

Principle sociological perspectives essay



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Many different sociologists have looked at different sociological perspectives in the effort to understand society and human behaviour. Sociology also includes different aspects of health and illness and the impact of it on society, to understand sociology all social structures and the process of socialization must be looked into. Functionalism The functionalist view on society can be tracked all the way back to Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and was very popular until around the 1970's when new ideas came to light, it was then developed in the 20th century by Talcott Parsons. Functionalists believe in sociological tradition and that the individual is merely a product of society who will help to keep society controlled and balanced. They believe that social institutions are in place to fulfill individual's biological needs, and certain functions:-* Hospitals - medical attention* Schools - knowledge* Police - Law and order It is said that these institutions influence every individual through their own experiences, and that these individuals will use their experiences within the society to benefit the whole of the society.

Although the individual is seen as not being able to change society or control any particular aspects of their life as it is decided for the benefit of society.

Functionalists have described society as a biological organism, all parts function together to make the whole thing work for example: the body, all organs need to function correctly to assure that the body can work properly. So society need police, schools, hospitals to function correctly but each place functions by themselves. Functionalists are very supportive of family values and traditions and that everyone should be living by the same rules, a nuclear family would be the expectation, a mother, father and two children.

Marxism Marxism was discovered by Karl Marx (1818-1883) who believed

that the individual was powerless and that sociology was just analyzing and explaining conflict, although Marxism did not come into existence until after Marx's death who tried to condense his views into a world view. Marx thought that if you remove the economics of the class system that all of society would be equal, so therefore he did not believe that class differences were natural or necessary.

Karl Marx's ideas were the basis for communism and there were two major social classes, the powerful ruling class (Bourgeoisie) and the working class (Proletariat). The proletariat sell their labour to the bourgeoisie but there is different levels of power within both of the social classes as the working class are just interested in getting a fair wage and the wealthy are always wealthy and are the ones who benefit from any good that comes from society.

Bourgeoisie are interested in maximizing profits and keeping the proletariat just wants a decent wage. Above are Marx ideas about capitalist society. He did not like this because some people have better lives than others e. g.

the bourgeois at the expense of the proletariat. Marx ideal was a society where everybody is the same and the proletariat is in control. He wanted people to have the same life opportunities regardless of their skill sets. Paid the same, they have the same quality of hospitals, housing, education etc. In reality some people remained more equal than others. Feminism Feminists are interested in women getting the same rights as to that of a man.

This movement was made shortly after the war when all the women had been sent back to their 'normal' life of living at home, cooking, cleaning and looking after the children. The women started to question the role they were

given and challenging just why they were expected to be doing these particular tasks. Feminist believe that the patriarchal society is constantly oppressing women and that the society is constantly discriminating against women. However after world war one there were not enough men left to meet all production needs so women needed to take on some of their jobs especially in factories and mills.

Feminist's main aim is to ensure that women retain the rights that they deserve, although sometimes it can be hard to challenge the job role which they are given because it is classed as natural. Feminists see the nuclear family as controlling the female role of production because they are not really giving them full choice in what they want to do; they also believe that the family is a main cause of oppression for women. The Suffragettes were the main women's movement in Britain, they campaigned for a say in how society was run and wanted to be able to vote. They stopped their campaign during World War On as most women were told to take jobs vacated by men who were fighting on the western front.

Women made sure Britain did not starve e. g. the land girls on the farms. The working class girls were involved in industry and making munitions, they would do all of the hard and dangerous work.

There efforts were recognized by the government after the war and by 1930 all women were able to vote had but it could be argued that the only reason this happened was so that wealthy people could balance out the number of votes that the working class men coming back from the war would be making. InteractionismInteractionism was look at by George Medd who is a

social psychologist, who focuses on individuals and them creating a social world. Interactionism believes that the individual develops through ' play and game' stages, in the play stage the child will play out familiar roles such as:-

- * A teacher* Parent* Nurse* Doctor

Although at this stage the child will generally be unaware of how the roles interact. In the game stage the child can see wider roles and has more understanding, they will now have more of an idea on how these roles interact and the development of social awareness will take place.

Interactionism has very different views on the whole of society, they refuse to apply anything to the whole society and just look at it in the smaller scale. They think that humans are distinctive because they can reflect on their own thoughts and actions, they emphasise on the fact that individuals gain shared understanding of meanings attached to objects and these meanings only exist as the result of social interaction. CollectivismCollectivism came around when the passing of the poor law was introduced in 1601; they believe that society and its individuals have the responsibility to meet the needs of all the individuals within it. Although there was very minimal help provided and that was for the starving, society still believed that it was your fault that your poor.

People within the society pay taxes and national insurance to the government which then funds education and health and social care services. Collectivists aim to address all the inequalities which are in society and they believe they can do this by compensating people who may be on a lower wage giving the access to education and health services for free. Every individual within the society will be benefiting from any means of production

that they have, even if they are the less wealthy. New RightThe new right perspective on society is very much involved with the individual and the emphasis around the individual having the maximum amount of freedom.

They think that people begin to rely on the government rather than planning a real future, so therefore they believe that the government should only play a very small role in any individual's life. Within their society they tried to reduce state control over education and health services and even though reality remained that most people could not afford to pay for it themselves they still think that state support is intrusive. They are very influenced by Margaret Thatcher and one of the particular quotes they are interested in is "there is no such thing as society", as they have a very negative view on the whole society being so reliant with the government. They do not trust the government because they think that they are too controlling an interfering, this is when they bought new ideas to the NHS about the individual having more choice in the treatment they have. Post ModernismPost modernists believe that the old sociological perspectives such as feminism and Marxism no longer help us to understand society as nothing is staying the same, family, religion and even the economy are dramatically changing and have changed since these perspectives were brought to light. Postmodernists have rejected a lot of perspectives like 'science over superstition' because they think that it is absolutely impossible to understand society in this way.

Post modernism has only emerged since the mid-1980s so it is one of the newest sociological perspectives. Post-modernists believe that society is changing rapidly and that individuals make their own life-style choices choosing from wide ranges.

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