

MOJZA

O-Level

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 1: Past Papers

2251



BY TEAM MOJZA

Paper 1(12)– Past Papers

[M/J/12/18]

Section A: Theory and methods

Source A

Diane Reay and her colleagues wanted to study people going to university in the UK, who were not from traditional middle class backgrounds. The researchers studied people from six different universities as their sample population. They gave out 502 questionnaires and followed this up with 53 interviews with students. The qualitative interviews were thought not to be representative of the whole sample population. The students were given a free choice to define their own ethnicity. The result was not as the researchers expected. In the UK the majority of the people are 'White' but less than half of the sample defined their ethnicity this way. One interviewee defined himself by his nationality rather than by his ethnicity.
-Adapted from Moore et. al. Sociology

g) To what extent is it possible to generalise from research? [15]

Arguments for:

- Generalisation from research findings is made more likely if an appropriate sample is used, e.g. one that is purposive and directed at the right group e.g. Hodkinson's study of Goths;
- Generalisation is possible if the sample is representative, i.e. with the same proportions of people of different gender, age, etc. according to what is appropriate to the research – this is best achieved by using stratified sampling techniques;
- Positivists believe generalisations may be made with quantitative data as it is often large scale thus increasing the likelihood of representativeness;
- Positivists would argue that data which is high in reliability and repeatable is more likely to be generalisable;
- If the findings are valid for the representative research population then generalisation can be made legitimately proving the sampling used is appropriate;
- Where qualitative methods are used to study small unique populations, like subcultures it may be possible to generalise about that group without using all its members in the research;

Arguments against:

- Sampling error is always a factor – as samples cannot be the same as the whole research population, so there will always be a difference between the results from the sample and the results from the whole population;
- Problems with generalisability may arise with certain sampling techniques e.g. volunteer sampling may produce a skewed or biased sample that is unrepresentative of the research population and therefore it is not possible to extend findings beyond the sample group;
- Methods such as lab experiments that lack ecological validity, due to the non-naturalistic environment, can mean that the research cannot be safely applied beyond the lab and sample group;
- Response rates for some methods such as questionnaire, is often low and therefore the possibility of generalising from research findings is similarly low;
- If data gathered is inaccurate to the sample then it follows that it cannot be safely applied elsewhere;
- If the sample is small then it follows that there are insufficient grounds for claims to be able to generalise from findings;
- Interpretivist sociologists believe that sociology should not mimic science as human beings, their behaviour and interactions, are unique and thus findings can never be fully generalised;
- Interpretivists would argue that generalisation is not an imperative of research as the emphasis should be on gaining depth, detail and, if possible, verstehen in the topic being investigated;
- Any other reasonable response.

[M/J/12/18]

Section B: Culture, identity and socialisation

Adolescents often feel peer pressure to fit in with their friends. This may lead to them changing their norms, values and identity in order to be accepted by their peer group.

(d) Explain why belonging to a youth sub-culture may have a negative impact on the individual. [8]

Possible responses:

- Crime – peers within a close-knit gang may be subjected to peer pressure within a subculture to commit crimes e.g. as part of an initiation or to prove their masculinity;
- Drug taking – some youth may follow their role models within a subculture and begin to take, and then possibly, deal drugs e.g. Hippies;

- Anti-school subculture – some young people drift into these subcultures as a result of status frustration or social exclusion with catastrophic effects on their educational attainment and ensuing life chances;
- Deviance – some subcultures follow norms and values that are antithetical to mainstream culture, thus involving them in social deviance e.g. punk appearance and behaviours like swearing and spitting;
- Delinquency – joining a local gang may inevitably lead to anti-social behaviours such as graffiti, vandalism and criminal damage in a certain area or estate;
- Tension with parents/authority – young people who join sub-cultures often clash with parents in terms of their newly found norms and values (of appearance and behaviour) which can result in family rifts and breakup e.g. Hippies;
- Membership of certain sub-cultures may bring with it the automatic threat of sanctions e.g. extremist religious or political groups who may be banned or prohibited;

[O/N/12/18]

Section B: Culture, identity and socialisation

Some researchers have claimed that traditional working class identity has declined because of the decrease in manual work. Other researchers have claimed there is now a new working class who have a clear social identity.

(c) Explain how conformity is rewarded in the workplace.

[6]

(d) Explain why individuals from different social classes may not experience the same socialisation as each other.

[8]

(e) To what extent is social class the most important factor in creating social identity? [15]

(c)

Possible Answers

- Conformity to expected roles may be shown informally by approval e.g. smiles, pat on the back from the boss, high five from team members etc.
- Doing the right thing may be rewarded by verbal praise e.g. ‘well done’, ‘good job’, etc. gives a feel-good factor and promotes repetition.
- Conformity brings a feeling of fitting in and may be rewarded informally by inclusion and acceptance e.g. invitation to after work outing with peers and/or superiors.
- Conforming to expectations in the workplace can be rewarded formally by a pay increase e.g. teachers following certain standards.
- Conforming to the norms and values in a workplace may lead to promotion as workers are seen as good role models and mentors for others.
- Conformity may be rewarded via other ‘perks’ such as a new company car or a bonus.

(d)

Possible answers:

- Education may socialise the classes differently e.g. the hidden curriculum of private schools versus state schools.
- Language may differ – middle and upper class students may learn elaborate code whilst the working class learn restricted code (Bernstein).
- Some middle class parents place a higher value on education and this transmits to their children, whilst the parents of working class children may not see it as vital to life chances.
- Individuals in different social classes may have been socialised into different values within the family and primary socialisation e.g. immediate vs deferred gratification or different views, manners, etc.
- Socialisation into gender roles may be affected by social class e.g. socialisation into hegemonic masculinity in the old working class versus the middle class ‘new man’
- The New Right theorists like Charles Murray argue that the underclass have inadequate socialisation due to lack of relevant role models e.g. lack of male role models in female headed or one parent families.
- Some individuals in the underclass may have been socialised into antisocial values e.g. if they grow up as part of a criminal subculture they may not feel guilt and remorse for what others may see as wrong doing.
- The values and norms of work may vary in terms of social class e.g. members of underclass may have poor socialisation in terms of the value of work because generations have been unemployed and have transmitted negative values.

(e)

Arguments for:

- The different social classes have distinct values e.g. members of the upper class are likely to see themselves as belonging to a sort of exclusive club, based on their ability to spend a lot of money (conspicuous consumption), which signals their wealth and difference to others whereas the underclass may enshrine fatalism, immediate gratification etc.
- There is a strong sense of working class community in areas with an industrial past linked to manual work e.g. in the UK coal, steel and shipbuilding industries boys would often follow their fathers to work and marriages often were made in the community.
- Membership of trade unions, voting patterns and shared working and living conditions created a strong sense of collective identity that was stronger in the working class than in some other classes.
- Social class may still affect language e.g. restricted and elaborate code, accent, etc. Which can all create a sense of identity and belonging.
- Different classes may participate in different cultural activities and this can affect identity e.g. members of the working class may associate themselves more with the products of popular rather than high culture.
- Social class can also affect aspects of identity such as gender e.g. the distinct norms of behaviour linked with the working class culture of hegemonic masculinity.
- Although working class incomes have changed there is still a gap between the working class and middle and upper classes especially in terms of consumption and lifestyle and

this affects social identity, e.g. the working class could be distinguished by the styles of clothing they choose to wear or their 'fake' couture.

- Working class youth subcultures are an exaggeration of the working class identity e.g. skinheads (Cohen).
- Media reporting of the working-class has become very negative, representing them stereotypically as lazy and scrounging off welfare e.g. the demonisation of the word 'chav' in the UK and this impacts on identity.

Arguments against:

- The old collective working class identity has now been weakened by the loss of jobs in the old manual industries and the fragmentation of the communities based on them so class identity is not now significant.
- Age as a social characteristic is more important than class in creating a sense of identity – members of an age group share a common experience of growing up at the same point in history and therefore experience different events and social changes which can impact on social identity e.g. the baby boomers of the 1960s have grown up in a more liberal and affluent society than their parents and thus may have different values and attitudes.
- Age is more important for adolescents – this is often seen as a difficult period because it involves an evolving identity and status anxiety; as a result peers often band closely together and create their own youth culture and subcultures which may give a strong sense of norms and values e.g. skinheads.
- Gender as a social characteristic is more important than class in creating a sense of identity – early gender role socialisation via canalisation and manipulation instil a strong sense of who we are as individuals and feminists argue that this can transcend social class identity in terms of its effects on roles within the family, the workplace, etc.
- Nationality is now more important than class in creating a sense of identity – in recent times, and following globalisation, nationality has become a more central part of peoples' identities e.g. in the rise of nationalism, Brexit, etc. and this crosses social class divides.
- Ethnicity remains a strong influence on social identity and affects language, clothing, food and values e.g. in multi-ethnic countries like the UK communities such as the Pakistani or Chinese communities are often more closely bound by ethnic ties than social class.
- Some postmodernists argue that class culture has been replaced by consumer culture – what we buy and own shapes our identity more than our social class e.g. in MIS the working class now have the wealth to aspire to consumer goods and activities they could not afford in the past and use items to signal status.
- In more open and socially mobile societies traditional class characteristics have largely disappeared e.g. the old upper class has now fragmented, class boundaries have become blurred as people have moved up/down the class ladder.

[O/N/12/18]

Section C: Social inequality

The welfare state is viewed by some sociologists as a cause of poverty. This is because they believe it makes people unwilling to work. Critics of this view say there are a large number of people who are willing to work but find themselves in a poverty trap.

c) Explain how sociologists measure poverty. [6]

e) To what extent is poverty a result of social exclusion? [15]

(c)

Possible answers:

- Absolute poverty i.e. not having the resources necessary to support life such as money, shelter, access to clean water, sanitation, food and medicine.
- Relative poverty i.e. poor by the standards of the society as a whole.
- Using a poverty line i.e. an artificial line below which people can be classed as poor e.g. income of less than 60% of the median income (Townsend).
- A deprivation index e.g. creating a list of items thought to be necessities in that society and then measuring how many items individuals cannot access (Mack and Lansley's Breadline Britain survey).
- Global measures of poverty e.g. the World Bank's measure of poverty as living on less than \$1.25 a day.

(e)

Arguments for:

- The socially excluded may miss out on employment and thus may be deprived in material terms causing an impact on almost every aspect of a person's life;
- Some argue that welfare benefits can make social exclusion worse as those receiving benefits may be negatively labelled and stereotyped as scroungers etc. which then further damages their chances of gaining work.
- Those who are socially excluded lack access to networks of power e.g. they lack social capital which means that they have little power to protect their interests or use influence to improve their life chances.
- Those who lack education are effectively socially excluded e.g. they may be illiterate and not be aware of their rights and this inevitably leads to poverty.
- The socially excluded lack knowledge and access to communications e.g. they can't afford the internet so can't search for the best deals to reduce out-goings or apply for some jobs;
- Social exclusion can be part of the poverty trap because the social support needed to move out of poverty is missing – people may become less self-sufficient and more welfare dependent thus prolonging poverty

Arguments against:

- Functionalists argue that poverty is an inevitable and useful part of the social system but is not caused by social exclusion; instead they argue that society is meritocratic and anyone can improve their social and material position through hard work and effort.
- Welfare benefits at low levels cause poverty and then social exclusion follows as the poor are scapegoated for their own situation.
- Marxists argue that poverty is an inevitable consequence of capitalism, so the bourgeoisie will always pay the proletariat the minimum in order to maximise profit – greed causes poverty.
- Marxists also argue that employers will try to bring in automation and mechanisation to save labour costs so wages fall and some become unemployed, causing poverty (it also suits the upper class to have a reserve army of labour).
- The poverty trap leads to social exclusion rather than vice versa e.g. the poor can't afford transport or childcare and this affects their ability to get out of poverty, leading to marginalisation and exclusion.
- Right-wing thinkers use the culture of poverty argument to blame the poor for being poor – it is the values of the poor rather than the structures of society or social exclusion that causes poverty.
- Feminists draw attention to higher proportions of women than men who live in poverty – this is partly caused by the poverty of lone mothers but also because women tend to be paid less on average than men and because women have more limited employment opportunities.
- Some argue that ethnicity can be a major cause of both poverty and social exclusion via racial prejudice and discrimination across different social areas, such as the media, education and employment.

[M/J/12/19]

Section A: Theory and methods

Feminist researchers are often concerned that the balance of power between the researcher and respondent is likely to affect any data gathered. They argue that the interviewer and the interviewee should be seen as equals in the research process. Feminists prefer unstructured interviews which give time and space for the interviewee to offer their views. In structured interviews the interviewer is the one in control, they direct the questioning and record the data. In unstructured interviews the interviewees describe their experiences in their own words with the interviewer acting only as a guide. This is why feminists prefer to use unstructured interviews. Feminists also like to use focus groups in their research. Positivists select objective methods that avoid interviewer bias but feminists reject this approach. Instead feminists claim that developing a relationship with respondents is an essential part of establishing trust and respect. Positivists also argue that unstructured interviews are very difficult to repeat.

(g) To what extent is validity the most important aspect of sociological research? [15]

Arguments for:

- Interpretivist approaches prioritise micro or small-scale phenomena favouring qualitative methods that are high in validity.
- In sociological research it is vital we are measuring what it is we want to measure – hence validity is central to any research programme.
- Validity is important because it refers to the extent to which the research findings accurately reflect reality – without this the value of the research is compromised.
- Validity comes from detailed and in-depth research – this is useful as we may need to uncover why people act as they do as well as the meanings they attach to their actions;
- Building validity into the research method allows for participants to develop their point of view e.g. in more unstructured methods like unstructured interviews, covert participant observations etc.
- Building validity into the research may enable us to achieve a holistic understanding – we seek to understand every aspect of the subject’s experience.
- Research high in validity allows us to see the subjective factors, such as intent, motive, and unintended consequences etc – these add another dimension to our understanding of social life which is missing in ‘scientific’ approaches.
- Feminists regard validity as important so they can understand the experiences of women in order to fight for change – without a full understanding appropriate action is impossible.

- Validity is particularly important in ethnography field research – as it is a sociological method that explores how people live, their culture and how and make sense of their lives.
- The use of triangulation demonstrates the importance of validity in research, it is the use of two or more research methods in a single piece of research in order to check the validity of research evidence

Arguments against:

- Methods high in validity often suffer from the researcher effect – such as the Hawthorne Effect or the Interviewer Effect and this can serious detract from the worth of the study.
- Positivists argue that it is important to be sure that if we repeated the measurement we will get the same or similar results, so reliability is the most important aspect of research.
- Comparative studies are difficult with most methods that gather valid data and hence if the aim is to compare different groups and social factors then a more quantitative approach is likely to be more appropriate.
- Structuralists regard reliability as important so social policy can be developed on the basis of solid 'scientific' results.
- Without reliable measures, sociologists cannot build or test theory as in an extreme case every research project would simply stand alone and no real generalisations could be made;
- Methods high in validity are often small scale and so difficult to generalise findings from unrepresentative samples.
- Ethics are more important than validity as it is crucial to safeguard participants and their data – even highly valid methods like covert observation may be ruled out if ethics are breached.

[M/J/12/19]

Section B: Culture, identity and socialisation

Peer groups are an important part of growing up and are an agency of informal social control, particularly for gender identity. Peer pressure can make individuals conform to the norms of the peer group and may cause role conflict for young people.

(c) Explain how young people may experience role conflict. [6]

(d) Explain why some young people join subcultures. [8]

(c)

Possible answers:

- Role conflict between paid work and student may mean young people fall behind with school work because of work pressures.
- Role conflict between student and peer group member – students may want to get on at school but fear losing credibility with their peer group and hence fall prey to negative peer pressure;
- Role conflict between the role of daughter/son and girlfriend/boyfriend – young people can face competing demands on the emotional time and this may result in a distancing from the family members as more social time is spent with boy/girlfriends.
- Role conflict between sister/brother and friend – older siblings may be expected to look after younger siblings when they'd rather be out with their friends and this may result in clashes with parents.

(d)

Possible answers:

- Young people are influenced by the culture of society but form subcultures to reject or rebel against aspects of it e.g. Hippies rejected the sexual norms of the 1950s and early 60s;
- Young people can feel compelled to join subcultures through peer pressure e.g. joining an anti-school subculture or gang;
- Young people can be influenced by media reporting of sub-cultures and this may encourage them to join a subculture as it brings status, kudos and 'coolness';
- Functionalists suggest subcultures act as a safety valve as young people navigate the difficult period of adolescence, so they seek peer support as they experiment and seek to establish their own identity;
- Sub-cultures offer a sense of autonomy and separateness from parents/school and this can reinforce a sense of identity during the teen years;
- Joining a subculture can be seen as a functional response by those young people who have low academic achievement or face unemployment – such young people's reaction may be seen as a rational choice given their background and poor prospects;
- Marxists would argue youth subcultures are a form of rebellion against capitalist society e.g. Skinheads adopting an exaggerated sense of working class masculinity;
- Cohen argued young people joined the skinhead subculture to defend their community from change in terms of immigration and the loss of manual jobs;
- McRobbie argued teenage girls created a bedroom culture that offered a space away from parents and boys in which young girls could gossip about boys, experiment with makeup, alcohol etc.;
- Postmodernists would argue young people join subcultures for fun and thrills e.g. some may enjoy the music or lifestyle attached without subscribing to any controversial sub-cultural norms and values;

[O/N/12/19]

Section A: Theory and methods

Source A

In the study 'Learning to Labour' Paul Willis conducted a longitudinal study of twelve male working-class students to gain in-depth data. He wanted to find out why working-class students usually work in manual or low-skilled jobs when they leave school. The study used triangulation as several methods were used including both participant and non-participant observations. It was important that Willis gained the trust of the male students, so they were more likely to show natural behaviour and give detailed answers. Willis studied the students over a period of time as they moved from school into work. At the end of his research Willis compared the results from each method to produce his final conclusions. He found that due to factors such as the males creating anti-school subcultures they failed to gain many academic qualifications. He concluded that the students' social class position never changed as the only jobs they could get were low-skilled. Adapted from Paul Willis Learning to Labour, (1977)

(g) To what extent can the interpretivist approach to sociological research be criticised? [15]

Arguments for:

- Interpretivist methods that involve the deep involvement of the researcher – such as participant observation – are prone to bias
- Structuralists argue that an interpretative micro approach cannot understand the impact of the big social forces such as class, socialisation, etc.
- Interpretivist research tends to be small scale, due to the cost and time-consuming nature of its methods, and this has the effect of making the data unrepresentative and not generalisable
- The interpretivist view leads them to believe that individuals understand the motivations behind their own actions, which they may not
- Positivists argue that quantitative data is more reliable than qualitative research and is thus more 'scientific' and trustworthy than qualitative research
- Positivists argue that, because of its methodology, interpretivism is unable to uncover the 'laws' that govern society in the same way that scientists can uncover the 'laws' that govern the natural world
- Qualitative data can often be purely subjective, by contrast quantitative data provides objective information that researchers can use to make scientific conclusions
- Interpretivists may become too involved in their subjects and 'go native' thus negatively affecting the validity of their findings.

- An interpretative approach by itself is not enough – a triangulated approach is more effective as it yields both qualitative and quantitative data.

Arguments against:

- They take a micro approach that sees the individual as having agency, not simply a recipient of external social forces – people are not just puppets of society.
- Using positivist methods that minimise subjectivity and bias (e.g. experiments) is not always possible or appropriate.
- Interpretivists argue that in order to understand human action we need to achieve ‘verstehen’, or empathetic understanding – we need to see the world through the eyes of the actors doing the acting.
- Methods linked to an interpretivist approach, such as unstructured interviews and participant interviews, are more likely to yield valid data and thus gain an accurate picture of social reality.
- Interpretivists seek to understand different aspects of a social situation to get a holistic view, often using multiple methods to achieve this qualitative picture.

[M/J/12/20]

Section A: Theory and methods

The comparative study is a scientific approach to sociological research and is often used by positivists. Sociologists can compare data between social groups and identify differences between them, such as educational achievement. Sociologists may compare data such as the different female literacy rates around the world (Fig. 1.1). Female literacy rates refer to the percentage of women over 15 years of age that can read and write in a country. Another example of a comparative study is the UK census. Every ten years in the UK all households have to complete a detailed survey. Many of the questions are standardised and remain the same over time. Like many sources of official statistics the UK census gathers a large amount of quantitative data taking a macro approach.

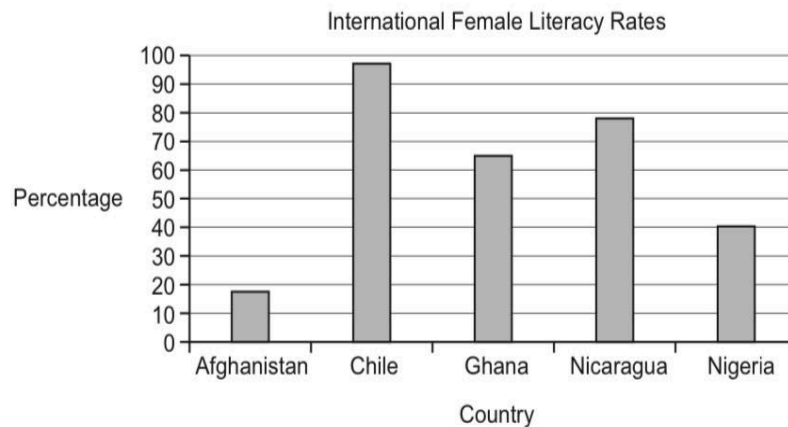


Fig. 1.1

(g) To what extent are macro structuralist approaches the most useful for understanding society? [15]

Arguments for:

- The macro structuralist is a top down approach that sees social institutions and structures as more important than individual actions.
- Structuralist theories are supported by key sociological thinkers and perspectives such as Durkheim, Marx and Functionalism, they are supported by a large body of work produced by eminent sociologists.
- Structuralism is a macro sociological approach that examines the relationship between key institutions such as family, education, religion, media, and law.
- Structuralist approaches allow us to see the relationship between key institutions in society.
- Structuralist approaches often use big studies such as social surveys to establish social facts.
- Positivists use official statistics which are often large quantitative data sets so they can spot patterns, trends, correlations and causal relationships.
- Durkheim's (a key Functionalist thinker) structural study of suicide remains a key sociological study despite having been carried out over 100 years ago - this provides a model for establishing large scale correlations.
- Marx's conflict theory can be applied to the major institutions in society and this structural theory seeks to establish ideological links between the key institutions in a society e.g. education and the workplace.
- Functionalists offer a consensus theory which can be applied to the major institutions in society and this structural theory seeks to establish functional links between the key institutions in a society e.g. the family and education.

- Structuralists work with large samples which are representative and so can make generalisations,
- Marxism unveils the interests of the dominant and powerful groups in society - a micro study couldn't make these claims.

Arguments against:

- Structuralist approaches are not unified and there is disagreement between conflict and consensus theorists.
- Structuralist theories fail to recognise the power of the individual - interpretivists see this a weakness.
- Structuralism fails to show us how social reality is made through individuals interacting.
- Marxists tend to consider people treated as 'cultural dopes' - these structural theories can be seen as too deterministic.
- Marxism is very value laden - capitalism has no advantages, whereas many sociologists would argue capitalism has helped raise many out of poverty.
- Interpretivists see major weaknesses in the structural methods such as social surveys, arguing these methods lack validity.
- Interpretivists see society from the point of view of its members and give value to individual meanings and social interactions.
- Interpretivists do not see the individual as simply a recipient of external social forces and recognise the complexity of factors influencing an individual's actions.
- Individual qualitative interviews are able to drill down and explore deeper meanings that surveys and questionnaires cannot.
- Individual qualitative interviews enable a rapport between interviewee and interviewer to develop giving the respondent more of a stake in the research.
- Participant observation has the advantage of seeing respondents in their natural environment, structuralists wouldn't employ this type of method.
- Structural functionalism' organic analogy is too simplistic to account for the complex range of factors that impact members of a society.
- Functionalists often rely upon official statistics as objective evidence however interpretivists would argue official statistics are socially constructed e.g. criticisms of Durkheim's study of suicide.

[M/J/12/20]

Section B: Culture, identity and socialisation

Functionalists believe for society to work well people need to agree on a common set of values, this is known as value consensus. Sanctions and socialisation are ways to ensure that members of a society share the same values. However, socialisation and sanctions differ depending on the age and gender of the individual.

(d) Explain why some sociologists argue that childhood is a social construction. [8]

(e) To what extent does functionalism offer the best explanation of why individuals join youth subcultures? [15]

(d)

Possible answers:

- The way childhood was considered in the past has changed compared to the present e.g. child centredness is evidence of social construction.
- The way childhood is considered differs from country to country e.g. child soldiers, this suggests childhood is socially constructed.
- According to Aries, children used to wear the same clothes as adults but nowadays they don't.
- Children used to be punished by law in the same way an adult was but now they are not e.g. age of criminal responsibility.
- In MIS children are required to go to school whereas in other societies they may be required to go to work and not have a formal education.
- Postman argues childhood is changing in the era of modern technologies and that they are no longer seen as innocent and protected from adult issues e.g. the sexualisation of children.
- Children's rights have changed hugely over time e.g. employment laws.

(e)

Arguments for:

- Functionalists argue joining a youth subculture can be explained as a way of managing the transition from childhood to adulthood.
- Functionalists argue youth sub-culture helps detach the individual from their family so they can achieve their own status as an adult developing autonomy and independence.
- Functionalists argue youth subcultures act as a 'safety valve' and people join to help them manage going through adolescence.
- Functionalists claim that youth subcultures offer members an alternative opportunity structure where they can gain status and respect.
- Functionalists argue that young people join subcultures to gain status, moving from an ascribed status to an achieved status.
- Functionalists argue that youth subcultures are a way of dealing with stress caused by the transition from childhood to adulthood.
- Joining a youth subculture can be a way of gaining success and status for those young people who find other routes to success (such as education) blocked.
- Functionalists argue (Eisenstadt) that young people need to find a way to distinguish themselves from their parents and youth subcultures are a vehicle for this.

Arguments against:

- Marxists argue that youth subcultures are a form of resistance against capitalism e.g. skinheads.
- Marxists argue working class youth subcultures are formed as other routes to resistance are blocked for such groups who lack power and status.
- Marxists argue (P Cohen) the skinhead subculture formed as a reaction to the decline of manufacturing and as a means of protecting working-class identity.
- Other Marxists (Brake) argue working class youth subcultures are 'magical' ; they provide each new generation with a chance to prove they are unique.
- Teddy boys took their style from the upper class Edwardians to show their new affluence.
- Marxists see working-class youth subcultures as linked to the decline of working-class inner-city communities.
- Postmodernists argue youth subcultures no longer have a clear purpose, young people join for thrills and leave, subcultures are transient.
- Feminists such as McRobbie argued girls created a bedroom subculture to create a space away not just away from adults but also from boys.
- Labelling theory suggests that pupil subcultures are a response to in-school processes such as teacher labelling.
- Paul Willis argued counter school subcultures were formed because the lads saw school and academic learning as pointless to their future lives as factory workers.
- Ethnicity and anti-school sub-cultures Sewell claimed that Black Caribbean boys may experience pressure from their peers to adopt the norms of an 'urban' or 'street' subculture.

[M/J/12/20]

Section C: Social inequality

Karl Marx argued that society was divided into two main social classes: the bourgeoisie (the upper class) and the proletariat (the working class). Class stratification and status in modern industrial societies are changing and new classes have been formed, such as the underclass. Some sociologists argue there is now a growing middle class while others suggest proletarianisation is leading to a growing working class.

(e) To what extent are Marxist explanations of social inequality the most useful? [15]

(e)

Arguments for:

- Marxists argue inequality is the inevitable outcome of capitalism, this is useful for economic explanations of inequality in most MIS;

- Marxism offers a clear distinction of the conflict between two classes in society – the bourgeoisie exploit the labour of the proletariat to increase their profits.
- Marxist explanations of the relationship between the proletariat who own nothing but their labour which they sell to the bourgeoisie for wages is true for many individuals in society.
- Marxists offer useful explanations of the barriers to resistance faced by the proletariat who are oppressed in that they can't exercise their dissatisfaction with their bosses for fear of being sacked.
- Althusser theories of ideology help explain why the working class fail to gain equality, this is useful as it explains how the key institutions in society (ISAs) work together to prevent the working classes from rising up.
- Marxism offers explanations of the ways in which the state tries to control our thoughts and legitimises the capitalist system, (the myth of meritocracy) through various ISAs such as religion, education , mass media and criminal justice.
- Marxist theories of education help explain the inequalities faced by the working class in terms of educational outcomes and class differences in educational attainment are clearly evident today.
- Marxists refer to 'the old boy's network' which see privileged elites helping people of their own class thus denying meritocratic opportunity, this theory is rooted in reality as examples of nepotism can be seen in most societies.
- Marxist theories of material deprivation are useful for explaining the formation of subcultures, crime rates and differences in educational attainment.

Arguments against:

- Marxism is one dimensional – tries to explain all inequality in terms of economic differences.
- Interactionist critique of structural approaches, such as Marxism, as being too deterministic, people are not just puppets but actors in their own lives.
- Functionalists argue society is meritocratic and that inequality is not a bad thing.
- Others argue capitalism has raised living standards for many so challenge Marxist's critique of capitalism.
- Marxist predictions of revolution have not materialised and so the theory is flawed.
- Feminists are likely to argue that gender is a more important explanation of inequality than class.
- Other sociologists argue ethnicity is a more important explanation of inequality than class.

[O/N/12/20]

Section C: Social inequality

In all modern societies relative poverty still exists. Equal opportunities legislation is often used to argue that society is becoming more fair today, with individuals able to improve their income, wealth and status. But poverty is difficult to measure accurately and sociologists disagree about the exact causes of social and economic inequality.

(d) Explain why poverty is difficult to define. [8]

(e) To what extent have government measures failed to reduce social inequality? [15]

(d)

Possible answers:

- Living standards are higher in modern industrial societies than in developing societies yet there are poor in both types of society, so it is difficult to reach a standard definition;
- It is difficult to define poverty as there are different types: absolute and relative.
- Relative poverty takes the social context into account so an individual who is relatively poor in one society may not be relatively poor in another – this makes international definitions and comparisons difficult.
- There are different ways of defining the poverty level in society, e.g. less than 60% of median income is one measure, but why 60% – this seems arbitrary.
- Some try to define poverty on the basis of the total cost of ‘necessities’ (e.g. Townsend’s study of poverty in the UK), but this may be problematic in terms of who classifies what items as ‘necessities’
- Defining poverty can be difficult because poverty can involve many factors such as education, health, housing etc., and so any attempts to define poverty will need to take these into account.
- Mack and Lansley’s Breadline Britain stipulated that individuals were in poverty if they lacked 3 or more items on a predefined list of items, but there is little justification of ‘3’ as the crucial number for poverty.
- Where is the ‘poverty line’ set? Researchers and governments may differ in their views on this and thus there is no consensus.

(e)

Arguments for:

- Equal opportunities legislation has failed to reduce gender discrimination which remains a significant issue in the workplace via vertical and horizontal segregation.
- Women are still subject to domestic violence and sexual violence disproportionately to men thus legislation and tougher sentences have only had minimal impact.

- The education system maintains social inequality despite government measures – so, for example, Marxists argue that social class divisions are reproduced via the hidden curriculum.
- Government measures like the welfare state have not tackled social class inequality – right wing thinkers such as Charles Murray argue that the poor themselves, in the form of the underclass, are to blame for their poverty and low social status via the culture of poverty and the culture of dependency.
- Despite legislation to tackle ethnic and racial discrimination it persists in many areas such as the workplace, housing and education as well as negative stereotyping in the media.
- Equal opportunities legislation has failed to reduce ageism with both young and old suffering discrimination and unequal treatment in the workplace and in terms of their power and status in society.
- Marxists argue that the welfare state ultimately fails to reduce social inequality – it simply promotes the false consciousness that the system is less unjust than it really is, effectively ‘bribing’ the lower classes and making radical change less likely.
- Government measures are likely to fail to reduce social inequality because, as functionalists like Davis and Moore argue, social inequality is inevitable in any complex modern society – roles need to be allocated and rewards assigned to these roles and some roles are more socially valued and attract more rewards.

Arguments against:

- Legislation to tackle discrimination such as the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equality Act have made it harder for minorities and women to be openly discriminated against.
- Measures such as the welfare state mean that society is now more meritocratic and individuals can achieve social mobility if they work hard.
- The government’s measures to redistribute wealth such as new tax laws and improved welfare benefits (such as the old age pension) have reduced poverty and narrowed the gap between rich and poor.
- The introduction of free education has improved the life chances of the poorest who can now achieve qualifications and access higher status jobs.
- Gender discrimination legislation has improved the lives of women in many social areas such as in education and the workplace where women are now competing successfully with men.
- The introduction of free health care systems, such as the NHS, enables all social groups to access good quality care and thus improve their health and longevity.

[M/J/12/21]

Section A: Theory and methods

In the Islington Crime Survey (1986) Jones, Lea and Young researched crime in an area of London called Islington. The survey's aims were to find out the types and the frequency of crime in the area. 1 The researchers hoped that this would provide more accurate data about crime in Islington than the official police records. The survey involved a random sample of over 2000 households from all parts of Islington. The response rate was approximately 75%. The researchers conducted structured interviews asking people about crimes they or their family had been a victim of during the last year.

Respondents were asked about those who committed offences against them and whether they thought police were effective in tackling crime. Key findings from the study included:

- the burglary rate in Islington was five times higher than the national average
- a third of all households had experienced serious crime in the last twelve months (e.g. robbery, racist attacks and domestic violence)
- over half of women avoided going out after dark due to fear of crime
- more than 60% of respondents thought police were ineffective in dealing with serious crimes
- only half of the crimes experienced by respondents were reported to the police, and only 3.8% of the crimes were detected by the police.

(f) Explain why sociologists might use covert participant observation in sociological research. [10]

Possible answers:

- It is useful when researching deviant or criminal groups as going undercover will enable 'secret' behaviours to be uncovered and recorded.
- Ethics - in the study of dangerous groups going covert whilst participating should protect the researcher from possible harm.
- The covert nature of the research also means that the researcher is much more likely to gain a true picture of the group's behaviour and views because the researcher is taking part secretly.
- It avoids the Hawthorne Effect so the behaviour of the group will not change due to the researcher's presence.

- Covert participant research usually takes place in a naturalistic setting and so the normal behaviour of the group can be studied often over a period of time.
- Interpretivists would like it because the participant nature of the research means that a deep understanding of the group can be achieved due to the covert nature thus enhancing validity.

[M/J/12/22]

Section B: Culture, identity and socialisation

Many sociologists investigate globalisation and its impact on the world. This leads to a debate about whether increased multiculturalism is a strength or a weakness of modern industrial societies. Despite these changes all societies still need to have agents of social control and agents of socialisation.

**(e) To what extent is multiculturalism a strength of modern industrial societies?
[15]**

Arguments for:

- Multiculturalism allows smaller cultures to maintain their language and cultural norms;
- A multicultural society encourages greater tolerance and understanding of difference because culture is seen as something to be protected and celebrated.
- Multiculturalism brings diversification in cultural products – so there is greater cultural diversity in foods, drink, dress, music etc. and this enriches society as a whole.
- Multiculturalism has historically brought a variety of skills and knowledge into one country which may lead to increased entrepreneurialism and trading opportunities.
- Cities that are culturally diverse are often popular tourist destinations e.g. London – many find the diversity enriching.

Arguments against:

- Multiculturalism may lead to language barriers – if ethnic minorities continue to speak their own language it may hold back their chances for social mobility or their children's chances of doing well in education which means that inequalities continue from one generation to another.
- In some countries multiculturalism has led to increased nationalism, often based on asserting the primacy of one culture – sometimes leading to struggles for independence and the fracturing of nation states
- Forced multiculturalism e.g. due to colonisation has often led to conflict/racism between different ethnic communities.
- Diversity of culture can lead to conflict as some argue that minority cultures are given too many rights e.g. if they have the right to have their children educated in their native language this may be expensive to provide.
- Some minority cultures may stay too separate from the host community so there is too little integration resulting in a defensive mindset and possibly extremism.

- Multiculturalism is too idealistic – it is unlikely that very different cultures can co-exist harmoniously if they have radically different norms and values.
- Many countries in the West which have experienced high levels of immigration are now using citizenship tests to ensure that people understand the core culture, laws and history.

[M/J/12/22]

Section C: Social inequality

Sociologists often research inequalities such as vertical segregation and scapegoating. Many sociologists research ascribed status and how it affects life chances. Some sociologists consider 3 genders to be the most influential factor in social inequality. However, in many societies a welfare state has been created to help individuals affected by some of these issues.

(d) Explain why ascribed status can affect a person's life chances. [8]

Possible answers:

- Royalty – being born into a ruling or royal family means that you automatically have high status and invariably have more money and power in comparison to those who have not been born into that position.
- Gender – being born a woman can mean less chance of being educated to the same level as men, discrimination in the workplace etc. all of which affects female life chances.
- Being born into certain ethnic groups may mean that you face prejudice and discrimination in the media e.g. labelled as ‘criminal’ which can then lead to police targeting.
- Age – young people and the elderly may face discrimination in the workplace where they may not be employed (elderly) or face differential wage rates (the young);
- In some closed societies individuals born into a low caste will tend to be denied social mobility and face prejudice, whereas being born into a high caste means a life of privilege and high status.
- In many societies social class is ascribed at birth and this can impact on life chances both for the under/working class and also for the upper class in terms of their access to things like education, social and economic capital etc.



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A Note from Mojza

These notes for Sociology (2251) have been prepared by Team Mojza, covering the content for O Level 2022-24 syllabus. The content of these notes has been prepared with utmost care. We apologise for any issues overlooked; factual, grammatical or otherwise. We hope that you benefit from these and find them useful towards achieving your goals for your Cambridge examinations.

If you find any issues within these notes or have any feedback, please contact us at support@mojza.org.

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