

- a) The first key feature of action theory is that it is a 'bottom up' theory, this means that the perspective believes that the people have control over the institutions and systems. Leading on from this, another feature of Action Theory is that it looks at the small scale interactions of people as a way of shaping social behaviour. Unlike structural theories who believe that the institutions and systems are responsible for our socialisation, action theory believes that we are socialised by observing and participating in social interactions where we then form mutual agreements on the norms, rules, roles and values of our society.
- b) One difference between action and feminist theories is that they disagree on how we are socialised. Action theory focuses on the small scale interactions of people and believes that observation and participation of these interactions is how we learn the norms, rules,

roles, laws and values of our society. However, feminist theories disagree with this view point as it is a structural theory, meaning that they believe that we are socialised through the institutions and systems of society in way that maintains the status quo of society (the status quo of society for feminists is built on inequality and results in women living in inequality). Thus, it is clear that one of the biggest differences of feminist and action theories is how we are socialised to fit in to our society and culture. Moreover, the opposing theories disagree on the very building blocks of society. Action theory believes that society is built upon the social groups and social behaviour/interactions, whereas Feminist theories believe that society is built upon the institutions and systems that are founded upon patriarchy powerful enough to control all people and aspects of society. Therefore, it could be said that Action theory is perhaps more optimistic than

Feminist theories as the later is based on domination and control of a few while Action Theory believes in the community of all. ~~The~~ However, this brings about another main difference of the two theories. One of the main criticisms of Action Theory is that it does not look at the reasons as to why people can have a mutual agreement on the norms, rules, roles and values - it has often been said to be more descriptive than explanatory. The difference between Action theory and Feminism in this area is that the Feminist Perspective does analyse this, its explanation is that society has been founded upon patriarchy that is stretched throughout all the institutions and system. Due to the dominance of these institutions and systems they are able to influence the socialisation process, implementing norms, roles and values etc that continue to oppress women. Thus, one of the fundamental differences of the theories can be found in the faults and the

praises of the others in their depth and level of exploration into society and social behaviour. Finally, another difference of the two theories can once again be found in their faults and praises. The Feminist Perspective, as with many other structural theories, is criticised for failing to give enough credit or will to the individuals to bring about change. However, Action Theory is founded upon the power and influence of the individual. However, in saying this Feminist theories have been praised for recognising that conflict can bring people together which can result in social change. Therefore, it is possible that this particular difference between Feminist and Action theories are not as far apart as other structural theories and action theory.

2) One appropriate research method to gain primary and quantitative data in the study of women being ~~as~~ discriminated against in the workplace is

QUESTION

a ~~partial questionnaire~~ structured interview. Key features of a structured interview involve a face-to-face discussion between the researcher and the interviewee. The questions will be pre-set and likely 'closed' this will limit the respondents answers e.g. 'have you ever experienced discrimination in the workplace' and the answer will be limited to 'yes' or 'no'. ~~These~~ ~~limited~~ ~~answer~~ One of the main advantages of using this research method is that if 'closed' questions are used, it will make the results easy to quantify. Thus, the researcher will easily be able to return the results into statistical information and compare it to other data or research available. Another advantage of using a structured interview as a research method is that it is face-to-face and so the researcher will be there to explain ~~any~~ or clarify any questions that the respondent doesn't understand. This is a particular advantage for this investigation as many people may not fully

understand what actions can be classed as discrimination.

Another advantage of ~~structured~~ structured interviews is that the pre-set questions allow the interviewer to get straight to the point and if they are 'closed' questions the researcher will be able to focus on directly relevant information. Thus, the researcher would be able to eliminate any lengthy discussion with any male workforce who may be unsure if they're guilty of discriminating and get directly to the point in other interviews with women about when/if they've been discriminated against e.g. 'yes' or 'no'. However, at the same time such a straight forward answer and response ~~may~~ result in some of the respondents getting frustrated because they² can't elaborate on any of their responses - this may frustrate many ~~who want~~ women who want to discuss the details of their discrimination or others who want to explain why they don't think they're guilty of discriminating. Another disadvantage of

using structured interviews for a research method for this particular study is that it is quite expensive due to the high involvement of the researcher - this means that the sociologist may not have enough money to carry out other research methods such as case studies of women who have tried to file discrimination law suits, which would compliment the researchers other studies. Finally, another disadvantage of the study is that it is quite time consuming for both the interviewer and the interviewee. Therefore, this is not a method that produces quick results. However, it is clear that despite the disadvantages, structured interviews would be an effective research method for this study as the pre-set questions ~~are~~ allow the sociologist control over the content, making it primary research and if 'closed' questions are used it will also produce ~~quanta~~ quantitative data.

3) As with all sociological theories, Functionalist theory believes that a human's sense of identity is developed through the socialisation process. For functionalists, the socialisation process comes in two stages - primary and secondary socialisation. Primary socialisation ~~is~~ takes place in the early stages of our life and continues throughout. It is informal as it takes place through observation of ~~family~~ family (mostly), friends etc. e.g. we learn the norm of our culture to eat with a knife and fork. The second stage of secondary socialisation develops as we grow older and is formal as we are socialised in a much more structured way. One of the main ways we are socialised in this stage is through the education system where we learn the value of reading and writing. Throughout both of these stages we are learning the norms, rules, roles, and values that form our society and culture. It is the functionalist belief that this socialisation process is for the good of the whole.

as it aids capitalism which they believe creates social order. Through our socialisation process we learn to realise this and internalise these norms, roles, rules and values and create value consensus as most of us accept this and carry out the behaviour and beliefs expected. Therefore, it is clear that this socialisation process is designed to help us fit in to and accept our culture as a culture is the way a social group live their lives e.g. the norms, rules, roles and values. Through being socialised into and accepting this culture, functionalists believe that we develop ~~an~~ our sense of identity through this. ~~While our personal identity~~ They believe that while our personal identity can not be changed as it involves the likes of our nationality, age etc, our social identity can be influenced by our culture. The main reason for this is because a person's social identity is how we view ourselves and others within our culture. Through the socialisation process we learn the

norms, rules, roles and values of our culture and so we learn how to think and act, affecting how we view ourselves and others as a result.

4) Culture is the way a social group live their lives e.g. the norms, rules, roles and values of that particular group of people. However, within every society and culture, there are sub-culture that bring together people who differ in their norms and values. ~~the~~ Examples of these sub-cultures in the present day are ethnic minority groups, minority religious groups, youth groups etc. ~~Not~~ Stanley Cohen's (1972) study *Folk Devils and Moral Panic*: focused on the medias reaction to two of these youth subcultures during the 1960s Britain, the mods and rockers. Sub-cultures have a role of providing escape for people who experience status frustration within the dominant culture. Cohen suggests that the two youth sub-cultures met this role for many young people at ~~the~~ time

who had previously had very little power in their culture who came shortly after a war and army generation who were socialised to be well behaved and obedient. The mods and rockers liberated themselves from this power and status frustration through music and appearance. Cohen noted how ethnocentrism was present as the dominant culture looked down on the sub cultures with disapproval. This disapproval quickly turned into moral panic and eventually folk devil after the two groups clashed at a beach one day in 1964. Cohen noted how the clash only resulted in few damages to property and no serious physical injury but the media exaggerated the event causing moral panic. Cohen studied articles and noticed how there was a huge distortion of facts and misrepresentation of evidence. Cohen's study then became hugely significant in terms of power and status as he then detailed the 3 stages that the media played in encouraging the moral panic

and spring on the folk devil against the two youth sub-cultures. The first stage was symbolisation, oversimplifying the events and these involved to make them easily recognisable. The second stage was exaggeration, amplifying and threatening the two groups to fuel on the moral crusade. The final stage was a prediction of events ~~for~~ of a similar nature for next year. This led to more police presence the next year (an example of hegemony) and which, in turn, only resulted in more fights between the mods and rockers. Thus, Cohen's study is an example of how the media can be used to drain a sub-culture of power as their input only led to the self destruction of the mods and rockers.

5) The social class stratification system is the way in which socio-economic inequality is most visible in our society. A social stratification system

seperates people within a society into different groups and places them in layers known as stratas. These stratas are then placed in a hierarchial order with the most privileged being placed at the top and the least favoured at the bottom. Different societies have different stratification systems and they can order people in terms of age, ethnicity, gender etc. However, in the UK we have a social class stratification system which layers people in terms of social class. As we have a capitalist society the most desired attributes are power, wealth and prestige. Due to the stratification system, ~~at~~ those at the top have the most. Thus, this makes socio-economic inequality a huge issue because before theories or evidence are even considered, the stratification system is affecting their wealth and power simply due to a person's class. In the UK we have 3 main classes - the upper class, the middle class and the working class. However, in 2001 the General Occupation

Scale was brought in which now considers ~~the~~ the likes of those who are too sick or cannot afford to work - this made the underclass much more clearly defined and dominant within society.

While it is clear that the social class stratification system promotes inequality, it is said to be an open system where upwards and downwards mobility is possible, suggesting that people do have opportunities. There are two types of mobility that sociologists refer to, absolute and relative mobility. Relative mobility refers to the difficulty that some people have with achieving mobility. Absolute mobility simply refers to the total amount of people that have been successfully mobile.

Sociologist's main concern lies with relative mobility and the sheer amount of people that are struggling and failing to achieve upwards mobility. Thus, this would suggest that the system is not as open as it is said to be due to the socio-economic inequality it promotes and the poor living standards and life chances

that those towards the bottom experience as a result.

A theoretical approach that would agree that socio-economic inequality is an issue in society because of the stratification system is Marxism. Marxist's believe that ~~these~~ society is unequal due to the fundamental conflict between the two groups - the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The proletariat want to earn as much as they can while the bourgeoisie want to earn as much profit. Only one can be successful and seeing as the bourgeoisie own the means and the forces of production, they come up on top. This then gives them control of the economic system which then allows them to control all other institutions and systems as the infrastructure controls the superstructure. Thus, the bourgeoisie are able to socialise ~~as~~ the proletariat into accepting the social class stratification system as the norm while the system ultimately benefits them and to the detriment of the proletariat. Max Weber agreed and built upon the point of inequality running through society

and the system, made by Marx, by detailing the poor living standards and life chances that those in the lower social classes suffer. As this is a capitalist society money is one of the most desirable attributes, those towards the top of the system get an unequal amount and as they have more, they get to better from better food, better education, better housing etc.

∴ A contrasting theoretical view that also has a view on the socio-economic inequality in the social class stratification system is Functionalism. ~~the~~ Functionalists accept that socio-economic inequality is present in our society and system, but unlike Marxists they believe that this is actually for the benefit of the whole.

~~As~~ According to functionalists, inequality is actually beneficial for society as Functionalists believe in biological analogy, where by they believe that each person^{can} achieves what they are supposed to. They believe that we live in a meritocracy meaning not only ~~will~~^{can} achieve what they are supposed to, but they will. This

is essential as Functionalists believe that no one role is more important than another. e.g. a doctor is no more important than a hairdresser as they both serve a purpose. Therefore, they believe that this creates a division of labour which is otherwise known as the social class stratification system or inequality. They say that this is ultimately beneficial for society as a whole as each institution and person is interdependent on the other and once again, no one role is more important than another.

Overall, it is clear ~~that~~ that socio-economic inequality is a huge issue. ~~within the UK~~ Before evidence is even looked at, the simplest and most visible way to see how socio-economic inequality is an issue is through the UK society and its social class stratification system. Such a system promotes inequality in itself by placing people in stratas and layering them in a hierarchical order so that power, wealth and prestige are unevenly distributed. Marxism

agrees that inequality is an issue and Max Weber details how this can limit people's living standards and life chances. Even Functionalists agree that inequality is ^{prevalent} ~~an~~ issue although they believe that it is actually beneficial. Their meritocracy ~~or~~ theory would suggest that they agree that the UK's system is an open one, however, the lack of evidence and sociologist's concern with relative mobility pokes holes and adds doubt to the theories credibility. Thus, overall it would consider that socio-economic inequality is an issue that limits people's life chances and living standards.