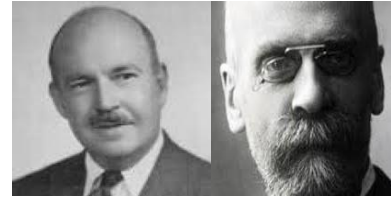


Sociological Theories

Society is seen as diverse and moving in many directions simultaneously meaning the idea of society progressing in one direction is no longer relevant; they reject the concept of a collective social identity, which can be proven through one theory. Postmodernists argue that group categories of social class, ethnicity and gender no longer exist in homogenous form, and subjective identity is more important. Indeed, postmodernists argue that we should focus on small parts of the social world and try and understand them from a range of viewpoints.



Jean-Francois Lyotard



Emile Durkheim & Talcott Parsons

Focuses on the functions performed by different parts of society and the interrelationship between them; it involves institutions (families, education, mass media and religion) working together to transmit shared norms and values (i.e., meritocracy) to each new generation ensuring stability and continuity in society. This allows members of societies to feel a sense of **social solidarity**, a feeling of belonging to a larger community and a shared identity.



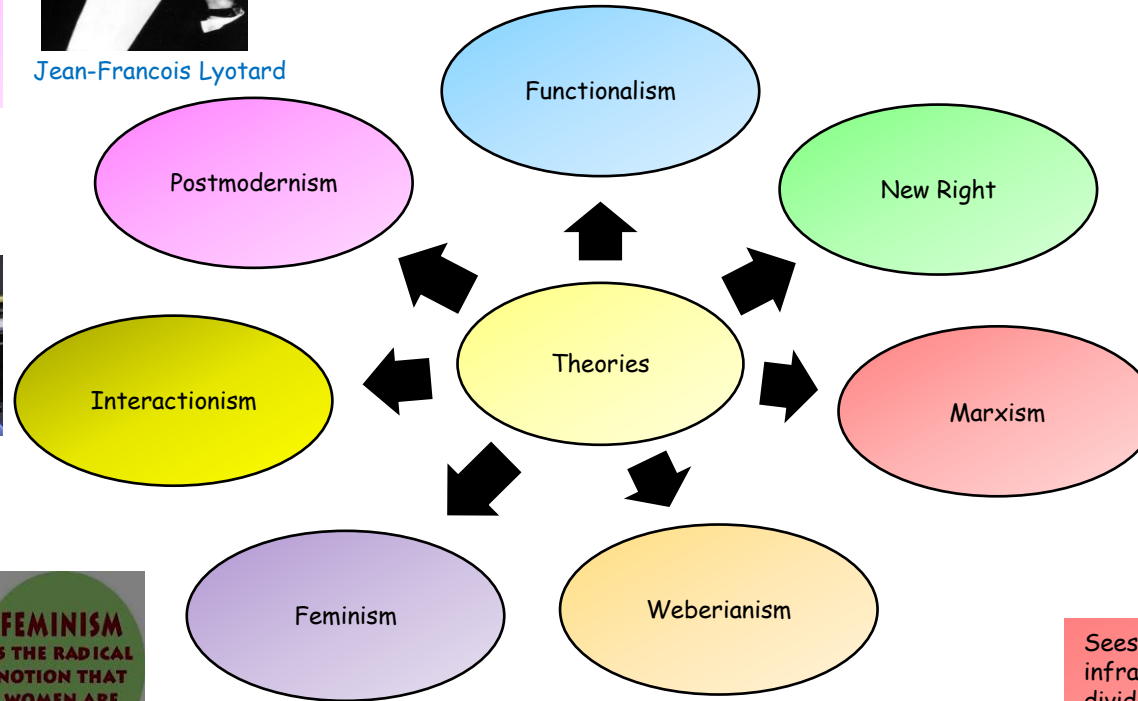
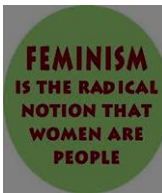
Charles Murray

A social action theory, which sees individuals' behaviours based on free will rather than being subject to social forces. It is centred upon interpretations and meanings that individuals assign to signs, symbols and interactions between one another. The concept of labelling is significant within this theory.

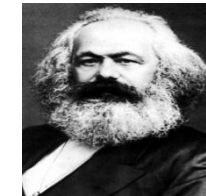


Howard Becker

A political movement which sees women as unequal to men and which tries to liberate women from gender inequality; they refer to patriarchal ideologies, ideas that help to justify men's dominance and women's subordinate place in society. There are four different types of feminists - liberal, marxist, radical and postmodernists.



New Right theorists support functionalist viewpoints; they believe that capitalist societies work best when there is a **free market** where the state avoids interfering in the economy by not restricting trade or setting the prices of goods/wages. They also believe that the individuals should not be dependent on the state and should take responsibilities for their own actions.



Karl Marx

Sees societies developing through class struggles, specifically the infrastructure or economic mode of production of a society. It divides society into:

- A **ruling class** or **bourgeoisie** who own the means of production (profits) and dictate the relations of production.
- The **working class** or **proletariat**, who are exploited, oppressed and conditioned to accept authority by being paid low wages and work unsociable hours.

Marx believed that eventually the proletariat would become aware of their exploitation, would overthrow capitalism and would establish a communist society run by workers for the benefit of everyone.



Max Weber

Sees three separate but related dimensions of power that has led to social inequalities in society:

- 1) **Class** - market position - amount of income earned.
- 2) **Status** - social standing and value within society.
- 3) **Party** - political power

However, class not always seen as the most important dimension.