THEORY AND METHODS

Theory and Methods in context

Should already know; quantitative and qualitative data. Primary and secondary source. Reliability and validity. Ethics. Official statistics. Experiments all kinds (lab, field, comparative) Observations (PO. NPO. Covert/overt). Documents (personal and public). Social surveys (pilot as well). Questionnaires. Interviews (structured/unstructured/semi-structures/group). Representative sample. Sampling. Longitudinal and snap shot studies. Methodological pluralism. Triangulation. Positivism vs Interpretivist + Strengths and Weaknesses.

Consensus and Conflict theories:
Consensus theory (like **Functionalism**) assumes that society works in harmony and social order is created through collective consensus/agreement on the rules, goals and norms. **Conflict theory** (like **Marxism**) sees society as full of conflict and unstable. Its main concerns are with class conflict through social inequality, the role of education as legitimising and reproducing this inequality, the elite and the dominant ideology.

Macro/ Micro:
Macro:
- looks at overall structure of society
- examines how social institutions like family make up the structure
- individuals behaviour is determined by social forces acting on them (no control)
- Like puppets- pulled by society
- 2 types consensus structuralism or conflict structuralism

Micro:
- Do not seek to provide complete explanations for society
- Look at how society is built up from people interacting with each other
- people who have consciousness involving personal beliefs values and interpretations and how these influence how they act
- to understand behaviour we must understand meanings people give to their behaviour.

Weber: Class, Status and Party
Alongside Marx he looked at inequality and conflict in terms of social classes pursuing economic interests, social groups pursuing social honour, prestige and respect, as well between parties who were there to influence policies on behalf of their members. Therefore he too saw society as an unstable balance between the conflicts of those 4 groups.

Feminism:
Also was a conflict theory based around the conflict between the male dominated patriarchy and their position over woman. Their main focus is to expose the gender differences, using interpretivist methods to understand feelings of woman. They argue that sociology is 'male-steam' and ignores woman and the gender dimensions of inequality.

Determinism and choice:

Determinism is the idea that we have no free will over the social forces around us, it looks at the extent to which the individual has control or is passive to these forces. It is seen in three main areas of sociology; structuralism, social action and Interpretivism, and integral approaches.

Structuralism:

The main ideas in structuralism are to study the **overall structure of society**, and look at how social institutions act as constraints and controls. It argues that the individual is moulded and determined by the social forces around (socialisation etc) them as well as material resources like income. The think the focus of sociology should be on the social institutions like the family, education, mass media and the work place and the relationships between them, this is a **macro** approach. The theories are often **positivist** because individual behaviour is a response to measurable social forces, the individuals thoughts are reflections of these and so not worth studying in its own right.

Social action or interpretivist theories:

This is more focused with the **individual** and their behaviour in social situations. It aims to discover and understand the interactions between individuals or small groups, and how people interpret the world as they do which sets their identity. It is also concerned with how the reactions of other affect an individuals identity. It argues that institutions are social constructions not something separate, they believe that there is a lot of **free choice** and individuals behaviour is not shaped by external social forces, it likes to focus on the individual and small groups and is thus called a **micro approach**. They favour **Interpretivism**.

Functionalism: Theories and methods

Functionalism is a consensus theory rooted in the work of **Durkheim (1858-1917)** and refined by **Parsons (1902-79)** and **Merton (1910-2004)**. It argues society is a stable, harmonious and integrated system, with social order and cohesion maintained through consensus.

Durkheim and functionalism
He was concerned by how **rapidly change** was occurring in his society to a **modern industrialised** one. In **traditional society** there was a strong collective conscience and individuals for this reason did not really exist. In this way there was a '**mechanical solidarity**' with little division of labour because everyone was alike. In modern society there is an advanced division of labour which has promoted differences between people and **weakened social bonds** (Hirshis social bonds theory). He said that whilst this rapid change has brought greater freedom for the individual, it has undermined the norms of society, which has created **anomie** for a lot of people and social cohesion is at threat.

Parsons: The organic analogy
Parsons (1970) identifies three ways in which society is like a human organism;
- **System**: Both are self-regulating systems of inter-related but still independent parts that fit together. In society the parts are social institutions (education etc) and individual roles (teacher) etc
- **System needs**: The organs in the body have needs to survive, so does society, like socialised people to continue society.
- **Functions**: The function of things in the body and society are the contributions they make to meeting the systems need. The economy meets the need for society by meeting the need for food and shelter.

-An analogy is a way of understanding something through something else, however it is not an explanation of the claim being made.

Value consensus and social order
Parson argues the answer the question of 'how is social order possible?' is that it is achieved through shared culture or a **central value system**. The cultural value system of goals and norms etc are what form the basis of the value consensus which hold society together. **Durkheim (1895)** believed that people were selfish and without collective conscious from socialisation, society would fall into chaos.

Integration of the individual
Value consensus integrates individuals into the society by directing them to meet the systems needs. **Parsons** says that there are two ways to direct individuals to conform to the social needs;
- **Socialisation**; through family, education, and work etc. This is where individuals internalise the values and norms of society and it becomes part of them.
- **Social control**; Positive sanctions reward conformity and negative ones punish deviance.

This means that if individuals are properly socialised their behaviour will be relatively predictable and cooperation can work.

Parts of the social system
We can describe Parsons' social model like building blocks with norms at the bottom going up;
- **Norms**: which are rules that govern an individuals behaviour
- **Status-roles**: sets of norms that indicate how someone in a role must act; teachers must not show favouritism
- **Institutions**: these are clusters of status roles, like the family is made up of many sub roles
- **Sub-systems**: are groups of related institutions, like shops, farms, factories all

make up the economic subsystem.
- **The social system**: sub-systems together make up the whole.

The systems needs: GAIL schema
Parsons identifies what the needs of society are and which sub-systems meet the needs. Parsons argues that for a society to survive it has two sets of problems to first overcome; **instrumental** (A/G) and **expressive** (I/L). Instrumental refers to means to an end, like food for the population. Expressive refers to I/L as they are expressive and a way of channelling emotions.
1. **Adaptation**: the environment to meet peoples needs (food and shelter), met by the economic subsystem.
2. **Goal attainment**: society needs to set goals and stuff to attain them as well as the ability to make the decisions (political parties we vote in do this for us), the political subsystem.
3. **Integration**: Different parts of the system must integrate to pursue shared goals, the religion, education and media subsystems.
4. **Latency**: society needs to be maintained over time. The kinship and friendship subsystem provides 'pattern' maintenance' and 'tension management', ensuring individuals feel motivated to continue their roles.

-Interpretivists argue that this idea pretends to make the society at large a real thing above the individuals, whereas only individuals have needs.

Types of societies

Table 4A	Differences between the norms of traditional and modern societies	
Traditional societies (Pattern variables A)	**Modern societies** (Pattern variables B)
Ascription Status is based on fixed characteristics such as gender — i.e. who you are, not what you have achieved.	**Achievement** Status is based on performance such as effort in education — i.e. what you do, not who you are or who you know.
Diffuseness Relationships are broad with a range of purposes (e.g. on the family farm, relatives are also workmates).	**Specificity** Relationships are narrow and limited to specific purposes (e.g. lawyer and client).
Particularism Norms emphasise treating different people differently (e.g. employing someone just because they are a relative).	**Universalism** Norms emphasise everyone being treated the same (e.g. giving the job to the best qualified person).
Affectivity Immediate gratification of desires (e.g. leaving school early to start earning).	**Affective neutrality** Deferred gratification (e.g. staying on at school).
Collective orientation Putting the group's interests first.	**Self orientation** Individualism, pursuing one's own self-interest.

Social change and social evolution:
They argue that like an organism change is **gradual and evolutionary** from simply to complex. In traditional societies single institutions like a kinship provided many functions, providing political leadership, socialisation and religious functions. As the society develops these functions are lost to other institutions like factories, political parties, school and churches etc. There is *structural differentiation* which is where functionally different institutions specialise and each meet a need separately. He sees a move through **Equilibrium** (balance) looking at the way social systems are interrelated- change in some part means change somewhere else in society.

Internal critique – Merton's manifest & Latent functions
- Criticises Durkheim for assuming that each social institutions activities have a positive function.
- Sometimes dysfunction can occur in a society and the social structure does not work as intended and can have negative consequences.

– He suggested that there are manifest functions of an institution (intended/recognised consequences) but also Latent functions (unrecognised consequences) for example, Healthcare MRSA

Evaluation of functionalism:
- Recognises the importance of social structure in understanding society and how major institutions like family, economy and education have links between them
- It explains why most people conform to the rules of society.
- **Logical criticisms:** ideas are teleological (something exists because of its function- family exist to socialise children) It explains the existence in terms of effect. But we want to understand the cause, cause comes before effect and so they don't identify the cause.
- Ideas are unscientific- can't falsify, it says deviance is both functional and dysfunctional, if it is both we cannot disprove.
- **Interpretivist/action theory:** too deterministic – passive products of social system that controls their behaviour
- **Conflict perspective/Marxism**: Takes for granted the value consensus in society, values are not consensus but are inflicted on us by dominant members of society.
- It ignores/downplays inequalities in our society and the unequal distribution of power
- **Post-modernism**: Functionalism tries to explain everything from a meta narrative (single perspective) but society is so fragmented this cannot work
- Does explain social change effectively – what about periods of rapid change, if society exists to fulfil a need then once it is achieved then we don't need to change them.

Positivism vs Interpretation

It's not one or the other, because sometimes studying real life does not work out black and white, instead we can say that perspectives or sociologists are more sympathetic to use of either method (positivist or interpretivist).

Positivism and Quantitative methods
At the basis of the positivist approach is the **Hypothetico-Deductive** method.

Hypthetico-deductive method
This is a series of steps to which positivists follow to ensure their research is scientific.nThis is based on two things; there needs to be a testable **hypothesis** (a theory that the research aims to prove true- the reason that people eat cereal for breakfast is because it is a breakfast food- so they ask the question -why do you eat cereal for breakfast);
and **deduction** (working something out from the general to the particular a famous example is -Socrates is a man, all men are mortal, so Socrates is mortal- you can figure out the truth of the conclusion from the looking at the general claims of men and mortal and the specifics that Socrates is a man, and all men are mortal so he must be).

The steps are;
- An area of interest discovered through everyday observation or personal experience
- *Hypothesis* of the causal link between two events
- Figuring out the appropriate way to *isolate the two variables*; like interview, questionnaire etc
- *Collect the data* reliably and validly
- *Analyse the data* – show a 'test of confidence' which is how confident they are of their results being accurate
- *Confirming, modifying or rejecting the hypothesis* – follow Popper's weaknesses test
- *Theory formation or conformation*, can't 'prove' a theory but you can say it is the best explanation until someone else comes along

Theoretical approaches linked to positivism and quantitative methods
Positivists believe that society exists as a separate thing to the individual believes of the people in it and thus follows a more structural perspective.

Structural functionalism
They believe that institutions in a society exist to continue the function of society. They believe society actively guides our actions and beliefs. Durkheim believed that there were **social facts** which describe objective facts in society. For instance on his study of suicide he found using the official statistics that the numbers and types of suicide were social facts.

Marxism
Social and economic laws exist to govern human behaviour. Although he believed human consciousness did play apart, these laws were dominant.

Criticisms
This structuralist perspective using positivist methods is often criticised by Interpretivists or symbolic interactionalists like **Blumer (1962)** believe that society is made by the actions and beliefs of the people in it, so positivist quantitative methods are inappropriate for assuming there is some objective reality of society

Quantitative research:
They favour things which have a lot of quantitative data, like surveys, questionnaires and case studies.
They seek out valid indicators of the variables to test them in reliable ways.

Surveys
Surveys come in two types – longitudinal and cross-sectional (snap shot)

Cross-sectional survey:
This is a snap shot and is often called an opinion poll, as it finds information about something specific from a large number of people reliably at one moment in time. The results can be collected and analysed very easily and quickly and the findings are likely to be generalisable.
-The indicators or questions asked to measure a certain attitude must be accurate or the validity of the research will fail
-Changes in views cannot be measured as the questions ask at a particular time and there is no chance for development or change in attitude

Longitudinal survey:
These take place over a period of time, collecting the data at intervals over a time period. Although this does not encounter the issues of not detecting change in attitudes or a development of attitudes.
-Because of the time scale these methods face a serious attrition problem (drop out rate) because of boredom or because they change address and so don't receive the survey.
-Could lack reliability and generalisability; because if too many people drop out the sample becomes very small and biased, also the results might not be collected or analysed in the same way all of the time.

Sampling in quantitative research
There are two quantitative methods for collecting representative samples that positvists like;
- **Random sampling** (probability sampling)- taking every nth person from a list of people. There are differenty types; stratified sampling, cluster sampling or systematic (example).
    - -Quite difficult to obtain large sampling frames since laws have been introduced to restricte information available online
    - -ometimes choosing the nth person doesn't work because even when the nth person is choosen if the researcher doesn't like their name or appearance they might choose the next one
    - -Location and time effect random sampling, for instance stopping every 10th person in the canteen at school during lesson 4 will result in a biased sample of sixthformers or staff not other students
- **Quota sampling**- you use this when you already know the characteristics of your sample and you can just select which proportion of which characteristic you want.
    - -Unless the researcher selectes the corect proportion of the characteristics the methods is pointless
    - -Statistical tests which can be used with random sampling cannot be used with quota sampling
    - -It relies on who the research decides they want to research from the selected, for intance they could think someone is younger than they are and so be inaccurate whether the person they want fits into the group

Sampling frame:
This is a lis which your sample can be drawn from, it is normally your target popultion, like Electoral registers, or Post Code Addresses. **Bryman (2004)** says that your sample is only as good (accurate or reliable) as your samping frame, so both need to be accurate.

Experiments:
These aim to isolate what they are measuring (dependent variable) from what you are affecting it with (indepdendent variable). It is hard in sociology to isolate the social events from the world around them. It is also sometimes unethical to control and manipulate social events. But when in experiments there is an experimenter effect where the participants know they are being researched.

Case studies:
This is a detailed study of one particular group. It gathers rich and detailed data because it is not focusing on large groups of people. The small groups may not be representative of the target population.

Interpretivists and Qualitative methods

Prefer to seek individual meaning and so favour **qualitative research methods**; PO, observation, documents and open ended questions. They value validity because the only way to gain insight into what they are studying is to be valid. They also favour the micro approach, looking at individual actor meanings. Weber; to get the best understanding of something is to put yourself in their shoes (their point of view)- **Verstehen**.

They do not favour the Hypothetico-deductive method, but instead favour **inductive methods**. For example, **Cicourel** (labelling theory) or **Douglas** (suicide), **Becker** (labelled pupils in classroom). The most common methods are; observational research (ethnography), focus groups, interviewing, and secondary sources.

Symbolic interactionalism and labelling theory:
This approach is an interpretivist, it assumes that social events, objects, and situations are all interpreted by people in various socially learned ways and then people respond to them in terms of their learned meanings. Labelling theory also says this but more how one group can impose labels and meanings on another.

Structuration theory:
Giddens structuration theory (1984) essentially says that there exist structures of societal things out there independent of people but that people must exist in order for those structures to exist. For instance people must exist in order to stay in relationships that constitute a 'family'. So we have to understand the motivations and actions of individuals before we can see how structures exist.

Approaches and Methods
Meaning:
- Qualitative methods allow us to find meaning for participants of events, situations and actions that they are involved in.

Context:
- Interpretive research usually uses small groups and small situations and can individualise the person rather than blanket all people in the research like Positivists do. It also enables the meaning of the event, situation and action to be understood and it is only in that context that it can be understood.

Unanticipated phenomena and influences:
- Interpretive research doesn't necessarily know where it is going when it starts, it does not aim to accept or reject an already conceived idea of what should happen. They are much more open to new ideas and areas.

Process:
- Positivists look for a pattern between two things not necessarily the details in between, Interpretivists tend to be interested in what is happening not the end result.

Ethnographic research
This uses observations, whether overt or covert, or participant or non-participant researchers need to know what detail they want to get out of their research and how they

want to go about it before deciding which one to use.
The process of participant observation:
Making contact and gaining entry to group; getting in can be very difficult as groups   studied can be marginal and sociologists are not often part of them. If this is the case   they may have to take other methods like joining a centre which works with these people   or using someone else's sample.

Acceptance by the group; once in the researcher might not be accepted, they need to   find out how best to get their research and they might be totally different to the sample   and need to over come this.

Recording activities of the group; in covert notes need to be taken as soon as the   research can otherwise they might forget or blow cover.

Validity of results; It is hard for the researcher to not be influenced by the group and the   group to not be influenced by the researcher. For instance in Parker 1998 studied a   group of youths in Liverpool and ended up giving them legal advice when they stole from   cars.

Leaving the group; When to leave is hard, some say that when new information only   confirms what is already known then it is time to leave. However this can be hard   because there could be emotions and relationships on the line.

Focus groups

Usually 12 or so people who are representative of the population studied and found using the usual sampling methods, they discuss ideas and contrast views, sometimes coming up with issues that the researcher had not thought about before the real interview.

+interpretive is better because looking at micro approaches and is more specific and thus interesting and gives insight into what sociology should be about, the study of society (people make society).

+You cannot collect validity from the methods Positivists use, they are closed and give no freedom to explain; close question questionnaires.

+Causal relationships are lies, they're no good when we want to find out 'WHY' rather than 'HOW' things happens. You cannot even establish them, because they are social facts and they don't exist, there are only interpretations of the world not causal roles.

+Positivists just look at 'human behaviour' whereas Interpretivist can empathise with human behaviour and thus give a more in depth understanding.

+Methods used: Experiments are not applicable to real life in society, you would not get true to life validity, Interpretivists use PO and open ended questions to give a chance for society to be understood. There is no point applying natural scientific methods to something which is a complex system and different everywhere and would not be representative, relatable or accurate of that society.

+Positivists are restricted by their own methods, they have hypothesis and are restricted to researching that, if they don't they have essentially failed. Whereas with more interpretivist methods you can find out something new or an unknown idea and have the freedom to explore it. Positivists could be considered biased because they are trying to support their hypothesis.

Douglas is a good example of interpretivist research, and looked at the reasons why which is arguably more interesting than positivist research.

Positivists love OS but they forget that they are hella invalid because they are based on things that are not accurate; for example the rates of mental health in society in OS are invalid because it only includes which cases have been diagnosed.

Marxism

Like Durkheim, Marx believed that society could be studied scientifically and that the knowledge would point the way to a better society. He described his theory as '**scientific socialism**'. He did not see the society as a naturally evolving and smoothly changing he saw a change as a contradictory process which would lead through capitalism to communism.

Historical Materialism:

Humans need materials to live, like food and shelter in order to make these and thus meet their needs they needed to work to get them. This is called the '**Modes of production**' or sometimes called the forces of production. At the start were humans with no tools trying to create things to meet their needs, now with machinery we have an easier job however we still need others in order to help us. This cooperation between people is called the '**modes of cooperation**' (philosophy students will feel comfortable with these terms), in sociology we might call these 'social relations of production'. Over time the modes of production change, and so does the modes of cooperation. Now we call this the division of labour, which splits people into two classes;

- those who own the means of production (factory owners)
- those who labour for the means of productions (factory workers)

Currently in the UK we live in a capitalist mode of production and this sets up our **economic substructure** (the base of society is based on economy, food, shelter, profit etc), because we live with an economic substructure it shapes the way we behave this gives rise to (because of the way it works, makes us buy our food, buy our shelter etc) a **superstructure of institutions** which hold our beliefs and behaviour we have created.
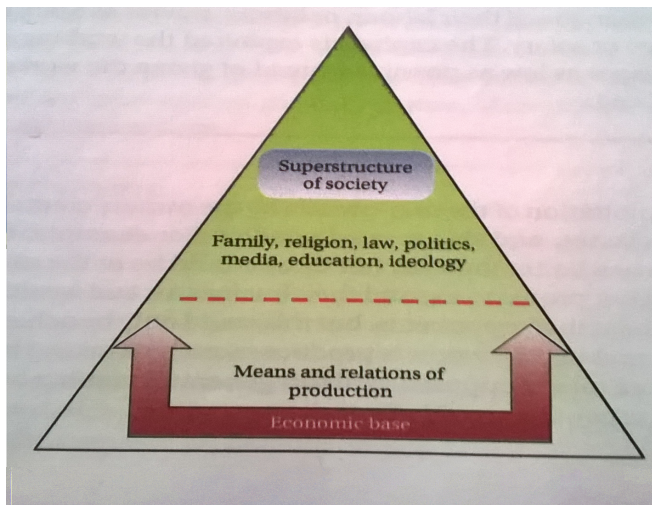
Class society and exploitation

In early history Marx believed that there was no exploitation, no class system, everyone worked and everyone shared. He calls this the '**primitive form of communism**'. Nowadays in capitalist society one class owns the modes of production and they exploit the others for surplus product (paying the workers only what they need to survive below what the product is worth gives the owners more profit or surplus). Marx has 3 types of successive class society each which its own form of exploitation.

- **Ancient society**; based on exploitation of slaves legally tied to owners
- **Feudal society**; based on exploitation of serfs legally tied to land, (lords owned land in Europe and those who lived on that land were called serfs)
- **Capitalist society**; based on exploitation of free wage labourers

Capitalism

In capitalism there is a basic system of owners of production (the ruling class-**bourgeoisie**) and labourers (**proletariat**- working class). Although the proles are free (compared to serfs or slaves) because the system is based on economics the proles have to sell their labour to owners in order to survive with wages. But as mentioned before, the surplus the owners make make the system unequal. But even worse is the concentration of control from smaller and fewer numbers of capitalists like giant TNC's. This forces the vast majority to be proletariats whereas the minority (very small amount) are in control as the owners of production. Because capitalism expands the modes of production technological advances soon take over the place of the proletariat and they become de-skilled.

Class Consciousness

Marx recognises that the capitalist system works against itself. By shutting down the proletariat by cutting wages, replacing jobs with machines and concentrating the ruling class, the proles get together, have their own consciousness and create political systems to fight their exploiters. The proles are no longer just a class, but they are a class who are conscious and need to overthrow capitalism.

Ideology

By owning the modes of production the ruling classes essentially own the thoughts of its labourers through their dominant values filtering through the institutions they own like school, religion etc. This way the ideology seeps into the proles and legitimises and justifies the inequalities. This ideology that seeps through creates a '**false consciousness**'. Its when the proles get to their ultimate low in poverty that they see through this and fight back.

Alienation

If we say that our true nature is to be able to support ourselves and create the products to help us survive than capitalism alienates us from our true nature as we have to sell our labour for others needs and not our own. This exists in class societies because the owners of production create for their own needs, and not everyone for their own (the groups) need.

The state, revolution and communism

Marx thinks the state is a collection of 'armed bodies of men', which include the police, courts, prisons etc. The state essentially exists to maintain the interests of the ruling class. For one class to become economically dominant they would need to overthrow the ruling class. Marx said that the first revolution will be between the poor majority and the rich minority, this revolution will abolish the state (which oppresses them), end exploitation because there are no armed bodies of men protecting the exploitative nature of the ruling class, with this it will end alienation as mentioned earlier.

Evaluation of Marxism
Class:

- Marx only sees one division between people which is class. Weber argues that status and also power are important divisions of inequalities. For example, Feminists feel that gender is a more important divider and source of inequality than class.
- Weber argues that Marx is too simplistic, Weber says that we should divide the proletariat itself into skilled and un-skilled as well as the middle class divided into white collar, petty bourgeoisie and office workers.
- Marx thought that class would be a massive division and the middle class would become a bigger working class, however now the industrial class has shrunk in the west, the middle class has grown and in other countries like China the working classes are growing because of globalisation.

Economic determinism:
- Marx ignores the fact that people have free will by assuming that at the base of everything including social change in society is down to economics.
- However Marx does advocate some free will by saying that the working class will realise themselves that the capitalist system is horrid and so they will make 'their own history'.
- He does explain the massive inequalities in terms of wealth, power and income, through the owners of the means of production
- Recognises the importance of the economy and how economic changes can influence a wide range of social institutions.
- Marx's predictions of revolution have not come true. He said that the rich western European countries would revolutionise, however it was the poor Russian states that did it in 1917.

'Two Marxism's'

These two perspectives realised after Marx's death there were no revolutions so theories just got rid of them, so instead there were two branches;
- **Humanistic or critical Marxism**- similarities with social action and interpretivist theories
- **Scientific or structuralist Marxism**- like positivism

Gramsci and Hegemony (Humanistic)

Antonio Gramsci was the leader of the first communist party in Italy in 1920, he realised that there would never be a revolution to a communist society from just the economic deterministic short falling of wages dropping and over-unemployment. He introduced the idea of hegemony which is the ruling ideology of the society, he argues that the working class need to create a '**counter-hegemony**' to overthrow the bourgeoisie. He says that the ruling class maintain dominance through;
- **Coercion**: uses the army, police, prisons and courts of the capitalist state.
- **Consent** (hegemony): ideas and values to persuade the subordinate classes and its rule as legitimate.

This idea suggests that the ideas we have in society are **relatively autonomic** from the base. Meaning that ideas aren't necessarily effected by the base of capitalism. The dominant values can control people and be separate from the economy. We maintain capitalism because they feed up **false ideas**.

Why is it Humanistic?

It relates more to social action and interactionism and looks at the effects of capitalism on the individuals. It believes we have free will, we have an active choice to let capitalism to continue in our society.

Table 4B	The two Marxisms	
Humanistic or critical Marxism	**Scientific or structuralist Marxism**
Example: Antonio Gramsci	Example: Louis Althusser
Draws on Marx's early writings, where he focuses on *alienation* and people's subjective experience of the world.	Draws on Marx's later work, where he writes about the *laws* of capitalist development working with 'iron necessity' towards inevitable results.
Marxism is a *political critique* of capitalism as alienating and inhuman, and a call to overthrow it.	Marxism is a *science*. It discovers the laws that govern the workings of capitalism.
Voluntarism: humans have free will. They are active agents who make their own history. Their consciousness and ideas are central in changing the world.	*Determinism*: structural factors determine the course of history. Individuals are passive puppets – victims of ideology manipulated by forces beyond their control.
Socialism will come about when people become *conscious* of the need to overthrow capitalism. *Encourages* political action, believing the time is always ripe for revolution.	Socialism will come about only when the *contradictions* of capitalism ultimately bring about the system's inevitable collapse. Tends to *discourage* political action.

Hegemony and revolution

In modern society it is imperative to have 'consent' to the hegemonic rule, this is gathered through ideologies promoted through education and media as well as other institutions. But this hegemony isn't certain because;

- **The ruling class are a minority**; they need to get help from others like the middle class, this is called a 'power bloc' so they can maintain rule, they have to compromise their own interests for theirs but maintain power.
- **The proletariat have a dual consciousness**; they are influenced by the ideologies of the ruling class but also their experiences of poverty, and they way they see through the 'smoke screen' of capitalism.

There is a chance that is bad times the smoke screen can be seen through, however this can only lead to an overthrow of the ruling class if the proles construct a '**counter-hegemonic bloc**' with an alternative moral and ideological way to rule society.
Gramsci thinks that the only way to overthrow the RC is for the proles to create '**organic intellectual**' which is a body of workers who form a revolutionary political party who can show an alternative view of society.

Evaluation of Gramsci

- He over-emphasises the role of ideas and under-emphasises the role of state coercion and economic factors. For instance, the workers may want to overthrow capitalism, but cant because the fear of repressive state apparatus is too much or even unemployment.
- +Neo-Marxist's have drawn on many of Gramsci's ideas like Paul Willis showed how working class lads saw through the ideology that school was meritocratic.

Althusser- Structuralist marxist

Believes it is the unequal structure of society that shapes history. He rejects both Marx's ideas of determinism, and Gramsci's ideas of consent (humanism). There are not two

levels of society base and superstructure, but instead three states; ideological level, political level and the economic level.

Ideological level: beliefs and values ISA – ideological state apparatus
Political level: Government and organisation involved in political organisation and control RSA – repressive state apparatus
Economic level: Economy Production of material goods

Instead of one effecting the other, they all influence each other. The ideologies effect the economy, the political level effects the economy etc. Each of these **justify the power of the RC**. Each level has relative autonomy and are independent from the economic base. People ideas can effect the economic base.

Althusser's criticism of humanism:
Everything is a product of underlying social structures, we do not have free will and choice to decide to accept capitalism.
Humans are essentially puppets.

Evaluation
- Overcomes Marxists failings in saying that the superstructure can affect the economic base and the economic base can impact on our superstructure.
- It claims to get rid of economic determinism, it just replaces it with a more complex determinism.
-Harsher to humanism than marxism.

Feminism

If we ignore the fact that large numbers of people think feminists are all man hating lesbians; then we can study the different types of feminism and their theory and methods.

First feminists in sociology believe that sociology is too '**malestream**', meaning that the people who are studied are largely male, the people doing the researching are largely male and the theories themselves only really apply to males. Think about crime explanations, it is largely focused on white male crime. There are three types of feminism in sociology that are key, Liberal feminists, Marxist feminists and Radical feminists

Radical Feminists

The **patriarchy** oppress women in every aspect of their lives through complex systems of inequality relationships in society. **Firestone (1972)** argues that woman's biology is the basis of inequality. Because women have babies they are dependent on others in ways, and because of this men are allowed this psychological power and control over them and dominate the social world. Equality will exist when babies can be made outside of the woman, the dependency ends and the power of men is destroyed.

They believe that personal relationships of power between woman and men become political relationships when the men dominate all women. **Susan Brownmiller (1976)** argues that fear of rape is a powerful deterrent against women going out at night alone.

Radical feminists argue that the patriarchy makes female sexuality the urge to satisfy male urges and desires. Women are seen as passive sex objects and penetration the main source of pleasure. **Adrenne Rich (1981)** argues that men force women into a narrow and unsatisfying 'compulsory heterosexuality' which is the only socially acceptable form of sexuality.

Solutions to the patriarchy:
- **Separatism**: They want men and women to live separately because men's oppression is exercised through domestic and sexual relationships and this is gone. **Germaine Greer (2000)** argues that the creation of the all female '**metrilocal**' households are the alternative to heterosexual families.
- **Consciousness-raising**: By getting women together to talk about experiences they can realise they all have the same experiences and can 'reclaim the night'.
- **Political lesbianism**: Sleeping with men is like sleeping with the enemy so they should all become lesbians so avoid oppressive relationships.
- R.F often leads to violence and hate speech; e.g. the SCUM manifesto.
- R.F methods for resolving tensions are impractical and inhumane. Gender segregation would not be practical and wouldn't follow human rights.
- What planet are these people on **myself (2015)**
- + The draw attention to the political areas of marriage, domestic labour, domestic violence, rape and pornography.
- Marxism say class not gender oppresses women
- They offer no explanation as to why women face different oppression in different society and assumes women are all in the same position.
- **Ann Pollert (1996)** argues that the concept of patriarchy offers no value in explaining women's position because it is a circular argument. It says male violence is explained by the patriarchy but that male violence also maintains the patriarchy.
- Jenny Somerville (2000) argues that heterosexual attraction makes it unlikely that there will be a separatist utopia.

Liberal Feminists

Concerned with **human and civil rights**; all humans should be equal. They argue that laws and policies against sex discrimination in employment and education can secure

equal opportunities. Sexist attitudes and cultural beliefs are purely socially constructed, woman and men can do the the same things but it is socialised to say the opposite. Gender stereotypes mean people cannot lead fulfilled lives. Woman having more rights mean that men can also benefit and express their feminine role.

They hate Functionalists like **Parsons** distinction between **instrumental** and **expressive** roles and how men do the former and women the latter. The former being performed in the public sphere of paid work, politics and decision-making. And the letter being performed in the private sphere of unpaid domestic labour, child caring for family members. Liberal feminists reject this view and say that men and women are capable of doing both of these things.
+ L.F research has produced much research that suggest gender differences are socially constructed
+ Importance on the effects of social polices
  – Focused on reducing the effects of woman's discrimination rather than the causes.
  – **Sylvia Walby (1997)** argues that they offer no explanation for the overal structure of gender inequalities.
  – They are accused of over-optimism by saying that the only obstacles in the way of progress are irrational laws or prejudice, they don't see that there could be some deep seating structural aspects.

Marxist Feminists
- Believe that woman are a source of exploitative labour; they are able to be paid less because they are assumed to be dependent on husbands.
- Woman reproduce and socialise the next generation/labour force.
- Women are a reserve army of labour; when there are economic booms or wars, women are drafted into the labour force, but when there are recessions or when men return from war woman are drafted out.
- Woman absorb anger that would otherwise be projected at capitalism
  ○ **Fran Ansley (1972)** says that wives are takers of shit because they soak up the frustration their husbands feel about alienation and exploitation of work.
    ■ + Explains domestic violence.

Barrett: Ideology of 'Familism'
In order to change and understand women's positions we have to look at non-economic factors as well as how woman have 'economic functions in families'.

Difference feminism and Post-structuralism
It is difficult to group all women together and talk about 'their experiences' as if they were one big group not individuals. Most of feminism is centred around white heterosexual woman. Radical, Liberal and Marxist feminists are all essentialists and group women together. **Butler (1992)** offers and alternative approach looking at **discourse** (ways of seeing, thinking and talking about something). The world is made up of competing discourse; religion, medicine and artistic etc

Action Theories

This is not a structural theory. The focus on individual behaviour in everyday social situations. This is a bottom up approach – looking at meanings and interpretations of actions. There are two main branches of action theories; **Symbolic interactionism** and **Ethnomethodology**.

Key features:
1. Society and social structures/ institutions are socially constructed (family is not real)
2. People have free will to do things and form their own identities
3. Prefer to research on small groups of individuals (micro)
4. Peoples behaviour is driven by their beliefs, meaning and emotions gives to a situation. e.g how mother interprets crying of baby, meaning of the cry will effect her actions and the babies behaviour will effect the mother

Symbolic interactionism
This focuses on how we create the world through our interactions. Our interactions are based on the meaning we give to situations and we can convey this through symbols like language.

G. H. Mead – The **Role of Others** – Symbols vs Instincts
Symbols versus instincts:
- Animals are guided through instinct whereas we are guided by our responses to the world in the form of meanings we attach to significant things.
- We create the world by attaching symbols to meanings we have attached.
  - The symbol of putting a finger to your mouth we have attached the symbol to the meaning 'be quite'
- There is an interpretive phase between a stimulus and our response to it including interpreting a meaning.

Taking the role of other
We interpret others actions by putting ourselves in their shoes and understanding it from their perspective, seeing ourselves as they see us.
As young children we internalise significant others (parents) and we see ourselves through them, but later on we see ourselves from the wider society. They call this the '**Generalised other**'.

Herbert Blumer – **3 Key Principals of Interaction**
1. Our actions are based on the meanings we give to situations, they are not automatic responses
2. The meanings we have arise from interactions and to some extent we can change and negotiate them
3. The meanings we give to things are mainly to result of taking the role of the other

Blumer argues that although our actions are based on meanings we give to a situations, people are sort of predictable because we internalise expectations of them. However there is still free choice in how we do things.

Labelling theory
This theory has 3 key concepts
1. **Definition of the situation**- defining something gives a label to it. If we believe something is true it will effect how we act and affects those involved.
2. **Looking glass self**; Cooley argues ourself concept arises out of our ability to take the other role
3. **Career** – in usual situations this applies to the stages through which an individual progresses in their occupation, but this applies to marijuana users, delinquents and deviants.

Goffman's Dramaturgical model

Some labelling theorist say that we construct ourselves through how other labels us, however Goffman believes that we actively manipulate others view of us in order to create our own self-construct. He uses an analogy of drama to aid this

   *"We are **social actors** with scripts using props to give a convincing performance. If we want to create an impression of ourselves we need to control the impressions"*

1. Presentation of self and impression management: In order to create an impression we use techniques which include;
   ○ tone of voice, gesture, props and dress, make up, décor and premises

2. There is a **role difference** between our real self and our roles, which is only slightly constrained by the society and mostly controlled by our own free will. For instance some teachers are really strict, whereas some are laid back. Sometimes we may not believe our roles, we just put it on to manipulate others to see us in a good light.

Phenomenology – Schutz

The world only makes sense to us because we impose meaning and order on it, and our shared meanings help create this. **This means society is a product of ours minds.**

Schutz argues that we share concepts and categories with members of society, and these are called '**Typifications**' and they enable us to understand and organise our experiences into a shared world of meaning. The meanings of any actions depends on the context. Raising my hand in a rave is considered normal and great, but if I raise my hand in a class room I am asking for attention to answer a question.

Schutz says that the society is just a creation of our mind, it is simply shared meanings that allows us to cooperate and achieve goals.

-**Berger and Luckman** argue that although life is socially constructed – once constructed it has a life of its own and it becomes and external phenomenon that has an affect on us. E.g. Religion may start in people's consciousness but embeds itself in society in the form of religious institutions, organisations and structures.

What's the difference between phenomenology and ethnomethodology?
Ethnomethodologists stem from phenomenology, but are interested in how social is created. It's more of a method than a theory.

Ethnomethodology

This is a method of studying how social order is created. It is mainly based on work from **Harold Garfinkel (1967)**. This approach is interested not in the meanings, but how we produce meanings in the first place. **Society is a social construction**. Social order is an illusion created in ones own mind using our common sense procedures and culturally embedded assumptions. **Atkinson's (1971**) study of sudden deaths being classed as suicide, he said that suicide was just a social construction of meaning. For instance a corpse is a lifeless body until a meaning is attached to it, e.g killed, murder, natural death.

Garkinkel sought to expose the taken for granted assumptions we have in an experimental way. He asked students to behave like a visitor or a lodger in their own homes and see the reactions. Their reaction of concern, bewilderment, anger and confusion only revealed the assumptions they had and how fragile the social order they created is.

+ Good in how it highlights how we actively construct order and aren't just puppets.
- **Craig** argues that the findings are trivial and commonsensical and so aren't useful.
- What Ethnomethodologists see as a structure of norms Functionalism sees them as 'social facts' so maybe society is out there.

Strengths and Weaknesses of both ethnomethodologists and phenomenologists
+ Shows how meanings can be created and negotiated
+ Shows how social construction of meaning can have consequences on individuals
+ Methods used mean high validity
- Ignores the structures of society
- Doesn't explain motivations
- Underestimates the distribution of power
- Is just another meta-narrative

Evaluation of Social action theory
+ Recognises people have free-will
- Avoids determinism of structural theories, recognises that people create society through their own meanings, and have their own motivations
- Provides real insight into how labels are placed on people and how this affects people, for instance deviant careers
- Interpretivists theories use qualitative methods and so are high in validity (Atkinson)
- Shows how meaning can be created or negotiated and make sense of the world by drawing on their own common sense views
- The theory is based on descriptive theories like Goffman and labelling but not explaining anything
- Ignores wider societal structures such as inequality and doesn't explain the origins of labels. People do not have free will, the structures in society are real. The power differences, social class differences and ethnic inequalities are real. For instance poverty is a real thing and it effects other parts of a persons life.
- Ethnomethodologists say interactionism is great to focus on actors meanings, but doesn't explain how actors create meanings.
- Some actions are habits and not intentional so what meaning they have
- Doesn't explain the reasons people do things and what they hope to achieve
- Ignores the power inequalities in society, not everyone has the chance to get their shared meanings to stick. For example the conversation between police officer and deviant does not have an equal relationships between what the label outcome is. Interactionists ignore this.
- Action theory is a **meta-narrative** (one theory/version of society) according to post-modernism. Its just another view that has valid views. Through looking at it from one angle it ignores other factors, it ignores structure.

Integrated approaches – combining structure and action
It recognises that there are structural constraints out there (family and work etc) and that we have free choice (individuals within limits can make choices within the structures and change them). **Max Weber** say we can only understand behaviour if we look at both structure and action, both are needed on two levels;
- The level of **cause**, explaining the objective structural factors that shape behaviour
- The level of **meaning**, understanding the subjective meaning that individuals attach to their actions, using the concept of Verstehen

For example, at a **structural cause level** in the Protestant reformation we saw the rise of Calvinism and a change in worldwide view and behaviour, for instance Calvinism lead to a strong work ethic and rise of capitalism. At a **meaning level**, the work people did took on a religious meaning, it glorified god through their labours. This motivated people to work systematically and so they accumulated lots of wealth and became the first modern capitalists.

Weber's Types of action:
Weber understood there were infinite subjective meanings but he attempts to classify them
- **Instrumental rational action:** The actor calculates the most efficient means of

achieving a goal, it doesn't even matter what the goal is, just how is the best way to get there.
- **Value-rational action:** The goal is desirable and so they don't know whether their actions of the most efficient way they just want the goal.
- **Traditional action:** Actions are due to traditions of doing things in a certain way, there is no rationale behind it it is just the way they have always done it
- **Affectual action:** actions which express emotion, like crying out of grief or being charismatic to attract electoral voters.

- Structuralist theories like Marxism and Functionalism say that by having an 'all encompassing' theory they find the theory and they get evidence for it. But it should be that they look carefully at evidence and then get theories from that.
- **Alfred Schutx (1972)** Weber's view is **too individualistic,** it doesn't explain how people begin to have shared meanings
- Webers typology of actions is **difficult to apply** as some of the types may overlap or become blurred. Do we give birthday presents to our friends because it is tradition to do so or because we are cementing our friendship links.
+ Weber argues that we should not generalise rules because people are not determined by general rules.
+ Weber's work has been influential for sociology in understanding human behaviour
+ Weber's approach lead to a view called methodological individualism which looks at how people actively engage in social interactions. - **Lee and Newby (1983)** describe him as a methodological individualist who ignores the structure of society
Weber is critical of Marx and says that individuals shape the development of society.
- We can never really understand an individuals actions because we are not them and so Verstehen cannot be applied.

Giddens theory of 'structuration'
Giddens attempts to combine **structural factors with action** which he sees it as two parts of the same thing, one is dependent on the other. Structures only exist because of the actions of people and people can only act because of the structures which enable meaningful action. Giddens called this '*Duality of structure*'. This shows the two way process of how people are constrained and shaped and how these structures only exist as long as people take actions to support them, and they can also change them. This is called '**reflexivity**' where people constantly reflect on things they do and how they do them. This relationship is the theory of '**structuration**'.

But sometimes our actions may **not have the intended consequence**. For instance looking back at Weber he noted how the Calvinists adopted protestant work ethic in order to glorify god but really just created modern capitalism.

Example: Language
Language has sets of rules and structure, if we don't follow the we cannot be understood, we all know these rules and are constrained by them to create meaningful communication. But we still have the opportunity to change language by ignoring rules or changing them. For example instead of using full words we abbreviate them, we ignore a rule of using the full word but still get meaningful communication and thus end up changing it. It shows how our action is dependent on the **structures** around us but at the same time how our **actions** change the structures.

Evaluation of Giddens
-Giddens over-emphasises the role we have in changing structures, for instance **Margaret Archer (1995**) argues that slaves may want to abolish slavery but not have the power to do so.
-**Craib** argues that structuration theory isn't even a theory, it is just telling us what we would find if we look at society; structures, rules, and resources.
-**Craib** also argues that Giddens fails to unite structure and action, it is just an action

theory which explains rules governing behaviour, and has no explanation for over arching structures like the economy or the state.

Summary of all theories
- **Action theories** are micro approaches and see society as constructed by peoples everyday actions, interactions and meanings.
- **Weber's** social actions theory identifies 4 main types of interaction.
- **Symbolic Interactionist's** see meaning as being created through our interactions with others and us taking the role of the other.
- Meanings are not fixed and are negotiable.
- **Labelling theory** and **Goffman's** dramaturgical analogy are two major interactionist approaches.
- **Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology** see the society as a social construction and not external. They see society created through 'typifications' and common sense understandings.
- **Giddens** attempts to unite structure and action and explains how we reproduce and change the structures, but fails to account for structures resisting change.

Modernity

Most of the theories we have seen already can be classed as modernist theories. Modernist theories are part of the **'enlightenment project'** which is the idea that society can progress through human reason, science and rationality enable us to discover cause and effect and patterns in our society and using those we can improve society. Marxism, Functionalism, Feminism all tried to do this.

Modern society has 4 main characteristics and it emerged in the 18th century after coming away from traditional society;

1. **Nation states –** are a key political unit in a bounded territory ruled by a centralised state and the people usually share the same language and culture
2. **Capitalism** – private ownership of means of production..
3. **Rationality, science and technology**. Scientific knowledge dominates religion.
4. **Individualism** – tradition becomes less important, experience greater freedom – define own identity.

Globalisation

People now argue that whilst we used to be confined by nation states we are now opened up by **globalisation**. There are 4 changes that we have been faced with to make the world more interconnected.

- **Technological changes:** Communication and movement around the world is now fast and vast. Satellites, the internet and global TV have all aided '*time-space compression*'
- **Economic changes:** The economy has moved to a 'electronic economy' instead of goods, it has moved to the production of information like music. 24 access to money and transfer of money across the world in search of profit brings a 'risky society'. For instance Icelands economy was brought to the brink as it was dependent on banking. **Leslie Sklair (2003)** agrue there is a new '*global capitalist class*' created by small elites owning huge companies.
- **Political changes**: **Kenichi Ohmae (1994)** argues that we live in a boarder-less world. States are now less able to control the activities of huge capitalist enterprises (TNC's)
- **Changes in culture and identity**: we now live in a global culture fuelled by the western values.

Explaining the changes

Do the changes we have seen in our society and globally mean that knowledge and reason cannot improve a society that is so fragmented.

Two schools of thought
Post-Modernism – changes in society recently have changed and fragmented society so much that modernism theories are outdated.
Late Modernity – although chnages have been significant we have not got further away from the old society, the old society has intensified and capitalism has grown.

Post-Modernism

This theory emerged in the 70's and is considered to be the period we are living in now. It is characterised by being unstable and fragmented but also global. We define the ourselves by what we consume.

Knowledge
Foucault argues that there is no foundation for knowledge as there are no criteria we can use to prove a theory true or false. This idea of not being able to get knowledge is called **'Anti-foundationalism'**. This idea has two consequences;
- If we have know correct/true or false knowledge then the enlightenment project of achieving progress through scientific knowledge is finished.
- All embracing theories like Marxism (structural theories) which is a 'meta-narrative' is just a version of reality so we have no reason to accept it as truth.

All ideas are of equal values regardless of power status. We can't know if something is true or false so we shouldn't repress peoples opinions.

Post-Modernism has also practically criticised meta-narratives because they can lead to over arching totalitarian states like the Soviet Union based on Marxist principals which created labour camps and political repression.

- However a criticism of Post-modern views on knowledge is that how can we 'know' that we can't know true or false narratives of society. It's like how we we 'know' we don't know anything when we know at least that we don't know.

Chaos, uncertainty and the collapse of social structures
Structures like the family and nation state are **braking down**, for instance there is no such thing as the 'typical family' anymore. They suggest that things like social class, and the nation state no longer exist, these have broken down too.

Meta-narrative and the myth of truth
Lyotard (1984) agues that because society is changing so fast it can no longer be explained by the general theories like Functionalism and Marxism (meta-narrative- just one version of the truth) and people are in so many groups, interests and lifestyles are changing. **Lyotard** argued that people do not believe in the **myth of truth** and societies can no longer be understood in terms of general theories. There has been a loss of faith in superiority of science and progress.

Choice, Identity and Consumption
People now have more choice over their identities, there are less social constraints. Post-Modern society involves a media saturated consumer culture, where there are virtually limitless possibilities for identities and lifestyles from the evolving consumer goods and activities.

A Media-saturated society
Baudrillard (2001) says that the mass media is so far into our lives that it begins to shape the way we live. Our society therefore is so saturated with media imagery. **Baudrillard** called this **'Simulacra'** which means, media images are shown to reflect reality but in reality have no reflection of the real event, and these images are seen all over the world showing people what 'is happening'. For example media image of war zones eliminate the corpses and death before being sent home, only to show war torn streets. Because of this we become unable to reveal the reality of situations from video games and Hollywood films.

This system of Simulacra creates a **'Hyper-reality'** where the world becomes defined by the media. **Giddens** notes, "we are responding to media images rather than real people."

'Pick 'n mix' identities

Baudrillard (2001) notes that post-modernism involves the consumption of media created desires, having designed clothes which are emphasized in the media. We are no longer constrained to fulfil identities because of class, ethnicity, or gender alone. We can pick and mix between these factors as well as matching the diversity we see in society (due to globalisation) and draw identities from across the globe.

Bauman (1996) and the shopping mall - you are what you buy

Bauman argues that we aren't so constrained by factors like ethnicity or class anymore, instead we can choose, swap and try on as many identities or variations as we want, much like strolling through a shopping mall and trying on new clothes, testing new styles and changing when they don't fit.

Evaluation of Post-modernism

+ It has highlighted some important cultural changes in media, culture and identity
+ It recognises that identities are more fluid and can be created and changed whenever, they cannot be reduced to a response to structural factors.
+ Provides insight into modern issues; globalisation, social changes, growing risk and uncertainty and the growing power of the media
+ It has influenced the way sociologists research, making them question their assumptions and the meaning of some social changes

- **Giddens: late modernity and reflexivity** – he accepts that there have been some changes in society but rejects that we have moved into a new era; instead we are in a stage of late modernity or high modernity. **Giddens** sees **Late Modernity** as characterised by '**reflexivity**'- knowledge we gain from society shapes how we act in it. In modern times social institutions are constantly reflecting on what they do and how they do it, and people are having to reflect on the circumstances in which they live their lives. In modern times personal reflexivity means looking at freedom and fulfilment, he calls this their '**life projects**'.
- Marxists like **Philo and Miller (2001)** make lots of criticisms
    - PM ignores power and inequality. The idea that the media is unconnected with reality ignores the fact that the **media is controlled by the dominant class**
    - Saying that we have limitless choice in choosing identities ignores how poverty restricts people
    - PM's are simply wrong to assume we cannot distinguish reality from media
    - By saying all views are equally true, it's like defending how some people can deny the Nazis killed millions of people, which is normally an indefensible position
- **Lyotard's** theory is **self-defeating**: Why should I believe a theory that says all theories are without truth.
- **Best and Keller (1991)** argue that Post-modernism is a pretty weak theory, it looks at some social changes and features of today's society without explaining where they came from
- PM's are accused of being **too pessimistic** about the Enlightenment project by saying knowledge is impossible and nothing can be done to improve society. **David Harvey (1989)** argues that political decisions do have an effect on all of us, and knowledge can be used to solve human problems.
- **Over-emphasises** the role of media and assumes people are passive to be manipulated by it.
- It exaggerates the scale of social change, factors like ethnicity and class still strongly influence us
- It assumes total free will to choose identities and make decisions however social structures still exert force against us, for example we are constrained by money or gender.
- Ollocks (2008) is simply an exhausting game for intellectuals using obscure imagery and flowery language to disguise nonsense ideas.
- Post-modernism is a meta-narrative in itself and so we can dismiss it.

Modern Society of Modernity	Post-modern society or post-modernity
Industrialisation and the use of technology for the manufacture of standardised goods for the mass market- 5 day manual workers in lifetime jobs	Rapid and continuous introduction of new goods and services with wider consumer choice. Service economy of finance, telecommunications, and customer service replaced manual labour. Jobs for life disappear
Main source of identity was work and social class. **Bradley (1996)** saw identity as fairly predictable and stable, formed by factors like ethnicity, class and gender	Consumption, media and lifestyle become main influences of identity. **Bradley** suggests identities are less predictable and fragmented. People now have 'pick 'n mix' identities. **Bauman (1996)** suggests lives gain meaning through consumption choices
Culture reflects the class structure with clear distinctions between high, mass or popular culture	Culture becomes diverse and fragmented, people pick 'n mix from global culture. The distinctions between high/mass/popular/low culture dissolve
Politics centre around social structural class interests, and is focused around political parties and government	Politics becomes more personalised and links to diversity of the consumer. Party policies are now identity policies like; gay, lesbian, feminism, ethnic or religious (e.g Islam). Movements occur based on person views now structural influences. Local politics take over
Nation-states, national economies and national identities predominate	Globalisation takes over, 'supra-national bodies' like the EU and UN, and TNC's making global products take over from national and local identities. Global media saturation create a global supermarket
Mass media concerned with one way communication, more or less reflecting reality through TV, newspapers and magazines	Society becomes dominated by social media, and social networking websites. Media is removed from reality. **Strinati (1995)** suggests that media becomes a source of individual identity, the mass media dominate and create a hyper-reality.
Rational thought and scientific theories take over as the superior forms for discovering truth about the world and improving it	Objective truth is undiscoverable. **Lyotard** argues that people have lost faith in truth and progressing society. Their disbelief in knowledge values all views as equal. There are no certain truths about the world.
Scientific knowledge and technological progress are a force for good to understand and solve the worlds problems	Science and technology often cause more problems than they solve; climate change, pollution and anti-biotic resistant super bugs.
Sociology developed to understand and explain the society scientifically with rationality and scientific methods as tools to do this. Marxism and Functionalism reflect the Modernist concern	Everything is in a constant state of change, flux, resulting in chaos and uncertainty. Society can no longer be understood through meta-narratives. There are few social constraints, but instead a mass of individuals making their own individual choices. Sociological theories are just one set of ideas competing against each other on a equal basis.

Late Modernity

They reject that we have moved from a modernity period of time to a post-modern time, instead they say that things like social change and globalisation are just intensifications of modernity itself not a whole new era. We call this intensification 'Late Modernity' and it is believed we are experiencing it now. They also like the **enlightenment project** and believe we can discover objective knowledge and use it to better society.

Giddens Reflexivity
Giddens argues that we are now in a stage of high modernity which can be categorised in two ways;
1. **Disembedding**, we no longer need face to face contact in order to communicate with each other and so we are 'lifting out of social relations from local contexts of interaction'. Disembedding breaks down geographical barriers in late modernity and interaction was impersonal.
2. **Reflexivity**; we are no longer as constrained by traditions and we are more individualistic, so we need to constantly monitor our behaviour.

Giddens sees **Late Modernity** as characterised by **'reflexivity'**- knowledge we gain from society shapes how we act in it. In modern times social institutions are constantly reflecting on what they do and how they do it, and people are having to reflect on the circumstances in which they live their lives. In modern times personal reflexivity means looking at freedom and fulfilment, he calls this their **'life projects'**. The reflexivity of institutions can act to change and improve society.

Beck's Risk Society
Beck (1992) argues that we are in a new period of modernity called **'reflexive modernity'**. He argues that we are in a new society, **'risk society'** which faces new dangers than before; we face *manufactured* dangers (MRSA, Super drug resistant bugs, as well as climate change through technology.
Because today is more individualistic, we constantly have to reflect on the risks of action we take or different opportunities we have open to us. This is **reflexive modernity**. Risk consciousness becomes more apparent, we are aware of more risks are try to avoid them, but our knowledge base is the mass media which is distorted. **Beck** is sceptical of the benefits of science because it brings so many manufactured issues, but believe we can use rationality to overcome them.

Evaluation
+ Shows that we have some free will in our actions, noting the ones that benefit us or hinder us and changing or improving our behaviour because of this.
- However ignores how not everyone has the same option, for instance the poor might face more environmental issues and not be able to move out of heavily polluted city areas.
- In terms of Beck it is argued by **Mike Rustin (1994)** that it is capitalism with the persuit of profit at all costs that creates risk not technology directly.
- **Paul Hirst (1993)** rejects the view that rationality attached to science in the form of environmentalism will bring about change as it cannot challenge capitalism as it (environmentalism) is too fragmented.
+ They provide an alternative to post-modernism
+ Show that rational analysis of society can be possible, and whilst it might never be perfect, we can still use it to improve society and reduce risks.

Marxist theories of Post Modernity
Marxists believe in the enlightenment project, but unlike Beck and Giddens, some Marxists like **Fredric Jameson (1984)** and **David Harvey (1989)** believe that society has broken away from Modernity into Post-Modernity, but rather than just a break it is the result of the recent stage of capitalism. They are similar to Post-modernism, however different in that they have faith in Marxist theory to explain changes, and that society can still be improved.

They explain the importance of media images, diversity and instability through its relation to capitalism. For **Harvey** capitalism is ever changing and evolving new technologies to make profits. But capitalism is prone to downfalls, Post-Modernity is believed to have arisen from the 1970 capitalist crisis.

Flexible accumulation:
This was a new way to make profit after the crisis, **Harvey** described this as Post-Fordism (referenced in the AS course and throughout all sociology textbooks). Flexible Accumulation involves ICT, expanded service sector and job insecurity, it requires employees to be flexible to employers needs. This enabled non-standardised products to be made for smaller markets and encouraged diversity of consumption, choice and instability.
This process of profit made leisure, culture and identity into commodities. **Jameson** argues that Post-modernity reflects developed capitalism as it has commodifies every aspect of life.
Harvey argued that this capitalism leads to more of post-modern theories in that global financial markets and foreign holidays have **'shrunk the globe'** and compressed time and space.

Politics and progress:
Both **Harvey** and **Jameson** argue that flexible accumulation has brought post-modern type political changes, in the way of weakening working class movements and creating fragmented smaller movements. But both **H** and **J** are hopeful these smaller changes will form on big **'rainbow alliance'** to change the world.

Evaluation of Marxist theories of post-modernity
- Marx's original idea was that the working class would lead through the enlightenment project to overthrow capitalism, but instead there are just smaller less significant groups in political opposition to capitalism.
+ They offer a sociological explanation for the recent changes in society (capitalism).

Sociology and Science

Positivism
Assuming you haven't blanked Positivism out of your mind from the past two years, here are the key ways it relates to the debate on whether sociology is a science

Key features:
- The <u>world</u> is a real thing separate from our understanding and viewing of it. The world (rocks, soil, leafs and other people) will still exist if we are not viewing it.
- <u>Society</u> is an objective factual reality – its an entity made up of social facts that exist independently to individuals.

Patterns, laws and inductive reasoning- There are regular patterns in society the same way we know that water boils at 100 degrees. We should observe, identity, measure and record these patterns which can lead us to explaining them.
They use inductive reasoning meaning that they gather loads of data about the world though observation and measurement and then find general patterns.

Verificationism:
Positivists need to have theories that are true, otherwise they are pointless. They need to make sure that all the evidence they have verifies their theory they have made. When it does they claim to have discovered a **general '*law*'**. Inductive reasoning in its nature verifies theories as the theories are built upon the data.

They explain the patterns in society as being caused by social facts. For instance, the social fact of egotistic suicide might be explained by the social fact of social integration or moral regulation. If we can explain social facts by other social facts then this can help improve society – influencing policies

Objective Quantitative research- They want us all to use scientific methods as its the best way to test hypothesis in a controlled way. They like quantitative data because it produces Mathematically precise statements about the relationship /pattern they are studying. They aim to find cause and effect in studying this way. They try to remove all subjective feelings and opinions much like natural science; no matter how hard to will it to boil at 2 degrees, water will only ever boil at 100 degrees.

Methods- because sociology is about people it can be hard to remain objective, so they use methods like questionnaires, structured interviews, experiments, structures non-participant observation and official statistics.

Interpretivism
They argue the subject matter of sociology is meaningful social action and so employing scientific methods is totally inadequate for sociology as we can only understand the subject matter through successfully interpreting meanings and motives.

Fundamental rejection of natural scientific methods- Natural sciences are concerned with different subject matter, matter which generally has no conscience. Water does not decided to boil at 100 degrees, the force of heat causes it to. Whereas sociology studies people who have consciousness which attach meaning to the world around them, when understanding their meanings can we understand the world. For example when motorists stop at a red light it is not because that red light is an external force causing them to stop, it is because motorists attach the meaning of 'stop' to it though learned social rules and so wait for it to change to green which they interpret to mean 'go'. **Humans are autonomous**

and the sociologists has to uncover their meanings.

Verstehen and qualitative research- To understand a social actors meanings we need to put ourselves in the place of the actor to grasp their meanings, Weber calls this **Verstehen**. - we call it empathetic understanding. (Empathy is not putting yourself in someone else's shoes, but understanding them from your own shoes).

Types of Interpretivism

Interactionists - Cause and effect can be established but not using a hypothesis, **Glaser and Strauss (1968)** argue that that would impose the researchers own view on the researched and not the social actors. **Glaser and Strauss** favour a bottom up approach, we can figure out a theory after we have been on the ground researching.

Phenomenologists and ethnomethodologists – Cause and effect doesn't exist, society is not an external force 'out there' but only exists in the shared knowledge and meanings of people. Think **Garfinkel**.

Cause and effect- because social actors actions are not guided by an external force there Is no way to get a cause and effect relationship of the sort Positivists want.

Research examples:

In suicide **Douglas (1967)** rejects Durkheim's view that there are external forces shaping whether someone commits suicide or not. He argues that people have free will and decided how to act based on meanings, so official statistics are not good to uncover meanings behind suicide.

Karl Popper: Falsifiability and implications on sociology

The Fallacy of induction:- We can never prove something to be true because all it would take would be on thing or event to prove the whole theory wrong. For instance we can never prove all swans are white, even if we look at a lot of swans and they are all white all we need is a black swan to destroy the theory. Thus we can't prove a theory true by gathering lots of evidence to 'verify' it.

Falsificationism:- Instead of proving a theory right by verifying it, we should aim to have the ability to prove it wrong. By having a scientific statement that could be proved wrong by the evidence. For example a test would disprove the law of water boiling at 10 degrees if it boiled at 50 degrees.

Two features of a good theory:
   • In it's principal can be falsified, but stands up to all attempts to disprove it
   • It claims to explain a great dead and in doing so opens itself up to a greater risk of being falsified.

Popper (1965) believes that we cannot say there can **never be absolute proof** that any knowledge is true, this is because at any moment it could be contradicted or proved false. A good theory is therefore something which has withstood attempts to falsify so far, not necessarily true.

Science grows so rapidly because theories are constantly opened up and criticised by the public and other scientists, pointing out flaws and allowing better theories. **Popper** claims science thrives in 'open' liberal societies where people are free to disagree. For example

17th century Galileo was punished because he claimed the Earth orbited the Sun and not the other way around, this was the closed society of Rome dominated by the Church.

Implications for sociology:- **Sociology seems unscientific** because the theories cannot be put to the test of falsifiability. For instance **Marx** believes there will be a revolution lead to classless society but that it has not yet happened because of the false consciousness of the proletariat. It can't be falsified because whether or not there is a revolution Marx is still correct.

But he believes **sociology can be scientific** as we can use hypothesis that in theory can be falsified. For instance **Ford (1969)** hypothesised that comprehensive schooling would allow social mixing from different social classes, she was able to test and falsify this. Popper still believes that there is some worth in un-falsifiable theories, they provide good debates which can question assumptions, bring clarity to meaning and result in testable hypothesis.

Thomas Kuhn: Scientific paradigms

Kuhn challenges Popper's assumption of whether scientists set out to falsify their hypothesis.

Scientific paradigms:- A paradigm is a **set of values**, ideas, beliefs and assumptions **within which scientists operate**. It essentially lays out the ways to research things and also a little of what will be found by doing so. Kuhn argues that **scientists accept this uncritically** unless there is an overwhelming amount of evidence against it. Without paradigms there would just be rival schools of thought which wouldn't come together as 'science'.

Normal Science- paradigms learnt by scientists in their training, its a set of beliefs widely thought at the time. The paradigm is a broad term and scientists have to neaten it up through research. For example we have an image of a puzzle, our job is the put the pieces together to make the image.

John Watkins (1970) says: **Popper** sees falsification as the most unique aspect of science, whereas **Kuhn** sees it as puzzle solving within a paradigm.

Scientific revolutions: - Where there is enough evidence against the current paradigm which cannot be easily dismissed does science change. There have been **radical paradigm changes** over time where evidence cannot be explained by the paradigm and thus the paradigm changes so it can explain it. Where new evidence cannot fit new paradigms are the created and become rivals. Like **Interpretivists** and **Positivists** it can be hard to measure both in the exact way because a measure for one could be considered invalid by the other because of the difference in assumptions and methods.

Kuhn and Popper:
- Popper characterises science to be open and fundamentally looking to prove itself wrong
- Kuhn sees science as closed and not open to remake unless there is an overwhelming amount of evidence to create a new paradigm. If evidence doesn't fit the paradigm straight away it is ridiculed and claimed to be error.

Implications for Sociology
The only way for sociology to become scientific in this way is to get over the different rival conflicting theories and **become one**. However whether this is possible is up for debate, as most sociological theories have basic level differences which means the methods, research topics and findings are totally different, they are also based on **political beliefs** in a lot of cases and so resolving issues might not be quick. **Post-modernists** believe this

is like a **meta-narrative** and so dislike it.

Realism, Science and Sociology

This is a third view of science. **Keat and Urry (1982)** stress similarities between sociology and certain kinds of science in terms of control.

Open and closed systems:
- **Closed systems** – researcher can control all of the relevant variables and can make precise conclusions. Typical method includes Lab experiment.
- **Open systems** – research cannot control all of the relevant variables and therefore cannot make precise conclusions. For example we cannot 100% predict crime as there are too many complex variables or too large a scale to be able to.

Both **Interpretivists** and **Positivists** are wrong. Positivists who favour researching only observable phenomena are wrong because (**Keat and Urry say**) we can study the interior of a black hole through physics without ever observing it. In the same way just because society is a construct of the mind, like the Interpretivists believe doesn't mean we can't study it.

Underlying structures:- We can explain causes of events through looking at underlying structures and processes. If things (social class) are not observable we can observe the effects (peoples like chances). They believe a lot of **sociology is scientific**. For instance **Marxism** studied the structure of capitalism and its effects (poverty). Even Interpretivists can be considered scientific (studying the unobservable actors meanings).

Realists see little difference between sociology and natural science expect whether they study **open or closed systems**.

Sociology and Values

Everyone of us has our own **values and beliefs**, these are shaped by many factors including our class, ethnicity or gender. This is a debate about whether sociologists who are people to, **can remove their own values** and beliefs from research and **remain objective**. This is also a debate about whether that is even *desirable*.

Classic Sociologists (early positivists and Weber)

Durkheim believed that science could show the perfect form of society, through scientific research and scientists could we uncover this. He valued, value free sociology and detached objectivity in order to achieve this. The perfect society was not a belief it was a scientific truth.

Karl Marx believed his method of **historical analysis** and **historical materialism** could reveal the development of people. He also argues that science can take us to the ideal communist society. **Marx** and **Durkheim** claim values and scientific fact are one and the same.

Max Weber believes that they are very **different and distinct**. For instance the scientific **fact** that divorcees are more likely to commit suicide does not demonstrate the value that we should make divorce harder to obtain, there is nothing that **logically** compels us to accept the **value**. Lots of people could have different values or what to do, make marriage harder to obtain (one value) or give the go ahead on suicide if its up to the person (another value). Even though values and fact were seen differently, he saw value in values in research.

- **Values as a guide to research:**- We select research topics based on *value relevance* to us and develop concepts to understand it. For example, Feminists value gender equality, they study women's oppression and lead to develop concepts like patriarchy to understand it.
- **Data collection and hypothesis testing:**- Values in selection topics is good, but values in research collecting is bad, data should be collected objectively and when hypothesis are tested should be done so only based on facts collected not opinion.
- **Values in the interpretation of data:**- We all believe in different theoretical frame work (positivists and interpretivists, interactionsist etc), and when analysing data should be explicit about which one we are following so we can show unconscious bias.
- **Values and the sociologist as a citizen:**- Sociologists must **take responsibility** for the use of their research by the public and politicians and not hide behind 'objectivity' and 'value free' research. For instance Einstein's research made the atomic bomb possible, but he objected to the use of nuclear weaponry.

Value freedom (modern positivists and committed sociology)

Modern Positivists tried to remain value free because;

- **The desire to appear scientific:**- Science is concerned with facts and not values, so sociological study should remain neutral, just to establish truths about human behaviour not opinionise it. -This could just be seen as a way to raise the credibility of sociology not to get the best research
- **Social position of sociology:**- **Gouldner (1975)** argues that in early 20th century sociologists were seen as **trouble makers** who challenged accepted authority. By te 1950's sociologists were essentially **hired hands** who worked for the government to solve their problems. **Gouldner** argues this 'hired hands' role made them remove their own values. -Weber argues they also left their morals behind and didn't take responsibility for their research.

Committed sociologists make a point of instilling their values into their research, actively taking sides by adopting the interests of individuals or groups. Sociologists like **Myrdal** and **Gouldner** say it is neither desirable or possible to remove values from research. Gouldner argues value free sociology is;

- **Impossible:**- researchers views or people who fund/pay them are going to be reflected in research.
- **Undesirable:**- If values are removed sociologists become hired hands and can do devastating research with no responsibility. For instance someone researching advertising for cigarette companies well aware of the latest cancer research.

Howerd Becker (1970) – Who's side are we on?

Values in sociology are always present, except in the past they have been on the side of the **powerful**. If you hold no values, then naturally you take the values of the powerful. **Becker** argues sociology needs to study and take the side of the **less powerful**, the less studied and the **'underdogs'** like criminals and mental patients. **Goffman (1968)** argues that in order to understand the metal patient we need to take their side against the psychiatrist. - **Gouldner** criticises Becker and argues that he romanticises the underdog that Interactionists tend to focus on.

Gouldner argues that we should take the (Marxist) stance of those **'fighting back'** not the underdog. We shouldn't just study the oppressed as **Goffman** and **Becker** do, but study those trying to end their oppression and unmask ways the powerful maintain dominance.

Funding and Careers

Sociologists are more likely to pick up values of those who fund them, as the people funding them choose the direction and parts researched (and subsequently not researched). They even control if it is unpublished and when. For instance, the **Black Report (1980)** was published on a bank holiday in hopes less would see it because it contradicted current conservative government views.

Sociologists may have different **pressures** for their career and this may affect research; university lecturers may be pressured to research regardless of quality or usefulness. Sociologists might not publish challenging papers lest it **affect their career** chances.

Perspective and Methods

We can see different sociological groups adopting different values based on a perspective of how society is or should be;

- **Feminism:**- sees society as based on gender inequality and promotes the rights of women
- **Functionalism:**- sees society as harmonious and adopts conservative views that favour the status quo
- **Marxism:**- society is conflict-ridden and strives for a classless society

They choose methods that best fit their perspective, for instance Interactionists favour qualitative methods as it gives access to the actors motivations and meanings. For instance Functionalists and positivist favours the establishment and thus use official statistics.

Objectivity and Relativism

If sociological research is based on a perspective then there would be no way to decided which perspective was true, if at all. **Relativism** states that there is **no independent way to judge the truth of perspectives**. Truth is relative, what is true to me is true to me, and your truth is your truth, we cannot know which is of us is actually true.

Relativism and Post-Modernism:

Post-modernism believes too that truth is relative and there is no absolute truth, theories

that claim to be are just meta-narratives, like post-modernism itself.

It matters less whether a theory contains certain values, but more that it can explain the world that we observe.

Sociology and social policy

The difference between social problems and sociological problems:
- **Social problems**: are in some way harmful to society, **Worsley (1978)** describes them as something which causes public friction / private misery and needs some collective action to solve it; social policy.

- **Sociological problems**: all social problems are sociological problems, but not the other way around; this deals with theoretical issues that need explaining for explanations sake. For example the huge improvement in girls educational achievement is not a social problem. Sociological problems may not be practical or useful but search for knowledge for knowledges sake. For example, **Simmel (1950)** looked at universal characteristics of social relationships, in the work place, families or even a bus queue.

However some sociologists are concerned with practical problems and employed by the home office to research and tackle them.

Contribution of sociology on social policy

Sociological research into poverty, health, education and crime has a huge influence on government policy and often government bodies hire sociologists to research these areas for them; for example the **Institute of Public Policy Research**. There are some factors on whether research effects policy;
- **Electoral popularity**: research findings might highlight areas the electorate like, if the people are behind it and it becomes widely accepted then it could also influence policy; **Bowlby's (1965)** idea that young children's relationships with their mother is crucial became widely accepted and influenced policy.
- **Idealogical preferences**: if the government and research share the same perspective on research there is a higher chance of success.
- **Interest groups**: pressure groups seek to further own interests through government policy.
- **Globalisation**: International policies (IMF – international monetary fund) structural readjustment programmes have require criteria to be met by developing countries that sociologists have warned against
- **Critical sociology**: Critical perspectives like Marxism are seen as too extreme to influence policy
- **Cost**: Even if the government likes the research findings, but might not have the funds
- **Funding sources**: think tanks which research, can have political perspectives and so politicians are more likely to use the ones that will provide the research they want.

Giddens (2006) 9 ways sociology can 'improve our lives';
Providing an awareness of cultural differences and of others- seeing it from other perspectives

Providing self-awareness and understanding- reflexivity can improve lives, reflecting on domestic violence, or sex discrimination. Social movements for the better emerge.

Challenging assumptions- **McNeill (1986)** notes that when sociological research is absorbed into common sense it can influence social policy.

Providing a theoretical framework- **Townsend's** research on poverty provided a framework for poverty, **Left and Right realism** a framework for crime.

Providing practical, professional knowledge- Sociologists work everywhere not just universities and can provide valued input.

Identifying social problems- Sociologists who are free to explore many areas can highlight wider societal issues that are often ignored in policy, for instance wider issues of gender inequality, influencing the sex discrimination and equal pay acts.

Providing the evidence- sociological research provides evidence naturally and policy makers can draw on this evidence

Identifying the unintended consequences of policies- Sociological research can evaluate policies, and like Merton's latent functions or dysfunctions.

Addressing the results- research can assess whether they have worked.

Perspectives on social policy and sociology

Positivism and Functionalism:
Using the **Enlightenment Project** to improve society, sociologists could influence social policy by showing objective scientifically collected facts (cause and effect relationships) in society and using social policy to better them. For example, **Durkheim's** analysis lead him to propose a meritocratic education system and the abolition of inherited wealth, to make society fairer.
Functionalists favour tackling one social problem at a time, this is called the **piecemeal approach**.
-Marxists criticise this piecemeal approach because it ignores wider social issues that require the basis of society to change rather than individual issue they are targeting. For instance, targeting improving education ignores the wider issues of poverty causing material deprivation.

The Social Democratic Perspective:
This approach wants a major reshuffle of the structure of society, to redistribute wealth from rich to poor. **Townsend (1979)** argues sociologists should be involved in researching social problems, and making policies to fix them. **Townsend** researched poverty and influenced welfare policies. The Black Report announced 37 far-reaching recommendations for policy, including free school meals and improved working conditions.
Criticisms:
- **Marxism** argues this perspective doesn't reach far enough. Capitalism needs to be stopped before these issues can be resolved.
- **Post-Modernists** as always claim that this is just another version of the truth, sociologists should only take the role of interpreters not law makers.

Marxism:
The main role of sociology should be to criticise the capitalist state not work for it, show the oppression so the WC overthrow it eventually. Policies are created in **the interests of the ruling class**. Policies like welfare act like capitalists care, when this is just a ruse, they maintain the labour forces health to maintain exploitation. Even if there are some policies in the WC interest, the fact that capitalism often crashes threatens these.
Criticisms:
- The idea of sociologists purpose being to expose oppression is impractical and unrealistic.
- **Social democrats** criticise how Marxists think research cant bring progress

Feminism:
Because of the patriarchy, polices make assumptions about people in society, for instance family policies affect and benefit heterosexual married families, they don't benefit those who cohabit. Feminist sociology has brought much to education in the form of **learning materials** (positively towards women) and **teacher training** (teachers should avoid gender bias and be inclusive). **Liberal feminists** believe that anti-discrimination policies

will liberate women. **Radical feminists** ideas of separatism also effect policy, for instance bringing in the **Women's Aid Federation** to support domestic violence victims and separate them from men.
- Marxists say this is still not far enough.

The New Right:
They want little state intervention into peoples lives because it removes freedom to choose and undermines social responsibility. **Charles Murray (1984)** argues that generous welfare act as perverse incentives to weaken self-reliance. Sociologists are there to propose alternative policies to current ones to improve individual responsibility. For example *Breakdown Britain* a conservative report by Social Justice Policy Group (2007) proposed a list of new policies to promote marriage, parenting classes and mothers staying at home.
The role of New Right thinking- New right has influenced by Conservatives and New Labour's policies about children and marriage. New Right support Right Realist approaches like **Wilson and Kelling's** Broken Window thesis.
Criticisms:
- Validity of research from Charles Murray about link between absent fathers and delinquency has been questioned
- New Right policies hardly use real sociological research, instead favouring politically sympathetic think tanks.

Should Sociologists be involved in social policy research?
There are a range of factors influencing how social policies are formulated, most relate to how they will only be created in the **interests of the powerful**. For instance, The **Black Report** was criticised by the Margaret Thatcher government because it contradicted what they wanted and so at the time it did not get the public approval, but by 1990's the labour government liked similar research and it influenced health policies.

McNeill (1986) argues what becomes a social problem is decided by what gets the most support. He argues that most **sociological research is ignored** by governments because they focus on inequalities and this highlights **uncomfortable truths**.

Marsland (1994) argues that systematically empirical sociological research is necessary, important and plays a constructive role in policy. He argues that policy makers ignore sociological research and sociological researchers lack commitment to the cause. He argues it would be better for society if sociologists got involved in evidence based policy making.

If sociologists strive to influence social policy it could change sociology to be just an extension of politics.