

Social sciences are a group of subjects which focus on society and how it functions as well as how the individuals within that society function and behave. They include sociology, Psychology and Politics.

Social Institutions are the structures in society which influence how society is structured and managed. They include Family, Media, Education and the Government.

Sociological Imagination means the ability to see things socially and how they interact and influence each other. To have a sociological imagination, a person must be able to pull away from the situation and think from an alternative point of view.

Values are the goals that society tells us we should be aiming for in order to be considered a success.

Norms are the unwritten rules of behaviour within a society. The rules which tell the difference between right and wrong as well as rude and polite.

Socialisation means the process of learning the norms and values of society. It happens in 2 stages: Primary socialisation occurs in the family or through the primary care givers. Secondary Socialisation reinforces primary socialisation through social institutions such as education and the media.

Definition of Sociology.

The systematic study of society, the groups within it and its institutions

Social Groups

C	Class
A	Age
D	Disability
G	Gender
E	Ethnicity
S	Sexuality



Who is Auguste Comte?

August Comte is the father of modern sociology. He gave the science of sociology its name and applied the methods of the natural science to the study of society.

Sociological Perspectives

	Outline	Key Thinkers
Functionalism	Structural consensus approach to society. Believe that the institutions of society work together in order to maintain social cohesion and social order. They believe that society is similar to the human body – Organic Analogy.	Durkheim Parsons Merton
Marxism	A structural conflict approach that believes that society is in conflict between the classes. They believe that the Bourgeoisie oppress the Proletariat through various social institutions without their full knowledge.	Marx Engels Althusser Gramsci
Feminism	A set of structural conflict approaches which see society as a conflict between men and women. They look at ways that women are oppressed/disadvantaged by various social institutions and the means by which equality can be achieved.	Oakley Firestone
Interactionism	A micro set of approaches which look at how the individual influences their society through their interactions with others and the social institutions. Interactionism includes Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology, Social Action theory and Symbolic interactionism	Goffman Cooley Weber
Postmodernism	A broad approach which sees society in a more diverse and less structured way. They believe that people have much more choice which means that they shape their reality and culture to their own needs.	Lyotard Baudrillard Foucault Giddens

A consensus theory is one which believes that the institutions of society are working together to maintain social cohesion and stability.

A structural theory is one which looks at how the social institutions influence the running of society and individuals behaviours.

Value Consensus means that a majority of society agree with the goals that society sets to show success.

Anomie means a feeling of normlessness where a person doesn't know what it means to be normal within society.

What are Social Facts and who is the key thinker?

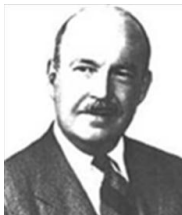
Durkheim

Social facts are things such as institutions, norms and values which exist external to the individual and constrain the individual.

Durkheim's Ideas of Society

1 Society shapes the Individual
It is a top down theory where the institutions of society influence the behaviour of the individual.

2 Social solidarity socialisation and anomie. Social solidarity and cohesion is achieved and maintained through socialisation process and learning of norms and values. Without this society can fall into anomie (Normlessness)



What is the Organic Analogy and who used it?

Talcott Parsons

Society acts in a similar way to the human body through the way that social institutions interact in the same way as human organs.

Three similarities between society and biological organisms.

- 1 **System:** Society and humans are systems of interconnected and inter-dependent parts which function for the good of the whole.
- 2 **System needs:** Organisms like the human body have needs that need to be met and so does society. Social institutions have evolved to meet society's needs.
- 3 **Functions:** Just as the organs of the body function for the good of the whole so do social institutions, which have evolved functions which benefit society as a whole.

Two means of maintaining value consensus and social order

- 1 Formal Social Control – Official groups who enforce societies laws, such as CJS and the Police.
- 2 Informal Social Control – Other social groups such as family and peers who keep us in line through punishment and ostracization.

The Four Basic needs of society

- G Goal Attainment (Political Function) – Societies set goals and decisions about how power and economic resources are allocated.
- A Adaption (Economic Function) – every society has to provide for the needs of its members in order of the society survive.
- I Integration (Social Harmony) – specialist institutions develop to reduce conflict in society. For example education and media create sense of belonging.
- L Latency: The unstated consequences of actions – there are 2 types of latency: Pattern Maintenance: Maintaining value consensus through socialisation and Tension Management. Opportunities to release tension in a safe way.

Internal Criticisms of Functionalism



Key Thinker

Robert K. Merton

Three Main Criticisms of Parson's Assumptions

- 1 **Indispensability** – not all social institutions are functionally indispensable and that there are functional alternatives. For example the family are not the only institution that can perform primary socialisation.
- 2 **Functional Unity** – Not all social institutions are a tightly linked as Parsons suggests. Some institutions are quite far removed from each other. For example the rules of banking and Education.
- 3 **Universal Functionalism** – Not all the institutions of society perform a positive function for society, instead for some people they are dysfunctional, for example domestic abuse makes the family dysfunctional for its members.

A Manifest Function is the intended function of a social institution.

An example of a manifest function is the rain dance performed by the Hopi Indians with the intention of making it rain.

A Latent Function is the unintended function of a social institution.

An example of a latent function is also shown by the Hopi Indians, the ran dance also helps to maintain social solidarity

External Criticisms of Functionalism

Logical Criticisms

- The theory is teleological – a thing exists because of its function or effect.
- Contradictory – how can something be both functional and dysfunctional
- Unscientific – impossible to falsify or verify the theory.

Conflict Perspective

- Unable to explain conflict and change in society.
- It is a conservative ideology that tries to maintain the status quo.
- Legitimises the position of the powerful.

Action Perspective

- Wrong (1961) – Functionalism is deterministic
- Functionalism reifies society – treating it as a distinct 'thing'

Postmodern Perspective

- Unable to explain diversity and instability in society.
- Functionalism is outdated due to being a meta-narrative.

A conflict theory is a theory that suggest that society is in conflict between certain groups. In the case of Marxism the conflict is between social classes.

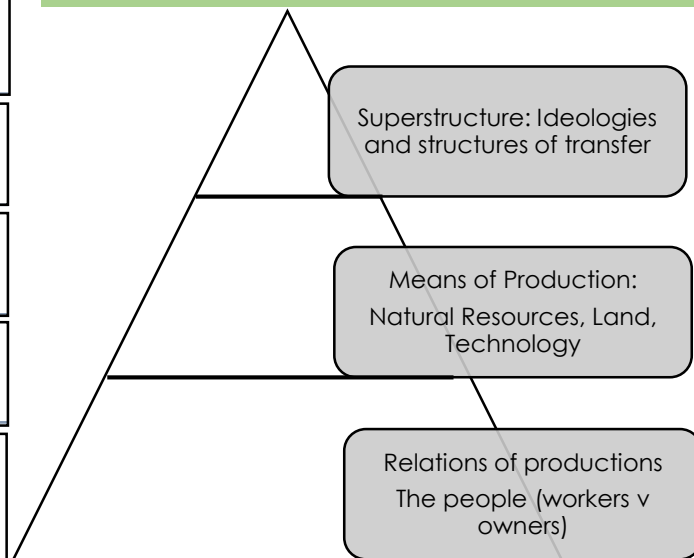
Bourgeoisie means the owners of the means of production and the ruling class.

Proletariat means the workers who are the relations of production and are oppressed by the bourgeoisie.

Alienation means the process whereby the **worker** is made to feel foreign to the products of his/her own **labor**.

False Class Consciousness means the way that the proletariat a led to believe their oppression by the bourgeoisie is normal and that if they work hard they can become the bourgeoisie.

Marxist Structure of a Capitalist society.



Evaluation of Marxism

Over Simplified	<p>Marx focuses solely on class divisions within society but Weber suggest that inequality can be caused by power and status independently of class structures. Feminists would also argue that there is more inequality between genders then there is between classes.</p> <p>The two class system is also over simplistic – it is currently suggested that there are 7 different classes within British society.</p>
Economic Determinism	<p>Marx's whole system is based on economics, and the view that economic factors are the sole cause of everything in society, from inequality to social change.</p> <p>Weber argues that Marxism completely ignores the role of ideas in social change – e.g. Calvinism's role in the rise of capitalism.</p>
Lack of Revolution	<p>The biggest criticism of Marxism is that the revolution that he said would cause the development to a communist society has yet to occur and Marx was very vague on the conditions that would eventually lead to this revolution.</p> <p>Marx also suggested that revolution would occur in the most advance capitalist societies and yet it has been the most backward countries (Russia and Cuba) that have seen Marxist revolutions.</p>
Out of date	<p>Capitalism has become es exploitative then it was during the industrial revolution. Keynesian Economics has led to more government oversight of businesses and the development of welfare states.</p> <p>A number of social institutions have become autonomous from the bourgeoisie – e.g. the media have become critical of the elite.</p>

The features of Capitalist Society .

The features of Communist Society .

1	The proletariat are legally free and separated from the means of production	1	Collective ownership of the means of production and abolish of production for profit.
2	Competition between capitalists lead to the means of production becoming concentrated.	2	Stateless and Classless society -
3	The proletariat do not receive the value of their goods that their labour produces, but only the cost of subsistence.	3	Reclaiming control over the workers labour and products they create (end alienation)



Five Stages of society according to Marx

1	Primitive communism – Classless society
2	Feudal Society – Landowners V Peasants
3	Capitalist Society – Bourgeoisie V Proletariat
4	Socialism – Government Owners V Workers
5	Communism – Classless Society

Humanistic Neo-Marxism



Gramsci's concept of hegemony means the dominance in society of the ruling class ideology and the acceptance of and consent to by the rest society.

Voluntarism means that the working class choose to accept the ruling class ideology.

Ruling Class dominance is maintained by....

- 1 Coercion – the use of the army, police and other government agencies to force other classes to accept ruling class ideology.
- 2 Consent – uses ideas and values to persuade the other classes that ruling class ideology is legitimate.

Reasons why Ruling Class hegemony is never complete

- 1 Ruling class are the minority – to maintain their rule they must create a power bloc (alliances) with other groups such as the middle class.
- 2 Dual consciousness – Working class can see through the dominant ideology to a certain extent. They are influenced by the bourgeoisie ideas but also by their material conditions.

Organic Intellectuals are class conscious workers who organise themselves into a revolutionary political party who will help to create the counter hegemony

Structural Neo-Marxism



State Apparatus

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Repressive State Apparatus: Armies of Men: Police, CJS, military. Coercion |
| 2 | Ideological State Apparatus: Media, education, family etc manipulation |

3 Levels of Structural Determinism

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Economic Level – All activities which produce something to meet a need. Dominates capitalism. |
| 2 | Political Level – All forms of organisation in including the RSA's which coerce workers into the false class consciousness. |
| 3 | Ideological Level – The ways people see themselves and the world. Including ISA's which socialise and manipulate people into FCC |

Relative Autonomy means partial autonomy from the economic level. This means that the political and ideological levels are more than a reflection of the economic level but there is in fact 2 way causality. Economic level dominates in capitalism but the political and ideological functions a indispensable as well.

Requirements for socialism to come about

Humanistic Neo-Marxism	Structural Neo-Marxism
Counter Hegemony created by the working class to over thrown the cultural hegemony of the ruling class.	

Evaluation of Neo-Marxism

Humanistic Neo-Marxism

Under - emphasizing the role of coercive political and economic forces in holding back the formation of a counter-hegemonic bloc – for example workers may be unable to form revolutionary vanguards because of the threat of state-violence.

Structural Neo-Marxism

- Replaces economic determinism is replaced by a more complex system.
- Discourages political activism by suggesting that individuals can do little to change society.
- Ignores examples of working class struggles changing society.
- Thompson – Althusser is elitist and suggests people follow communist party blindly.

Feminism in general means the belief in the social, economic, and political equality of the sexes.

Malestream means viewing social phenomena mainstream and usual, from the point of view of the man, without regard to gender.

Patriarchy means male dominance over women.

Three Waves of Feminism

1 Early 1900's
Suffragettes striving for women's votes.
Emmeline Pankhurst

2 1960's
"Private made Political" – Gloria Steinem
Binging women's issues into the public sphere such as abortion, contraception and domestic violence.

3 1990's
#HeforShe, #Metoo
Focus on issues such as gender representations in the media and sexual harassment.

6 Structures of Patriarchy - Walby

1	The state: govt run by men so policies and laws tend to favour men's interests.
2	Violence: Men are able to use their physicality to intimidate women.
3	Domestic Labour: Women still complete the majority of domestic labour even though there is no reason for this.
4	Paid Work: Women earn less than men and they are overwhelmingly in low paid and part time work.
5	Sexuality: The difference in how men and women's sexuality is perceived. Women are Sluts, men are players.
6	Culture: portrayal of women in culture and the media is often in a sexual way or in a way that reinforces women's lower status.

General Features of Feminism

1	There are inequalities between men and women based on power and status.
2	Inequalities create conflict between men and women.
3	Gender roles and inequalities are generally socially constructed.
4	The importance of the concept of patriarchy: A system of social structures and practices which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.

Type	Outline	Thinkers	Evaluation
Liberal Feminism	Believes that equality should be brought about through education and policy changes. They try to change the system from within.	Anne Oakley Sue Sharpe	Overly Optimistic about the amount of progress that has been made. Deals with the effects of patriarchy not the causes.
Radical Feminism	Believe equality can only be achieved through gender separation and political lesbianism. Change is brought about through protest and violence.	Germaine Greer	Gives other forms of feminism a bad reputation. In this theory gender equality is never full achieved.
Marxist Feminism	Believe that capitalism is the cause of women's oppression and that this oppression helps to reinforce capitalism. This is done in three ways: Women as reserve work force Creation of the next gen of workers. Cushioning Effect – Zaretsky	Michèle Bartlett	Revolution is required for equality and it hasn't happened yet. Patriarchy exists in non-capitalist societies. It is men not capitalism that benefit from women's oppression.
Intersectional Feminism	Believes that other feminisms create a false universality of women's oppression, based on the experiences of western, middle class white women. Different groups of women will experience oppression differently and each of these experiences needs to be	Judith Butler	Focuses on the minutia of oppression which lessens the impact and power in feminism as a whole.
Dual systems Feminism	Combines the ideas of the radical and Marxist feminists, and suggests that women are oppressed by two different systems: Capitalism and Patriarchy	Heidi Hartman Sylvia Walby	Patriarchy is not a system in the same way as capitalism instead it is a descriptive term for practices such as male violence and control of women's labour.

5 Features of Social Action

1	Social structures are a social construction created by individuals. Not a separate entity above them.
2	Voluntarism, free will and choice of people to do things and form their own identities rather than being dictated by social institutions.
3	Micro Approach, focus on individual or small groups rather than large scale trends.
4	Behaviours is driven by beliefs, meanings and feelings people give to the situation they are in, or the way they see things.
5	The use of interpretivist methodology in order to uncover the meanings and definitions individuals give to their behaviour.



Key Thinker

Max Weber

Micro Approach means that the sociologists are looking at the individuals in society and how they shape the world around them

Verstehen means empathy. To fully understand social groups you have to be able to 'walk in their shoes'

Summary of Social Action Theory

Weber believed that in order to fully understand society you need to use a combination of both structural and action approaches.

Example: The Protestant Work Ethic

Structural cause: Protestant reformation, introduced an new belief system – Calvinism. This changed peoples worldview and therefore their behaviour.

Subjective Meaning: work took on a religious meaning, glorifying God through labour and aestheticism. Making them the first modern capitalists.

2 levels of sociological explanation

1	Cause: explaining the structural factors that shape peoples behaviour.
2	Meaning: Understanding the subjective meanings that individuals attach to their actions.

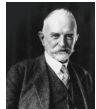
4 Types of Action

1	Instrumental Rational Action: Social actors works out the most efficient way to achieve a goal. E.g. the most efficient way to make profit is to pay low wages.
2	Value Rational Action: Action towards a goal that seen as desirable for its own sake. E.G. Believing in God and completing rituals in order to reach salvation.
3	Traditional Action: Routine, customary or habitual actions that are done without thought or choice; more like "we have always don this"
4	Affectual Action: Action that expresses emotion. Weber saw this as important in religious and political movements with charismatic leaders who attract followers based on emotional appeal. E.g. weeping with grief or violence caused by anger.

Evaluation of Weber

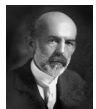
Alfred Schutz	Weber's view of action is to individualistic and doesn't explained shared nature of meanings. For example a student raising their hand in class, THEY mean they have a question or answer, but Weber doesn't explain how the teacher and other students also know what is meant by this gesture.
Application	It is difficult to apply these ideas as meaning can be misinterpreted or reinterpreted by different individuals. E.g. The Trobriand Islanders exchange gifts called 'Kula' with neighbouring islands. This could be seen as either a traditional action as it has been done for generations or it could be seen as an instrumental rational action because it cements
Verstehen	IT is never possible to truly put yourself into the shoes of another person, therefore we cannot really know or understand their motives.

Key Thinkers



G.H. Mead

Herbert Blumer



Charles Cooley

Erving Goffman



Symbol Versus Instinct

Instinct means responding to stimulus in an automatic, pre-programmed way.

Symbol means the words, objects, expressions and gestures that an individual attaches meaning to.
For example: the shaking of a fist can mean many things.

Interpretive Phase means the process between experiencing the stimulus and reacting to it, where the situation is interpreted in order to choose the appropriate response.

Taking on the role of the other

Thinker: **GH Mead**

Taking on the role of others means putting oneself in the place of the other person and seeing ourselves as they see us.

How do we take on the role of the other?

Through the process of social interaction. Firstly as young children through imitative play where we start to see ourselves as our significant others see us. Then we start to see ourselves as the wider community do – Generalised Other

Key Principals of Symbolic Interactionism

Thinker: Herbert Blumer

1	Our actions are based on the meanings we give to the situations, events and people.
2	These meanings are based on the interactions we have experienced and are not fixed but are negotiable and fluid to some extent.
3	The meanings we give to situations are the result of interpretive procedures we use such as taking on the role of others.

Labelling Theory

Definition of the situation	WI Thomas – the definition of something is its label therefore people label situations, events and people which can have real world consequences. For example a teacher labels a student as troublesome and will therefore act differently towards that student.
Looking Glass Self	Cooley – the way that we develop our <i>self-concept</i> . "I am not who I think I am, I am not who you think I am, I am who I think you think I am." Self Fulfilling Prophecy – we become what others see us as.
Career	Becker and Lemert – the process of labelling, from identification, to the label being attached, acceptance or rejection of the label by the labelled, to the creation of a master status. Each stage has its own set of problems and issues.

Dramaturgical Model

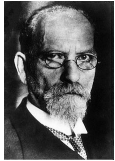
Thinker: **Goffman**

Presentation of self	Front Stage Self – The act we put on for other people. The front stage is where we spend most of our lives. Back Stage – The private place where we can truly be ourselves and prepare to return to the front stage.
Impression Management	The use of language, gestures, body language and props to help us play for the type of person that we want the audience to see. This process requires us to constantly read the audiences responses to us and adjust our performance accordingly.
Roles	There is a gap between who we really are and the roles we play - 'role distance'. Roles are loosely scripted by society so we have the freedom to choose how we play them.

Evaluation

	1	2	3	4	5
	Ethnomethodology argues that although it is correct to focus on interactions, Symbolic Interactionism fails to explain who the actors create the meanings.	Not all action is meaningful, especially Weber's idea of traditional actions which may hold little meaning for the actor.	Fails to explain the origin of labels or the consistent patterns that we see in peoples behaviour.	It is more a loose group of descriptive concepts than an explanatory theory.	Dramaturgical analogy has its limitation as everyone plays both roles of actor and audience and interactions are often improvised and unrehearsed.

Phenomenology



Edmund Husserl: The world only makes sense because we impose meaning and order on it. We construct mental categories to classify and file information that we experience through our senses. Therefore the world as we know it is a product of the individual mind.



Alfred Schutz: developed Husserl's ideas and applied it to the social world. He states that the categories and concepts we use to construct our mental categories are not unique to ourselves but we in fact share these with other people which is how we are able to live in community and social groups.

Typifications means... The shared categories that help us to organise the experiences and world around us. Typifications help to stabilise and clarify meanings by ensuring that we are all speaking the same language and agree on the meaning of things.

Life World means... the stock of shared typifications or what many consider common sense knowledge. It includes common assumptions about the way things are and what certain situations mean.

Recipe Knowledge means... the ability to interpret a situation, action or motivation without really thinking about it. For example we know that a red light means stop and this knowledge means that we are able to drive safely.

Natural Attitude means... the belief that society is a real objective thing that exists outside of us. However Schutz suggests that this is a false belief as it merely demonstrates how people have the same shared meanings which allow us to cooperate and achieve mutual goals.

EVALUATION: Berger and Luckman

Agree that it is right to focus on the common sense knowledge they disagree with the idea that reality is an inter-subjective reality but instead that once the shared meanings have been created, society becomes an external reality that reflects back on us. For example Religion starts as a set of ideas but becomes powerful structures of society which can constrain us.

Ethnomethodology



Harold Garfinkel – is interested in how social order is maintained. Unlike interactionists who are interested in the effects of the meanings; he is interested in how people construct the common sense knowledge and the rules and processes we use to produce the meanings in the first place.

Social order is created from.... The members of society creating and applying common sense knowledge to their everyday lives.

Ethnomethodology studies.... The process of creating the meanings by which we make sense of the world and the rules and methods used to create the meanings.

Indexicality means.. Nothing has a fixed meaning; everything is dependent on context.

Reflexivity means the use of common sense knowledge to interpret everyday situations to construct a sense of meaning and order.

Breaching Experiments

What are they	What is their purpose?	What did Garfinkel conclude?
Garfinkel got his students to either act as lodgers in their own home (overly polite, avoiding getting personal) or the haggled over the price of groceries at the checkout of a supermarket.	Experiments which aim to disrupt people's sense of order and challenge their reflexivity by undermining assumptions about a situation.	By challenging the taken for granted assumptions he was able to show that the orderliness of everyday situations is not fixed but an accomplishment of those who took part. Social order is "participant produced"

EVALUATION: Carib

Findings of the breaching experiments were trivial as Ethnomethodologists spend a lot of time uncovering "taken for granted rules" which are of no surprise to anyone. EM denies the existence of wider society suggesting instead that it is a "shared Fiction" but functionalists would argue that norms and values are not fiction but a social fact. Marxists would argue that the "shred common sense knowledge" is in fact the ruling class ideology and the order that it creates serves the interests of capitalism not the individual.

4 Characteristics of a Modern Society.

1	Nation State – The key political unit of modern society. A geographical area ruled by a powerful central state.
2	Capitalism – Private ownership of the means of production and the use of wage labourers.
3	Rationality – Science and technology are the dominate way of thinking. The move away from religious explanations.
4	Individualism – greater personal freedom and the break from tradition and ascribed status. Although structural inequalities still remain.

Globalisation means... the increased interconnectedness of people across national boundaries.

4 Changes of Globalisation

1	Technological Changes – New technologies have created a time-space compression but also created greater risk such as global warming.
2	Economic Changes – economic activity now takes place on a global scale and includes the electronic economy. Money never sleeps.
3	Political Changes – globalisation has undermined the power of the nation state. We now live in a borderless world – Ohmae. TNC have more power than government.
4	Changes in culture and identity – we live in a global culture created by mass media that has led to the westernisation of the world.

Late Modernity

Argue that we are not entering a new era of postmodernism but instead are seeing a continuation of modernity. They recognise that something important is happening but the elements of modernity are still present. They believe that we can use the enlightenment project to improve society.

Giddens: Key Features of Late Modernity

1	Disembedding – we no longer need face to face contact in order to interact. There is a break down of geographical borders thus making interaction more impersonal.
2	Reflexivity – we are continually re-evaluating our ideas and theories, nothing is fixed or permanent and everything is up to challenge.

Ulrich Beck: Risk Society

Manufactured Risk: The risks that we face today have been created by human activity rather than by nature.

Individualisation: we are no longer governed by tradition in terms of how we act, instead we think for ourselves and reflect on the possible consequences of our actions.

Risk Consciousness: we have become much more aware of risks to ourselves than we ever used to be and work to avoid and minimise them.

Evaluation

Rustin	Hirst	Risk & the Poor
Capitalism not technology is the cause of risk in modern society.	Movements such as environmentalism are unable to bring about the change that Beck suggests are the yare too fragmented.	Not everyone has the option to minimise the risk that they are faced with, the poor don't always have the means to do this.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism is characterised by instability and fragmentation within a global village where image and reality are indistinguishable. We are defined by what we consume. It is a completely new era of society and new theory

Meta Narrative means... the big picture, a singular truth which explains the world around us.

Relativist Position means... All views are true for the people who hold them. No one has a monopoly on the truth.

Baudrillard and Simulacra

Society is no longer based on production of goods but on buying and selling of knowledge which bears no relation to reality. He calls the signs that stand for nothing Simulacra. He also talks about hyper-reality where there is a blurring of reality and image. For example reality TV which is partially scripted so bears no relation to actual reality.

Lyotard and language Games

Knowledge is not about truth it is a but a way of seeing the world. This is preferable as it allows marginalised groups to be heard.

Evaluation

Philo and Miller	Best and Kellner	Enlightenment Project
It ignores power and inequality	Weak theory as it explains how society is but fails to explain how they came about.	Postmodernism is a pessimistic about the entitlements project, suggesting that their view of objective knowledge is impossible and nothing can be done to change or improve society.
Overlooks the role of poverty in restricting opportunities.		
Wrong to assume people cannot differentiate between reality and image.		

Hypothesis means a supposition or proposed explanation made on the basis of limited evidence as a starting point for further investigation.

Correlation means the relationships between two variables. It could be a positive or negative relationship.

Ethnographies means the scientific description of peoples and cultures with their customs, habits, and mutual differences.

Pilot Study is a small scale preliminary study conducted in order to evaluate feasibility of the key steps in a future, full-scale project.

Qualitative data is virtually any type of information that can be observed and recorded that is not numerical in nature and can be in the form of written or verbal communication.

Longitudinal Study means a study that takes place over a long period of time. It can include a number of other research methods.

Case Study means a detailed and in-depth study of a single case, involving an event, group, individual, or organization.

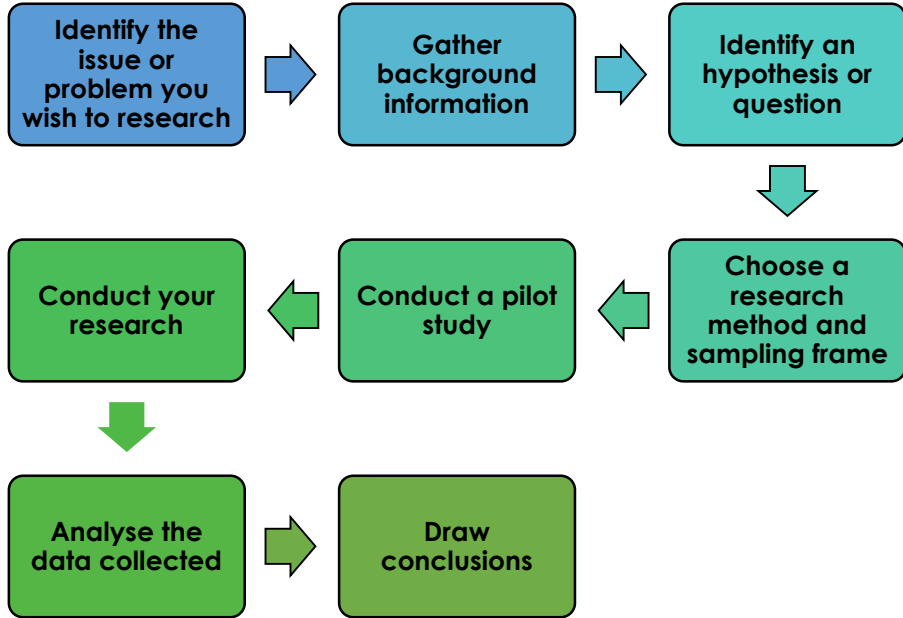
Quantitative data is data that can be quantified and verified, and is amenable to statistical manipulation. Generally comes in the form of numbers and figures.

Reliability means the extent to which a study can be replicated in the same way. You do not need to get the same results but the process should be the same.

Validity means how well a piece of research actually measures what it sets out to, or how well it reflects the reality it claims to represent.

Triangulation means using more than one research method to improve the validity of the study.

The Hypothetico-Deductive Model



Factors when choosing a topic

1	The personal interests and values of the researchers themselves
2	Theoretical perspective/ political beliefs.
3	Opportunity / Access to research population
4	Funding
5	Society and what is currently "In Vogue"
6	Ethical Considerations

Practical Factors

Access to the Participants

The ability to gain access to the group you wish to study will determine which type of method you are able to use. For example if your participants are working class parents they may not have the time to complete interviews but could do a questionnaire.

Personal Characteristics of the Researcher

The personal characteristics of the researcher will influence their choice of method as different researchers will have different skill sets making some methods easier to use than others. For example a researcher would need good communication skills in order to use an interview and good memory and powers of observation for using an observation.

Subject Matter

The subject you are studying may lend itself more to one research method than another. For example it may be difficult for a male researcher to interview victims of domestic violence and questionnaires may not be appropriate for participants who have English as a second language.

Size of the sample

The sample size can influence the choice in methods as if you have access to a large sample an interview would take too long to complete but if you have a very small sample a in depth interview might be required to get enough information.

Type of data required

Different methods will provide either qualitative or quantitative data, so the type of data required will influence the method used.

Time Available

Different methods require different amount of time to complete and this may influence a researcher's choice and they may have a deadline to meet. For example unstructured interviews and observations can take a lot more time to complete than a web based questionnaire.

Cost / Funding

Research funding can influence the research method used not just due to the requirements of the funding body but also the amount it could cost as the researcher will need to stay within budget.

Research Opportunity

There are times when a research opportunity can occur suddenly meaning that the research will not have the time to prepare structured interviews or questionnaires.

Ethical and Moral Factors

Informed Consent

All participants have to give **informed consent**. This would mean that the sociologist would have to explain to participants what the research was about, what taking part would involve and how the data will be used.

Covert Research & Consent

When conducting covert research it may be necessary for the researcher to gain informed consent **after** the data has been collected, they can also gain pre-emptive consent from a similar group.

Pre-emptive Consent means speaking to a similar group to your sample to see if they would give consent to the researcher and if so the researcher can assume the sample will as well.

Deception means deliberately lying to the participants about the purpose of the research or how the data will be used. This can sometimes be necessary if the nature of the research could lead to researcher effects and invalidate the data.

Gate keepers are the people that you need to gain permission from in order to gain access to your participants.

Confidentiality

Any and all identifying features about the participants should not be released to the public or published in the report on the study.

Privacy

The researcher should not ask or involve themselves in the private lives of their participants which do not pertain to the research they are conducting.

Harm

The participants and researcher should not be put in any harms way during the research, wither physical, psychological or emotional harm.

Legality

The researcher cannot break the law during their research or take part in illegal activities.

Method	Description	Practical		Ethical		Theoretical	
		+	-	+	-	+	-
Open Questionnaire	A self complete form with questions which allow the respondent to answer in as much detail as they want.	Easy Cheap Lack of researcher effects Quick to analyses and reach conclusions	Low response rate Misunderstand the question Answer may not fit those given (closed) Leading Questions	Informed consent given by completing Anonymous	Questions may be sensitive.	Detailed data (Open) Reliable Large Sample Easy to quantify and analyse (Closed) Detachment and objectivity	Participants may lie Someone other than the intended participant may answer Right answerism Lack of rapport
Closed Questionnaire	A self complete form with questions which give a set of responses that the respondent can choose from.						
Web based Questionnaire	A self complete form which is sent out via the internet or by using a site such as survey monkey..						
Unstructured Interview	A conversation between the researcher and the participant where the questions are based on the responses given.	(US) Flexibility Allows for clarification of the questions.	Time Cost & Training of Interviewers	(US) Good for sensitive topics	Questions could cause harm if of a sensitive nature.	In depth detailed data (S) Reliable Hard to Quantify	Demand Characteristics (US) Unreliable Small Sample (G) Peer Group Influence
Structured Interview	A conversation between the researcher and the participant where the questions are set in advance.						
Group Interview	Where the interview can be structured or unstructured but involves more than one participant.						
Overt Observation	Where a researcher tells the participants that they are being observed and what they are being observed for.	Flexible [O] Researcher can ask questions Only option with some groups.	Time Cost Researcher effect Requires a certain skill set not all researchers will have. [C] Relies on memory Some groups can be hard to access		[C] lacks informed consent. Privacy can be breached. [P] Going Native	In depth detailed data Allows for Verstehen	Hawthome Effect Hard to Quantify Small Sample Unreliable
Covert Observation	Where the researcher doesn't tell the participants that they are being observed until after the study is complete.						
Participant Observation	Where the researcher becomes a member of the group they are researching.						
Non-Participation Observation	Where the researcher watches the group from the outside without taking part.						
Experiments - Lab	A study that takes place in a lab where the researcher is able to manipulate and control all the variables.	Variables are controlled.	Time Cost	Harm to participants – Stress	Deception in order to deal with researcher effects	Highly reliable Causation can be determined	Validity – not normal setting Researcher Effects Small Sample
Experiments - Field	Field Experiments take place in real-life settings such as a classroom, the work place or even the high street.						

Method	Description	Practical		Ethical		Theoretical	
		+	-	+	-	+	-
Official Statistics	Numerical data that is produced by government of government agencies.	Cheap Easily accessible	May not ask the questions specific to the research	No ethical considerations in using official statistics.		Large sample Valid Reliable	
Unofficial Statistics	Numerical data that is collected by charities and other organisations.	Cheap Easily accessible	May not ask the questions specific to the research	No ethical considerations in using unofficial statistics.		Large Sample Valid Reliable	Could be biased to the views of the organisation.
Personal Documents	Documents such as personal diaries, letters and other personal correspondence.	Cheap	Can be hard to access		Invasion of privacy Informed Consent Confidentiality	In depth and detailed	Open to interpretation Personal view Unreliable
Public Documents	Government documents that have been released such as OFSTED reports	Some can be easy to access. Cheap	Can take time to gain access under FOI Act	No ethical considerations		In depth data	Unreliable Open to interpretation Biased
Historical Documents	Original documents that contain important historical information about a person, place, or event.	Cheap Time Can be easy to access	May not be specific to the research being conducted		Confidentiality Invasion of Privacy	In depth data	Open to interpretation Unreliable Personal View
Prior Research	Research that has been carried out in the same area or on the same topic.	Cheap Easy to access Time	May not be exactly the same in terms of research aims.	No ethical considerations			
Content Analysis	Formal Content Analysis is a quantitative approach to analysing mass media content and involves developing a system of classification to analyse the key features of media sources	Cheap Easy to access	Time	No ethical considerations		Reliable	Open to interpretation

A population is the people who live within a society.

A research population is the group of people that you wish to study.

A sample is those who are taking part in your study.

Representative means the extent to which a sample mirrors a researcher's target population and reflects its characteristics.

Generalisability means the extent to which their findings can be applied to the larger population of which their sample was a part.

Random	
Description An example of random sampling would be picking names out of a hat. In random sampling everyone in the population has the same chance of getting chosen.	
+	-
Easy to create and can be created by computer	Can lead to unrepresentative sample

Systematic	
Description Picking every N th person from all possible participants. N = the number of people in the research population / the number of people needed for the sample.	
+	-
Relatively easy to create	Can lead to an unrepresentative sample

Stratified	
Description Where the sample reflects the proportions of different groups in the research population. For example if 33% of the RP are female then 33% of the sample should be female.	
+	-
Provides a representative sample	Can be complicated to create the sample.

Quota	
Description In this method researchers will be told to ensure the sample fits with certain quotas, for example they might be told to find 90 participants, with 30 of them being unemployed.	
+	-
Representative Sample	Can be difficult to find enough people to fill the quota.

Snowball	
Description With this method, researchers might find a few participants, and then ask them to find participants themselves and so on.	
+	-
Useful to use when researching had to access groups.	Sample can be unrepresentative

Opportunity	
Description Uses people from target population available at the time and willing to take part. It is based on convenience .	
+	-
Quick and easy	Can lead to an unrepresentative sample.

Reliability means the extent to which a study can be replicated in the same way. You do not need to get the same results but the process should be the same.

Validity means how well a piece of research actually measures what it sets out to, or how well it reflects the reality it claims to represent.

Representative means the extent to which a sample mirrors a researcher's target population and reflects its characteristics.

Generalisability means the extent to which their findings can be applied to the larger population of which their sample was a part.

Factors impacting Reliability

Research Method

Some research methods such as structured interviews and questionnaires are more reliable as they can be repeated in the same way multiple times.

Data type

Quantitative data is more reliable than qualitative as it is quantifiable and not open to interpretation.

Participants

It is unlikely that a researcher will be able to get participants who match exactly when repeating research, so participants will lower the reliability of a study.

Factors impacting Validity

Hawthorne Effect

The idea that participants will consciously or unconsciously change their behaviour when they know they are being watched – only applies to observations.

Social Desirability

Social desirability refers to the conscious or unconscious changes people make to their answers or behaviours so that they appear more socially acceptable / normal.

Data Type

Qualitative data is open to interpretation which can lower the validity as one researcher may interpret it differently to another .

Group Dynamics

Peer group pressure can change a participants behaviour or answers to appear more acceptable to the group or to gain symbolic capital amongst the groups.

Demand Characteristics

When the participants change their answers or behaviour to what they think they researcher wants to see or hear.

Factors impacting Representativeness and Generalisability

Sample Size

The smaller the sample size the less likely it can be generalised to the wider research population and is unlikely to be fully representative of the groups.

Research Method

Some research methods will mean that the sample will need to be small (interviews and Observations) which can limit both representativeness and generalisability.

Interpretivism

Verstehen means empathic understanding of human behaviour. Walking in someone else's shoes.

Social Construction means phenomena that is created by society and not naturally occurring. It will vary from culture to culture.

Approach to sociological research

To understand the world you need to be empathetic in order to understand the meanings attached to action.

Natural Science V Sociology

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Causation | • Meanings and interpretations |
| • Observable phenomena | • Unobservable |
| • External Stimuli | • Conscious beings / Free Will |

Preferred data type and methods

Qualitative data

- Methods such as:
- Unstructured Interviews
 - Observations
 - Open Questionnaires

Sociological Perspectives

Social Action theories such as Symbolic Interactionism, Phenomenology, ethnomethodology.

Sociologists

Weber
Garfinkle
Bulmer
Goffman
Cooley
Mead
Husserl

Types of Interpretivism

- Interactionism:**

There can be causal explanation in sociology but there is no need for a hypothesis before starting research. By stating an hypothesis at the start of the study Glaser and Strauss argue that researchers run the risk of imposing their own views on the data rather than those of the actors being researched. Instead there should be a grounded theory which means allowing ideas to emerge as the data is collected which can later be used to produce a testable hypothesis.
- Phenomenology & Ethnomethodology**

Rejects the idea that there can be cause explanations for human behaviour and that society is not out there determining our actions. Instead they argue that society is a shared set of meanings and knowledge. They are interested in finding out what these shared meanings are and where they originate from.

Positivism

Social facts are things such as institutions, norms and values which exist external to the individual and constrain the individual.

Induction involves accumulating data about the world through careful observation and measurement

Causality means the relationships between cause and effect. How one stimuli can lead to a certain action.

Approach to sociological research

Sociology should approach research in the same way as the natural sciences. It should be objective and logical.

Objective Quantitative Research

Positivists prefer quantitative data and as far as possible should follow the experimental method of the natural sciences. This will allow them to uncover and measure patterns of behaviour which will lead them to create social facts which govern society. Also by using quantitative data the positivists believe that they are able to uncover cause and effect that determine human behaviour.

Positivists believe that research should be detached from subjective feelings and interpretations it is claimed that a scientist's beliefs and values have no impact on their findings and sociologists should be the same .

Preferred data type and methods

Quantitative Data

- Methods such as:
- Closed Questions
 - Structured Interviews
 - Experiments

Sociological Perspectives

Structural Approaches such as Functionalism, Marxism and Feminism

Sociologists

Durkheim
Comte

5 Components of a science	
1	Empirical – Count and measure information
2	Testable – scientific knowledge can be tested and retested.
3	Theoretical – seeks causal relationships and doesn't seek to simply describe but to explain.
4	Cumulative – Builds on previous knowledge.
5	Objective – Personal feelings m prejudices etc have not place in science. It should be unbiased.

Falsification
Thinkers: Popper
Position on Sociology as a science. Sociology is not a science but it could be
Explanation Popper believes that instead of verification, what makes science unique is the idea of Falsification. Falsification is the idea that a statements can in principal be falsified by evidence. So a good theory is one that stands up to any attempts to disprove it. Popper states that sociology at present is not a science because its theories and statements are not able to be put to the test with the possibility of being falsified. For example Marxism states that there will be a revolution to overthrow capitalism but this revolution has not yet occurred due to false class consciousness. This means that Marxism cannot be falsified as if there is a revolution then Marxism is correct and even if there is not a revolution Marxism is still correct. But Popper said the sociology could be a science because it is capable of producing testable hypotheses

Realists
Thinkers: Keat and Urry
Position on Sociology as a science. Sociology could be a science depending on definition of science
Explanation Realists recognise there are some similarities between Sociology and the natural science depending on the amount of control the researcher has over their variables. They identify 2 types of system within science. Closed systems – researchers are able to control and measure all the relevant variables and therefor can make predictions, similar to chemistry and physics. Open systems – The researcher is not able to control and measure all the variables so cannot make precise predictions due to the complex nature of the subject area, for example meteorology. Keat and Urry argue then that sociology is an open system as there are often complex systems and multiple variables which the researcher cannot control.

Positivists
Thinkers: Durkheim and Comte
Position on Sociology as a science. Sociology is and should be considered a science.
Explanation Reality exists outside and independently of the mind and there for it can be studied objectively and as a real thing. They believe that there are social facts which make up the rules of society which are separate and independent of individuals. Due to this belief Positivists believe that society can be studied in the same way as the natural world and that patterns can be observed and analysed to create the social facts which rule society. This method is called inductive reasoning, which involves accumulating data about the world through careful observation and measurement. From this data a theory can be formed and verified through further study. Positivists believe that sociology should follow the objective experimental methods that the natural sciences follow so that the research remains value free and patterns and causation can be established.

Paradigms
Thinkers: Kuhn
Position on Sociology as a science. Sociology is not a science but it could be
Explanation A paradigm is a basic framework of assumptions, principals and methods from which the members of the community work. It is a set of norms which tell a scientists how to think and behave and although in science there are rival schools of thought there is still a single paradigm that all scientists accept uncritically. At present Sociology doesn't have a single paradigm, there are rival schools of thought and no fundamental agreement on what or how to study society. Kuhn refers to this as being pre-paradigmatic. Stating that Sociology could become a science if it is able to develop this single fundamental beliefs system. However postmodernists do not think a single paradigm is desirable in sociology as it is too close of being a meta narrative.

Interpretivists
Thinkers:
Position on Sociology as a science. Sociology cannot and should not be a science.
Explanation Sociology and science differ on two major areas. 1) Observable v Unobservable – Sociology is concerned with unobservable internal meanings behind action and not external causes so is unobservable where as the natural sciences deal mostly with the observable cause and effect. 2) Consciousness – The natural sciences studies matter which doesn't have consciousness and therefore behaviour can be explained as a reaction to external stimulus. Where as sociology is dealing with conscious beings who make sense of the world by attaching meaning to action. These meanings are internal and based on experiences so not directly linked to external stimulus.

Values refer to beliefs, opinion prejudices that everyone holds and are influenced by our class, gender, ethnicity and experiences.

Relativism means that there is no independent way to judge if one view is more true than any other.

Positivists and Value Freedom

Thinkers: Durkheim, Comte, Marx

Explanation:

Believe that the study of society should not be the a matter of subjective values or personal opinions about what is best. Instead it should focus on uncovering the truth about how society works and uncovering the laws governing its proper function. In order to do this sociologists should stay objective and value free so that they could say with scientific certainty what is best for society and they would be able to prescribe how things should be.

Committed Sociology	
Explanation: Sociologists shouldn't just spell out their values in their research but should also take sides and espouse the values and interests of certain groups.	
Gouldner	Becker
Value free sociology is both impossible and undesirable. It is impossible because a sociologists own values or those of their pay masters are inevitably going to be reflecting in their research. Undesirable since without values to guide research sociologists are simply selling their services to the highest bidder.	Becker argues that it is inevitable that sociologists take sides and that they should take the side of the Under dog rather than that of the powerful. Partly because less is known about these groups but also because their stories need to be told in order to redress the balance.
Feminists	
Feminists conduct their research entirely based on their values and political opinions. They argue that sociology should be driven by the desire to make society better and should be used to expose the injustice of patriarchy.	

Value Laden Sociology	
Explanation: Gomm argues that 'a value free Sociology is impossible... the very idea is unsociological'. He argues that Sociologists react to political, economic and social events – and what is seen as a political or social 'issue', a social 'problem' is dependent on the power of different groups to define and shape reality – to define what is worthy of research. Consequently, it is just as important to look at what sociologists do not investigate as what they do – Sociologists are not necessarily immune to ideological hegemony.	
Three areas where sociology cannot be value free.	
1	Choice of Subject or Topic – This can be subject not only to the values of the researcher themselves but also by those in political power.
2	Funding – the source of the funding to complete the research may come with ideological ties to the how the data is interpreted.
3	Methodology – The choice of the method can be influenced by the perspective stance that a research takes.

Weber	
Explanation: Sociology cannot be completely value free but there are elements which can be. He makes a distinction between facts and value judgements. A fact can be proven or disproven by evidence where as value judgements cannot be proven or disproven.	
Areas where Sociology can be Value Free	Areas where sociology cannot be Value Free
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection – Weber argues that the collection of data should be objective and unbiased. The questions asked should not be leading and researchers should not aim to get the respondents to answer in away that reflects their ideas. He states that an hypothesis must stand or fall solely on whether or not it fits the observed facts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choice of topic – Values play an important role in selecting the area of research as it is a reflection on what they feel is important and worthy of study. Interpretation of Data – facts need to have a theoretical framework so that it is possible to see the significance of the data and draw conclusions. This framework will be based around individual values and beliefs.

SOCIAL POLICIES refer to laws made by the government which aim to improve society or deal with a social policy.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS refers to social behaviour that causes public friction and misery, and requires a collective response. Examples include Poverty, juvenile delinquency and divorce.

SOCIOLOGICAL PROBLEMS according to Worsley are any pattern of relationships that calls for an explanation. In other words any social behaviour or phenomena which requires explanation.

For example why poor people are more likely to commit crime.

Functionalist View

Functionalists believe that the state acts in the best interests of society and see social policy as being good for all. Social policies help to help society to run more smoothly and efficiently. They promote equal opportunity and social cohesion. Functionalists often favour social policies which are referred to as piecemeal social engineering, meaning they favour a cautious approach tackling one issue at a time. Sociologists should investigate social problems scientifically and provide explanations as well as solutions to social problems.

New Right View

The New Right believe that people should be self reliant. Therefore they believe that the state should not interfere too much in the private lives of the citizen. They are particularly against the welfare state which they see as undermining peoples sense of responsibility. They believe that social policy should aim to restore peoples sense of responsibility.

Marxist View

Marxists believe that the state represents the interests of the ruling class and therefore social policies will reflect the interests of the ruling class as well. Social policies:

- **Provide ideological legitimization** to mask capitalist exploitation. For example the welfare state provides capitalism with a human face, making it look like the state cares for the sick and poor.
- **Maintain the labour force** for example the NHS keeps workers fit for labour.
- **Means of preventing revolution** by placating the working class and making it seem as if the state is looking after the working class. Policies such as the maximum working hours.

Sociologists should therefor reveal the unpleasant truth about capitalist policies rather than solve the problems. This will all class consciousness to occur and revolution to start.

Feminist View

Feminists believe that the state and society is patriarchal and therefore social policies are designed to maintain this patriarchy. For example family policies which benefit married couples and maternity policies are aimed at keeping women at home. Feminist research has had an impact in a number of policy areas including equal opportunities and gender neutrality. However these policies are often seen as reflecting the Liberal Feminist view not radical or Marxist feminist view.

Postmodernist View

Postmodernists aren't really interested in social policy however do support policies that diversity and choices. Late modernists believe that social policies need to adapt constantly to globalisation.

Factors affecting the influence of sociology on social policy.

Electoral Popularity	Ideological and Policy preferences	Cost / Funding	Globalisation	Critical Sociology
Research findings may be unpopular with voters so governments may decide not to follow those recommendations.	If a researchers values or perspectives is in line with the governments then it is more likely to have a chance at influencing policy. For example the New Right had considerable influence in the Conservative government of the 1970's and 1980's.	Governments may not have the budget to implement a sociologists recommendations. Whoever is funding the research may influence the recommendations and findings that the study publishes.	Social policy isn't just made by a nation in isolation. International organisations such as the IMF and EU may influence social policy within individual nations.	Sociologists such a the Marxists are critical of the state and therefore unlikely to influence policy.