisie. Proletariat are not really free as have to **sell their labour power** to the bourgeoisie and they do not receive the profits they raise. Competition forces low wages to raise profits.

The classes are polarised. Members of the proletariat become **conscious** of how bad their lives are, this is called ‘**class consciousness’** as they become aware of need to overthrow capitalism.

**Ideology** – bourgeoisie aim to control the ideas of the proletariat. Ideas in society are those of the dominant class. This can create a **false consciousness**.

**Alienation** – this comes from loss of control and then separation from our true nature.,

**Revolution and communism** – the state exists to protect the interests of the ruling class. Marx thinks that the proletariat will overthrow the bourgeoisie and become the first majority to overthrow a minority. The state and class will disappear, private ownership and exploitation will disappear.

Useful terms

**Mode of production** (forces and relations of production)

**Economic base of society –** this determines all other features of society.

**Superstructures** all the bits of society that come from this base.

Materialism = idea that humans are beings with needs

How are these met?

Through history….unaided human labour, then tools, machines, human co-operation and social relations of production.

This creates - 1. A class who owns means of production

2. A class of labourers.

**Comparison to Functionalism**

Similar to Durkheim - both could see harm caused my modern Industrial Society. Both believed that you could understand society scientifically.

Different because Marx did not see progress as smooth and gradual. Saw historical change as a process where capitalism would increase human misery before giving may to a classless society where humans would be free.

Other Marxist Theories

Gramsci and hegemony **humanistic Marxism**

**Hegemony** means ideological or moral leadership. This idea is used to explain how the ruling class keep their position. They use coercion (force) and **hegemony -** ideas and values to trick the weaker class into thinking their stronger class should be in power. The working class can only win the battle by producing their own intellectuals who would put together a different vision of how society should work. This would be called the ‘**counter hegemony’**  it would be based on socialist rather than capitalist values.

Evaluation of Gramsci

Althusser’s **structuralist** Marxism

Humanist Marxists believe that humans can change the course of history. **Structuralist** Marxists believe that social structures shape history and these could be studied scientifically. Althusser is the most important structural Marxist. He sees society as having 3 structures or Levels, draw these below. Draw Craib’s analogy next to it and explain.

What can you remember about RSAs and ISAs?

How does Althusser criticise humanist Marxism?

Evaluation of Althusser

**Is Sociology a Science? – Part 1 Positivism and Interpretivism**

10 markers

* Outline and explain two ways in which structuralist theories of society differ from social action or interpretivist theories. (10)
* Outline and explain two reasons why positivists prefer quantitative research methods (10)

20 markers

*Interpretivists view social reality as made up of meanings and motives. To understand these meanings and motives, sociologists must be able to empathise with the people they study. Furthermore, interpretivists argue that society can only be studied subjectively and therefore they favour qualitative methods of research.*

Applying material from item B1 and your own knowledge, evaluate the usefulness of interpretivist approaches to our understanding of society

*Interpretivists argue that sociology is about investigating the meanings and motives of social actors, and so the aim of researches should be to obtain an empathetic, and subjective understanding of people's meanings. In the view of interpretivists, this can only be achieved by employing open ended qualitative research methods such as participant observation and unstructured interviews. These methods allow people to act naturally or respond fully and freely to the sociologists question, producing data that is high in validity. However, other sociologists argue that these methods produce biased data which is that the results of the research is subjective interpretation of events and responses.*

Applying material from item B6 and your own knowledge, Evaluate the interpretivist claim that qualitative research methods are the most appropriate ones for studying Society.

Positivists believe that sociology can be a science by following the logic and methods of the natural sciences. In the view of positivism, this involves Gathering objective quantitative data to verify or prove hypothesis and Discover causal laws. While accepting the positivist view of science, interactionists reject the claim that we can study human beings in this way. However, positivism is just one view of what constitutes science. For example, Popper argues that science involves seeking to falsify hypothesis, while Kuhn argues that a scientific subject is one that has a unified paradigm.

Applying material from Item B7 and your own knowledge, Evaluate The claim that whether sociology can be a science depends on what we mean by science in the first place.

Positivists argue that by replicating the logic and methods of the natural sciences, sociology can uncover laws of human behaviour. They believe that, like natural scientists, sociologists should you use quantitative data to deduce objectively whether a hypothesis is true or false. However, sociologists from other perspectives have different views, not only on whether this is possible but on the very nature of science itself.

Applying material from Item B8 and your own knowledge, Evaluate the claim that sociology can and should be a science.

Ensure you cover Durkheim, Weber, Glaser & Strauss, Atkinson

What can you remember about Positivism and Interpretivism from last year?

Positivism and suicide.

What do positivists believe about objective quantitative research?

What is verificationism?

What do positivists believe about scientific method?

**Interpretivism**

Why might scientific methods be no good for Sociology?

Other types of sociologists who reject the view that sociology is a science.

Explain how Interpretivists might respond to Durkheim’s views about suicide.

Explain the 2 types of interpretivists

Interactionists

Phenomenologists and ethnomethodologists

Verstehen and qualitative research

**Is Sociology a Science?**

Content – remember the work from last week about positivists and interpretivists.

What is science?

Durkheim, Douglas. Other views of scientific sociology.

Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, Realists Keat and Urry.

Past questions

10 markers

Outline and explain two arguments against the view that sociology is a science.

20 markers

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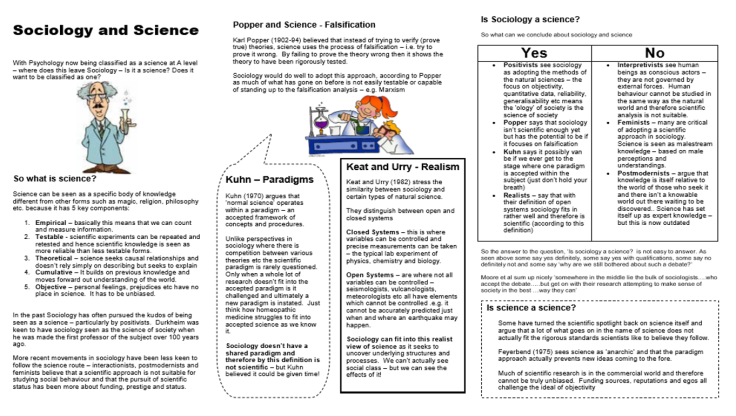
Applying material from Item B8 and your own knowledge, Evaluate the claim that sociology can and should be a science.

Early positivist sociologists believe that sociology was a ‘science of society’ that would enable us to discover the causes of social problems and offer solutions to them. Sociologist research findings would then enable the state to implement appropriate social policies to deal with the problems. In the same way as medical research can discover cures for diseases, so sociological research would help solve society's problems. However, Marxists claim that the main function of social policy is to maintain capitalism and that the role of sociologists should therefore be to criticise policy, not to serve the capitalist state.

Applying material from item B15 and your own knowledge, Evaluate different sociological perspectives reviews of the relationship between sociology and social policy.

Is Sociology a Science?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes | No |



**Objectivity and values in Sociology**

10 markers

Outline and explain two arguments against the view that sociology can be value free.

Outline and explain two arguments for the view that sociological research should not be value free.

20 marker

**Item B10**

*Some sociologists argue that their research should take the side of the underdog. For example, Becker points out that traditionally, sociology has tended to take the side of the powerful groups in society, often accepting their view of the World. As a result, the standpoint of less powerful groups have been largely hidden. Becker therefore argues that sociology should identify with the underdog, empathize with them and uncover their world view. However, others have argued that there is no place with values in Sociology and that sociologists should take an objective ‘value neutral’ approach to research.*

Applying material from item B10 and your own knowledge, Evaluate the view that sociologists should take the side of the underdog and be committed to social change.

**What you need to know for Paper 3**

Concepts of objectivity, subjectivity, value freedom and ideology.

**Comte, Durkheim, Marx, Weber, Becker, Gouldner**

Different views of whether sociology can and should be objective or value free, eg classical sociology, value neutrality and committed sociology; relativism.

**Objectivity and Values in Sociology**

One view of science is that it produces . What does it mean if we say scientists take an objective approach to their research?

Con sociologists be objective? What values may come into a sociologist’s project? Give examples.

**Classic Sociologists and values**

**Early positivists**

**Comte and Durkheim** thought that the job of sociology was to discover the truth about how society works and to uncover the laws that make it work. This knowledge could solve social problems and improve human life. Their approach was aiming to be **objective** and **scientific**

**Karl Marx**

Debate about whether he was a positivist. He saw himself as a scientist. He focused on discovering the evolution of human society from class- based to classless. He wanted to reveal the truth of this development. He would have seen this as a scientific pursuit.

**Marx, Durkheim and Comte** see no distinction between the facts as revealed by science and the values we should hold. They believe scientific method will tell us what these should be.

**Max Weber**

In contrast Max Weber makes a distinction between value judgements and facts. A researcher may show that divorcees are more likely to commit suicide. This does not mean that we should make divorce harder to obtain. The fact does not mean we should accept this value judgement. Weber thought values were **important**.

4 ways values should be used in research according to Weber.

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Values as a guide to research** |
| 1. **Data collection and hypothesis testing.** |
| 1. **Values in the interpretation of data** |
| 1. **Values and the sociologist as a citizen** |

**Value freedom – Do Sociologists bring their own values into their research?**

Marxists, interactionists and feminists argue for a **committed** sociology in which the sociologist spells out the importance of their values to their research.

Modern Positivists

By the mid 20th century positivists argued that their own values were irrelevant to research.

Why?

1. **They wanted to appear scientific**
2. **Social position of sociology**

**Committed Sociology**

**Gouldner & Becker**

**Further considerations**

|  |
| --- |
| **Funding and careers** |
| **Perspectives and methods** |
| **Objectivity and realism** |

**SUMMARY** Can Sociologists study society objectively as they are part of what they are studying?

3 main positions on this can be identified:

1. Value freedom is possible
2. Value freedom is not possible
3. Values should be celebrated and incorporated into sociological research

**Value Free Sociology: Positivism**

This has developed from Positivists who believe that we should copy the methodology of the natural sciences (like Biology, Chemistry etc).  Like the natural scientist the sociologist studies phenomena that exist totally externally to the individual. These social facts can be observed objectively by following the scientific procedure. Any personal or political beliefs and biases of the researcher are irrelevant as long as the research is well designed and the findings are not altered or tampered with.

**Value Freedom is not Possible: Interpretivism (Weber)**

For Weber values, unlike facts, cannot be disproved and he saw an essential role for values in Sociological research:

* **Values as a guide to research: –**values are essential to help us choose which aspects of social life to study.
* **Values and data collection: –**When collecting data Weber believed we should keep our values out of the process.
* **Values and data interpretation: –**values are important again when we interpret what the research is telling us.  We need to put the findings within a theoretical concept.  We need to tell others about our values so that our interpretations can be made in context.
* **Values and effects of research: –**Weber believed that as sociologists we have a responsibility to look at the effects of our research.  We cannot hide behind ‘objectivity’ at this stage – particularly if our findings can cause harm.

**Sociology cannot and should not be value free**:

**Becker (Interactionist)**

Becker (famous for labelling theory) argued that sociologists should argue from the side of the ‘underdog’ (criminals; homeless; mentally ill patients etc) because little is known about their position.

**Gouldner (Marxist)**

Gouldner argued the opposite and suggested that sociologists should focus on, and challenge the really powerful groups as these create the ‘structures of oppression’. Gouldner is critical of Becker’s position which he sees as an over-sentimental view of disadvantaged groups. Instead, Gouldner advocates a Marxist position in siding against the powerful, exploitive groups in society.

**Feminism**

Feminists agree with this idea of exposing exploitive groups, but see the key issue being the patriarchal nature of society – how males dominate and control society.

**Conclusion**

The Interpretive position argues that there are no such things as ‘social facts’, just many different ways of interpreting social behaviour, according to the values of the researcher. Positivists disagree, and say that there is a real, factual world out there and that sociologists can objectively observe, record and report on what is going on out there irrespective of their values.

**Action theory**

10 markers

Outline and explain two concepts that symbolic interactionist use to understand social life.

20 markers

*Action approaches reject the idea that we are simply puppets whose behaviour is determined by tightly scripted roles in post on us by Society. Instead, they start from the assumption that we create and shape Society through our choices and actions. For example, interactionist argue that we create the social world through our interaction with one another, based on the meanings we give to the situations. Similarly, ethnomethodologists argue that we use common sense knowledge to construct a set of shared meanings. However, critics argue that action approaches ignore the influence of wider social structures.*

Applying material from item B13 and your own knowledge, Evaluate the contribution of action approach cheers to our understanding of social behaviour.

**What you need to know for Paper 3**

The main types of action theory, such as social action theory, symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology.

**Weber, Mead, Blumer, Becker, Goffman, Garfinkel**

**2 types of theory – structural and action**

**Explain the difference**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Structural | Action |

Weber’s social action theory

Sociological explanation has two levels.

1. The level of cause
2. The level of meaning

We must account for both levels to have a full explanation.

There are different types of meanings that people give to their actions.

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Instrumentally rational action |
| 1. Value rational action |
| 1. Traditional Action |
| 1. Affectual Action |

**Evaluation of Weber**

* Schutz – shows that Webers view of action is too focused on individuals and can’t explain the shared nature of meanings. People understand the meaning of each other’s actions but Weber does not account for this.
* This theory is very difficult to apply.
* Weber advocated the use of ‘verstehen’ which is when we put ourself in others’ place but we can never be that person or truly understand their meanings.

**Symbolic interactionism** this focusses on our ability to create the social world through actions and interactions. These interactions are based on the meanings we give to situations.

Mead – unlike animals our behavior is not shaped by instinct. We give meanings to the things that are significant to us so we created and inhabit a world of meanings.

How does Mead illustrate this?

How do we interpret other peoples’ meanings?

Explain how Blumer continues this theory after Mead’s death

Labelling Theory

This is the best known application of interactionist ideas. You will see this theory in education and in crime. Remind yourself of the work of Becker from these topics.

Another good example is that of mental health. We can see an individual as having a career from pre-patient with symptoms to being labelled by a psychiatrist to hospital in-patient to discharge. Each stage has its own status and problems. Foe example ‘mental patient’ may become our master status in the eyes of society.

Evaluation? This is seen as a theory that emphasizes free will and choice but can be seen as too deterministic.

**Goffman**

How is Goffman different from ‘labelling theory?’

Why is his approach described as ‘dramaturgical’

Presentation of the self and impression management

Goffman’s view of roles

**Evaluation of symbolic interactionism**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Strengths  Recognizes that people create society through their choices and meanings.  Is not as deterministic as structural theories such as functionalism. | Criticisms   * Some claim that this theory is just a collection of descriptions rather than an explanation. * Ignores wider social structures – just looks at face to face interactions and just not explain consistent patterns in behavior in the way that functionalism might. * No all action is meaningful |

**Phenomenology**

This is the theory that all information about the social world is the product of the human mind. It tries to understand the shared social meanings that people use to make sense of the world around them. Phenomenologists aim to study how people experience social action and how they organize it into social categories called **phenomena.**

**Phenomena** are things which have characteristics in common according to our senses.

Schutz calls these categorisations ‘**typifications’**

**Ethnomethodology**

This is closely related to phenomenology and is associated with **Garfinkel** it isan interpretivist approach that aims to analyse how people construct and make sense of routine social activity by uncovering the common sense rules that govern all social interactions and situations. Most people unconsciously share complex unwritten rules using this commonsensical knowledge.

Social meanings can be unclear. He is interested in **reflexivity** this is the way that two individuals in a social interaction mirror each other’s behavior so that the interaction makes sense to them both.

**It is important to understand that this theory looks at how social meanings are constructed rather than accepting that society is something which exists ‘out there’.**

Garfinkel and his students tried to demonstrate social order by ‘breaching experiments’. One way they did this was to act as lodgers in their own homes ((being polite etc), by disrupting people’s sense of order their parents became anxious etc.

Evaluation

Good to see us not as puppets of the social system which is what functionalism does. BUT these theorists spend time uncovering rules we already know. Also ignores how wider structures of power and inequality affect meanings that individuals construct.

Structuration Combines Structuralism and Social Action

* **Giddens** and other claim that sociologists should look at the interaction between individuals and the social structures that influence these interactions.
* Structuration theorists say that individuals have to conform to the rules of social structures and social systems. Lots of actions depend on these structures. Eg language – you need to understand the rules of language to communicate with others.
* BUT Giddens also argues that structure depend on people living by them. They can be changed by the actions of individuals. This is more like what action theorists say.
* Individuals may respond the structures in different ways. Individuals have an awareness of the social rules and structures and have some level of choice about how to react to them.

*Structuration theory assumes that if people want to change the world they can. Who would disagree with this and why?*

**Globalisation, modernity and postmodernity**

**What you need to know for Paper 3**

The concepts of modernity and postmodernity, including variants such as late modernity.

**Baudrillard, Giddens, Beck, Harvey**

Modernist and postmodernist theories of contemporary society.

**Baudrillard, Giddens, Beck, Harvey**

10 markers

Outline and explain two reasons for the growth of globalisation.

Outline and explain two arguments that suggest that Society may have moved beyond modernity to a new stage of postmodernity.

Outline and explain two ways in which modernist approaches differ from postmodernist approaches to the study of society.

20 Markers

*According to some sociologists, recent changes such as those associated with globalisation have resulted in a major change in the nature of today's Society. For example, postmodernists argue that we no longer live in modern society but are now living in a media saturated postmodern society in which it is impossible to distinguish image from reality or to change society for the better. As a result, postmodernists argue, we need new theories to explain this new kind of society. However, some critics argue that although there have been major changes in society, these are a continuation of modernity rather than a completely new type of society.*

Applying material from item B14 and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that we are now living in a postmodern age.

Postmodernists argue that due to the significant changes that have taken place in society, the modern world is dissolving. This, it is claimed, is due to factors such as increased fragmentation and living in a media saturated Society. However, other sociologists acknowledge that while rapid changes have occurred since the 1970s, factors such as social class inequalities are still significant in today's Society.

Applying material from item B18 and your own knowledge, Evaluate the claim that we are now living in a postmodern Society.

**Definitions**

Modernity refers to the modern industrial world. This involves the belief that society can make progress through

Globalisation is concerned with the interconnectedness of people across national boundaries and we are no living in a global village

Postmodernity is the view that society has progressed from modernity

Modernity

Nation state this is the key political unit in modern society

Capitalism this is the economy of modern society

Rationalist science and technology these are the ways of thinking that dominate modern society

Individualism

How was this changed with a move to globalization? (Refer to technology, economy, political changes and culture and identity)

Postmodernism

This is a major intellectual movement that has emerged since the 70s and has been very influential in Sociology. This is an unstable world which is fragmented and where image and reality cannot be separated. We define ourselves by what we consume. It is a new kind of society which requires a new kind of theory.

Work is flexible, culture is plural (we live lots of different roles so people interpret society in their own different ways) and globalization has made boundaries unimportant.

Theorists

Lyotard (1979) looks at the consequences this has for language. Claiming that we can not understanding language through one theory. There is not one overall language with set meanings. We play a series of ‘language games’ where different meanings exist in different contexts.

Baudrillard looks at the links between postmodern society and consumption. He looks at how we consume ‘signs’. Society is based on buying and selling knowledge in the form of images and signs. These ‘signs’ stand for nothing on their own and are not symbol of a real thing. Eg a child might buy a poster of their favourite film character but this signifier (the poster) represents something that is not actually real (the character). He is very negative about society particularly television which he sees as confusing. We have lost our ability to tell what is real so we have lost our ability to improve society. We live in a ‘hyper-reality’ – we cannot tell what is real and what is not.

Criticisms of postmodernism

It annoys Marxists because

Baudrillard is seen as too pessimistic Harvey says that we should be more optimistic about how to change society for the better.

Lyotard is seen as contradicting himself.

An alternative theory ‘late modernity’

Giddens argues that we are in a state of ‘late modernity’ a continuation of modernity rather than a move to ‘post-modernity’. This is a society where changes are happening quickly due to two things

1. Reflexivity
2. Disembedding

So there is constant change. This is a state of society with many risks such a military risks of war but unlike postmodernists Giddens thinks we can intervene to improve things.

Beck (1992) risk society. Urich Beck is in the enlightenment tradition. The means he believes that this kind of society involves greater individualization. We are not ruled by tradition. SO we have o think for ourselves and reflect on the consequences of our actions. We must constantly take account of risks for ourselves (reflexive modernization). Being risk conscious is central to our culture. He thinks society can be improved. We can ‘minimise risks’ on a political scale eg reducing the risk of nuclear war.

Evaluation of ‘late modernity’.

Good as they provide a sociological alternative to postmodernism and show that rational analysis of society remains possible.

BUT we can’t always weigh up our risks and react to them and some experience more risks in life than others. The poor may be exposed to more environmental risk than others.

Rustin

Hirst

**Sociology and Social policy.**

10 markers

Outline and explain two reasons why some sociologists suggest researches should not involve themselves in applied research to assist governments informing their social policies.

20 markers

Early positivist sociologists believe that sociology was a ‘science of society’ that would enable us to discover the causes of social problems and offer solutions to them. Sociologist research findings would then enable the state to implement appropriate social policies to deal with the problems. In the same way as medical research can discover cures for diseases, so sociological research would help solve society's problems. However, Marxists claim that the main function of social policy is to maintain capitalism and that the role of sociologists should therefore be to criticise policy, not to serve the capitalist state.

Applying material from item B15 and your own knowledge, Evaluate different sociological perspectives reviews of the relationship between sociology and social policy.

**What the exam board want you to know**

The difference between social problems and sociological problems; perspectives on social policy and on the role of sociology in relation to policy.

**Worsley, Comte, Durkheim, Marx, Murray**

**Sociology and Social Policy**

What is ‘Social Policy’

Social problems and Sociological problems

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Social** Problems  Worsley ‘a social problem is some piece of social behavior that causes public friction and / or private misery and causes for collective action to solve it.’  Examples? | **Sociological** problems  Worlsey ‘a sociological problem is any pattern of relationships that calls for explanation’  Examples? |

Why might sociologists be interested in both?

Do Sociologists influence policy?

Sociologists may conduct research into social problems but this does not mean policy makers will study these findings so sometimes the link between sociology and social policy may not be very strong as governments are restricted by the factors below.

They want policies to be popular for elections. Policies may have financial implications.

Explain

Do sociologists think they should be close to social policy?

Theorists **Comte, Durkheim, Marx, Murray**

Comte & Durkheim (positivism and functionalism) they took the view that sociology is a science and would discover the problems in society and successful solutions. Here the sociologist is like a medical researcher looking for the cause of disease and a cure.

BUT Marxists think sociology is too close to the Capitalist system so it cannot really make a difference to society. Research is controlled by ruling class interests eg funding for sociology projects may come from industry.

Murray and the New Right believe that the state should only have minimal involvement in society. They don’t believe for example that the state should provide welfare not deal with social problems. Murray thinks that if the state help families this can weaken their self-reliance. Become too dependent . The new right think that sociologists should suggest alternatives which should restore individuals’ responsibility for their own welfare.

(Use page 432 – 441 of Browen textbook for more information)

Giddens

* Argues that there are 4 reasons for studying sociology
* 1. Understanding society
* 2. Awareness of cultural difference
* 3. Increase in self-knowledge
* 4. Assessment of government policies

SO Thinks that sociology has a vital role in evaluating the effectiveness of Government Policies. We can fact gather and arrive at explanations which could be useful for government policy.



What did you find out about the Joseph Rowntree Foundation?

**Governments may ignore evidence when they create policy. This would suggest the relationship between policy and sociology is not strong.**

* Case study 1. prostitution
  + Davies looked at the governments Coordinated Prostitution Strategy in 2006 that was very selective about which research it used to support its own hostile view of prostitution.
  + What did it ignore?
    - Research on clients which found these were fairly typical men, not violent and abusive stereotypes assumed in the strategy.
    - Evidence from Sweden and effective alternative approaches in other countries.
* Case study 2 – cannabis
  + 2008 this drug was moved from class C to class B (more harmful). It had been moved from B to C in 2004.
  + Scientific advisors did not agree with this move.
  + Cannabis use among young people had fallen when it was moved from B to C earlier.
  + Therefore this reclassification was not based on research.

Case study 3 – the Black report. This was a report which exposed deep social inequalities. It showed that social class inequalities in health are rooted in wider cultural and structural factors. This report uncovered some uncomfortable truths and was buried by the Conservative government of the time. In contrast in 1998 the Acheson Report had a direct influence of health policy under a Labour government which was more sympathetic to reducing health inequalities.

Social democrat view

* This view (Peter Townsend) would claim that there should be major redistribution of wealth. Sociologists should research social problems and encourage government to eradicate poverty.

Link between perspectives and Social Policy

Quantitative Positivist research is favoured by governments and positivists see themselves as producing objective data which governments could use to form policies.

Further theorists who think Sociologists SHOULD be engaged in Social Policy

Further theorists who think Sociologists SHOULD NOT be engaged in Social Policy

Relationship between Theory and Methods

What the exam board want you to know

The relationship between theoretical perspectives and preference for particular research methods and sources of data, eg positivism and quantitative data, interpretivism and qualitative data.

**Durkheim, Atkinson, Jack Douglas**

Positivist, interpretivism and research methods.

Positivists believe that society is external to individuals. Exists as a series of social facts.

For interpretivists, society is a socially created set of meanings shared by a social group. They begin with different assumptions so they employ different methods.

Positivism and quantitative data

we

Examples of methods a positivist would favour.

Look at the table on p417 of Browne

Explain the links between positivism, social theory and research methods

|  |
| --- |
| View of Society |
| Theoretical perspective |
| Methodological approach |

Summarise with 3 examples why they use the methods they do

Criticisms?

Interpretivism and qualitative data

Interpretivists are concerned with understanding the meanings that individuals give to situations. They regard scientific methods as inappropriate for this. They adopt and inductive approach. Eg Weber and Verstehen.

Positivists believe that society is external to individuals. Exists as a series of social facts.

For interpretivists, society is a socially created set of meanings shared by a social group. They begin with different assumptions so they employ different methods.

Intepretivist and qualitative data

Look at the table on p419 of Browne

Explain the links between interpretivism, social theory and research methods

|  |
| --- |
| View of Society |
| Theoretical perspective |
| Methodological approach |

Summarise with 3 examples why they use the methods they do

Criticisms?

Feminist methodology

Why would feminists criticize quantitative positivist research?

Uses malestream methods. Limits what respondents can say.

How would feminists feel about interpretivist methods?

Other than theory, summarise what else affects methods

Theorists

Summarise what we have learnt before about Durkheim, Douglass & Atkinson in their approach to studying suicide

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |