***Lesson 2***

***Who has the Power?***

Who has the power? Respond to each scenario using at least two Sociological Theories of power. Grade C

Use analytic language to compare your selected theories. Grade B

Describe both similarities and differences between your selected theories before providing a completely different, viable alternative theory. Grade A

Is there a blurred boundary between some theories? Does Sociology provide the only answer? Grade A\*

Scenario 1

Workers in a car factory feel as though they are paid too little for the amount of work that they do. They complain to the factory floor manager but feel that she doesn’t care and has seemingly no impact. They call a meeting during work hours and decide that they will write a letter of complaint about the factories increasing profits when their wages always stay the same. They agree that if the management refuses to offer them a pay rise as a result of the letter they will strike. The following week they went on strike for 4 days. The management of the factory offered them a 2% pay rise and the workers agreed to come back to work.

***A grade answer example***…Some sociologists would argue that the management have the power. This is because they have decided to give a small pay rise to the workers. This idea would be supported by Elite theorists because they believe that a small group of Elite people make all the decisions in society to benefit them selves. Similarly, Marxists believe that the Bourgeoisie have full control over the means of production and in turn have control over the Proletariat. They have ensured that they maintain control of the workers and the factory by giving a very small pay rise that will not affect profits anyway. Although Elite Theorists and Marx held the similar views as described, there was one main difference. Marx thought that the rule of an elite (Bourgeoisie) was fundamentally wrong, Elite Theorists thought this was morally right. Marx’s theory states that the Proletariat should come together and over throw the Bourgeoisie, making us all communists. However, another school of Sociological thought, such as Functionalism would say that power is distributed fairly, not everybody in society can have power, it wouldn’t function. People vote for leaders and then they act on behalf of the masses. Marx would argue that the factory owners have overall power and yet have not been voted for by the workers. Sometimes it is unhelpful to categorise events in society, or people into one Sociological theory. For example Postmodernists do not subscribe to the social structure emphasis that Marxists and Functionalists apply to society. Postmodernists such as Foucault believe in assessing the individual and that discourses can affect each one of us. Society and people are not simple, we cannot simply categorise them into neat boxes. Sometimes it is helpful to look at things from a Marxists point of view but these theories are dated and often naive.

Scenario 2

A student complains that she does not feel very well at school, so wants to go home. The class teacher asks her to carry on with her work quietly. The student sits quietly but refuses to carry on with her work. After ten minutes the teacher asks her to continue working, she refuses and storms out of the room, escaping out of school and running home at 2pm. The next day she is secluded from school for truancy, actioned by the class teacher.

Scenario 3

Women are paid, on average, one third less than men in England for doing identical jobs. Over a third work part time hours. Many are married to men who are well paid and work full time for the duration of their working life.

Scenario 4

Workers in a car factory feel as though they are paid too little for the amount of work that they do. They complain to the factory floor manager but feel that she doesn’t care and has seemingly no impact. They call a meeting during work hours and decide that they will write a letter of complaint about the factories increasing profits when their wages always stay the same. They agree that if the management refuses to offer them a pay rise as a result of the letter they will strike. The following week they went on strike for 4 days. The management of the factory offered them a 2% pay rise and the workers agreed to come back to work. Their Trade Union then instructed the workers to refuse the pay rise and carry on striking, because a National Ballot had indicted most workers wanted to continue striking.

Scenario 5

A twelve year old boy is admitted to hospital suffering from anorexia. He watches a lot of television and reads celebrity magazines. He believes that he is ugly and fat. His parents have banned him from going out because he has been caught shoplifting designer clothes. Children at school bully him because he is so thin.

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| ***Key Words*** | ***Key Theorists*** |
| Democracy | Karl Marx |
| Elite | Max Weber |
| Radical | Stephen Lukes |
| Ideology | Pareto |
| Legitimate | Mosca |
| Neo-Marxism | C Wright Mills |
| Hegemony | Dahl |
| Meritocracy | Foucault |
| Consensus | Lyotard |
| Conflict | Miliband |
| Bourgeoisie | Gramsci |
| Proletariat | Lupton and Wilson |
| Charismatic |  |
| Means of production |  |
| Discourse |  |
| Bureaucracy |  |
| Capitalism |  |
| Zero-sum view of power |  |

***SMSC links***