**Sociological theories introduction**

**Getting started:**

In pairs, read the six statements from the ’getting you thinking’ box pg 36 and write your views below (there are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers - this is just your opinion which may differ from your partner)

Put the comments in order - 1= most agree, 6 = least agree

2. Explain why you chose the statement you agreed with most

3. Explain why you chose the statement you disagreed with most

Your view on functionalism:

How is society like a human body?

Examining the houses in an English suburb, Barley notices how structured they are. They begin with front gardens which must be kept in good order with flowerbeds and so on. However, he observed that people very rarely sat in these or used them for family activities such as barbecues. This was the function of back gardens, although people maintained their privacy with the use of hedges and fences. Rooms on the ground floor were generally regarded as public rooms, some being kept for ‘best’ such as dining rooms. Kitchens were used to prepare and eat meals. Most had a sitting room in which the television was kept and this was the focus of most family activity, especially entertaining guests. The most private rooms were the toilets. Visitors would seek permission to use these. Upstairs bedrooms, too, were generally regarded as private because these were associated with intimate activities. Consequently, family members knocked on doors before entering. Bedrooms were also individually furnished and decorated so that it was not difficult to identify which family members occupied them.

*Billington R et al (1998)*

*Exploring Self and Society*

Read the extract above. Barley is describing a very ordered and structured world. Do you agree that his is the case?

Why do you think it is so ordered?

Do you think this is true for all societies?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Body | Society equivalent |
|  |  |

Read the text above and then explain Durkheim's explanation for the role of the following aspects of society and give at least one example of this:

The family

Education:

Religious beliefs

Durkheim believed that the function of social institutions was to promote and maintain social order and social solidarity. He regarded the family as the most important institution because it links the individual to society. Romantic love and marriage provide society with an orderly means of reproduction, while the family unit provides physical and economic support for children during the early years of dependence. Most importantly, the family is the primary agent of socialisation - children learn society’s essential ideas and values, the accepted ways of behaving and the social roles (such as feminine and masculine roles) required for adult life. Education, too, develops both the values and skills required for children to take their place eventually as working adults in the specialised division of labour. The discipline structure and secondary socialisation that occurs in schools also function to maintain consensus, as most people accept that a future of work and career are the norm. Finally, religious beliefs provide people with moral guidelines and practices which socially integrate people into a common identity and community.

*Durkheim*

Explain the Marxist pyramid

Micro theories:

Macro theories:

Why do you think there are many different theoretical schools of thought in sociology?

Explain one strength in having so many different views

Explain at least one weakness of having so many different views

What is meant by a ‘dependency culture’?

Do you think governments should have more or less power? Explain your view.

Complete the ‘Getting you thinking’ questions

How do you think you might be ‘brainwashed’ into ‘norms and values’?

**Functionalism**

**New Right**

**Weber**

Choose one of the aspects of status and explain why you think this is the most important.

What is ‘status’?

What aspects of society give us status?

**New Right**

What is meant by a ‘dependency culture’?

Do you think governments should have more or less power? Explain your view.

Complete the ‘Getting you thinking’ questions

**Feminism**

High profile organisations such as the BBC are actively recruiting women. Do you think this is right or wrong?

Do you think we should study feminist views? Explain your argument

**Interactionism (social action)**

Activity pg 44 textbook

Complete the ‘getting you thinking’ questions

**Postmodernism**

Complete the ‘exploring postmodernism’ questions 1,2, 3

Complete the ‘getting you thinking’ questions

**Postmodernism**

Example postmodernist media

Activity pg 45