

Thinking sociologically: Scenario activity

Read each scenario and answer the questions that follow:

Scenario 1

John and Violet have been married for 15 years and have two children, Sophie and Lucy. John is a production line worker in a local factory. He came home from work on Friday saying his manager had shouted at him because he wasn't working quickly enough. They threatened to sack him if he continued to be slow. At bedtime, his children were messing around and wouldn't settle which resulted in him losing his patience and he smacked one of them. This then caused John and Violet to argue and John became verbally abusive to Violet.

1. How would Feminists explain John's behaviour?

2. How would Marxists explain John's behaviour?

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Scenario 2

Simon is 13 years old and lives in a council owned flat in Slough. His parents split up when he was 5 and since then he has lived with just his mum and younger sister Emily. Mum works in a local supermarket for 14 hours a week and does her best to provide for her family. However, they struggle to afford good quality nutritious food so they regularly visit a food bank and the house is often cold in the winter as his mum doesn't have enough money to pay for the gas bill. Simon is generally a good boy at school but can often be very distracted and was told off last week for falling asleep at his desk when he was meant to be reading his book.

3. Explain how Simon's situation could be negatively impacting his education.

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Scenario 3

Betty is 84 years old and Christian. She has always attended church on a Sunday and been involved with other church activities; it's been a central part of her lifestyle and identity since she was a child. However, over the last 10 years she has noticed that the church congregation has gotten smaller and there are very few young people attending. She feels sad that the sense of community is decreasing and decided to speak to her vicar about the changes she has observed.

4. Suggest some potential reasons for the changes noticed by Betty.

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Scenario 4

Margery and Tony live in a 4 bed, detached house in Surrey. Their children are grown up and have left home. Their house is on a nice street where their neighbours look after their properties and look out for each other. They regularly attend a “neighbourhood watch” group that was set up by their next-door neighbour Bernard and have CCTV up at the front and back of their house. They feel quite satisfied that their chances of being victims of property crime or theft are low.

However, their grown-up son Daniel mentioned to Margery that he was kept awake the other night by youths drinking alcohol and messing about on his road. However, he had decided to just stay inside and ignore what was happening. Daniel got up the next day to see that his next-door neighbour had been a victim of graffiti as the youths had sprayed abusive slurs on the side of his house wall.

5. Suggest some possible reasons why Margery and Tony are less likely to be victims of crime compared to their son Daniel.

6. Suggest how Daniel and his neighbours could better protect themselves against crime.
