

Sociological Perspectives – Knowledge Organiser 1.5

Consensus or conflict theory

Consensus theory	Functionalism (emphasises shared values - Durkheim). Conflict happens but is only a passing phase.
Parsons	An American Sociologist in the 1950s. Emphasised consensus theory. Shared values maintained the capitalist economic system e.g. families believed in materialism – the value of possessions and physical comfort.
Conflict theory	Marxism, feminism (emphasises the differences between groups in society). One group in society exploits another for their own interest.

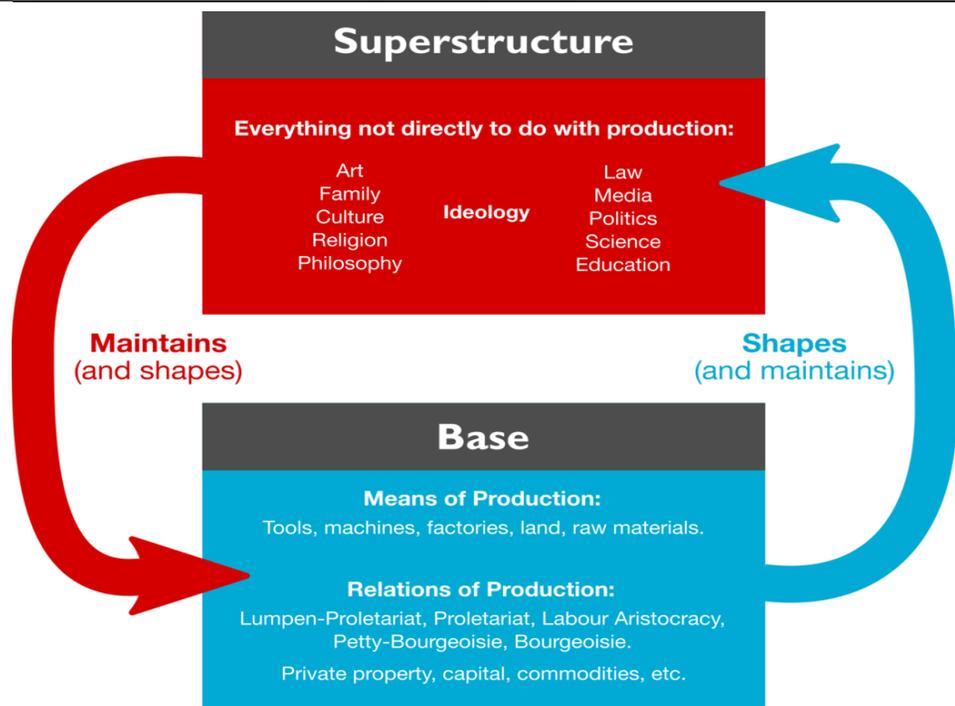
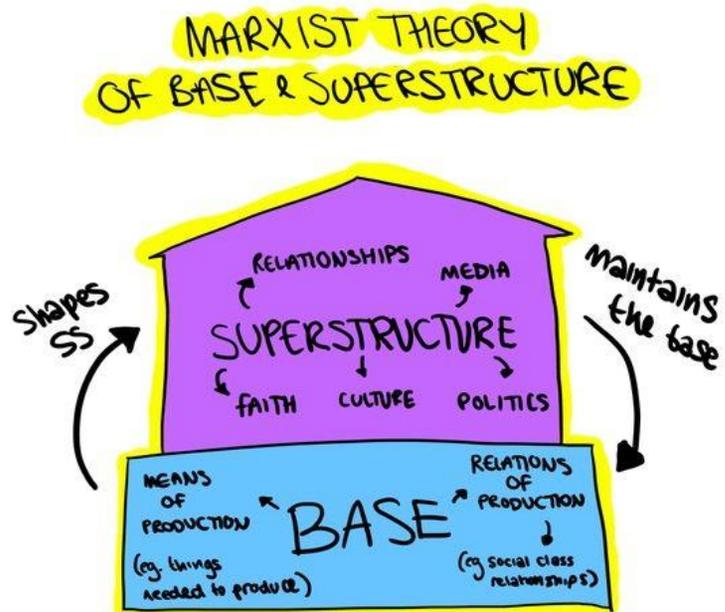
Functionalism

Functionalism	Society is based on shared values. ‘Laws’ that preserve the ‘health’ of society. It is impossible to understand separate parts of society unless viewed in relation to the whole of society. Society is like a machine or a the human body. All the different parts work together
Relationships in society	Norms & customs govern human behaviour and relationships. These relationships then form the structure of society.
Durkheim	Durkheim held functionalist beliefs
Parsons	Parsons held functionalist beliefs
Functionalist prerequisites	The basic needs of society that must be met if the society is to survive e.g. housing or food
Institutions	Important parts of the structure of society maintained by social norms e.g. the family, education system
Social order	How society is constructed and maintained. Functionalists believe that social order is essential for a prosperous society. Socialisation & social control maintain social order.
Value consensus	Beliefs that are commonly shared by a particular social group. Functionalists believe that society is based on a value consensus. The value consensus ensures that the ‘machine’ of society works. If the different parts of the ‘machine’ stop working, society as a whole will breakdown

Marxism

Capitalism	Marx believed Capitalism exploits the labour of the workers and oppresses them
Forces of production	Materials, technology and knowledge required to produce the goods that society needs
Historical development	Marx believed that changes in the forces of production shape society
Infrastructure	The forces of production & social relationships that form the basic foundations of society
False consciousness	The mistaken idea that capitalist society is fair and opportunities are open to all
Ruling class ideology	The ideas and beliefs of the ruling class
Superstructure	All other aspects of society built upon the foundation of the infrastructure e.g. government and political systems

Marx's vision	Eventually a revolution will occur which produce a fairer society. Collective ownership of the means of production would come about – a communist or socialist society for the benefit of all, not just the privileged few.
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Interactionism

Small scale	Interactionism is different to Functionalism and Marxism because it focuses on small-scale human actions – all human interactions are meaningful to those involved.
Attaching meaning	Different people attach different meanings to interactions. How people react to situations is in part based on their self-concept
Self-concept	The idea we have of the person we think are. Shaped because of our interactions with others.
Labelling	When the behaviour or identity of individuals is used to classify them – put them into categories (boxes).
Master status	When an individual accepts a label that has been ascribed to them that label becomes a master status and influences their behaviour and how others react to them
Negotiation	The process by which an individual changes the reactions of others or shapes their own role.
Self-fulfilling prophecy	When an individual accepts the label that has been given to them by others and acts accordingly.
Free will	Interactionist sociologists believe that people have free will to choose whether to accept labels or follow social norms – they are not forced. Through a process of negotiation, labels can change and roles are performed differently.

Feminism

Feminism	The most important issue in society is the division between men and women
Patriarchy	Male domination of society and its institutions

Patriarchal family life	Men get the greatest benefit from family life. Women have to do most of the housework even if they go out to work as well.
Different types of feminists	Radical, Liberal (moderate), Marxist, Black
The New Right	
New Right ideas	Emphasises the individual Support capitalism Competition & choice will drive up standards in health care & education Reduce welfare benefits
Cultural dependency	The idea that allowing people to have benefits encourages them to stay on benefits rather than support themselves through work
Culture of poverty	An acceptance repeated across generations that if you are poor you will always be poor.
New Right Government	Associated with Thatcher in 1980s Britain "There is no such thing as society"
Marketization of education	Systems encouraging competition between schools in order to raise standards
Underclass	People at the bottom of the social scale who rely on welfare benefits
Murray	A sociologist (still alive) who believes that the underclass behave badly and are unwilling to take jobs. He says they commit more crimes and are less likely to stay married. He believes that lone parents are not as effective as those in a marriage are. Young people see welfare benefits as an entitlement.