

Section A: Theory and methods

Question no 1

**(a) Identify two reasons why researchers might have difficulties gaining entry to groups like gangs. [2]**

- Access to the group may be limited because the group do not trust the researcher • Ethical issues like whether to report or ignore criminal activity
- They are involved in illegal activities and are therefore secretive
- Groups are closed in nature and naturally suspicious of outsiders
- Facing danger
- Having to go through initiation ceremonies, e.g. committing a crime
- Any other reasonable response.

One mark for each correct reason identified (up to a maximum of two).

**(b) Identify two methods that might be used to research gangs, apart from observation. [2]**

Any two from:

- Non-participant observation
- Interview any type
- Secondary data like crime statistics
- Questionnaires/social surveys
- Longitudinal studies
- Any other reasonable response.

Note: Other reasonable response if appropriate to the research topic.

One mark for each correct reason identified (up to a maximum of two).

**(c) Using information from Source A, describe two ways in which the observer might influence the behaviour of those being observed. [4]**

Candidates need to recognise that there is a clear indication of the subjects and the researcher's behaviour changing as a result of the participant observation described.

Possible answers:

- Might change their way of thinking, e.g. 'Now when I do something I have to think what Bill Whyte would want to know'

- Researcher going ‘native’, e.g. ‘become a non-observant participant rather than a non-participant observer’
- ‘Hawthorne effect’, e.g. ‘Now when I do something I have to think what Bill Whyte would want to know’
- Might change or adapt their behaviour, e.g. ‘Before, I used to do things by instinct.’
- Any other reasonable response.

Band 0

No creditworthy response.

Band 1 (1–2)

Answers at the bottom of the band will offer one reason without reference to Source A.

Alternatively; answers may be vague or general with little sociological knowledge. Answers at the top end of the mark band may offer two reasons but without reference to Source A.

Band 2 (3–4)

To reach this band candidates must make reference to Source A, e.g. in Source A it says ‘Before, I used to do things by instinct.’ This can be implicit at the lower end of the band. This clearly shows that the observer had influenced the behaviour of the person being observed who admits to adapting their behaviour. To reach the top of the band candidates will give two reasons with development and reference to the Source A.

**(d) Describe two strengths of using non-participant observation in sociological research. [4]**

Candidates will be expected to describe any of the following:

Note: Allow answers which refer to overt and covert observation

- Opportunity to record thoughts
- Non-participant is thought to be more objective
- Allows researcher to study groups who would be unwilling to allow them to participate in their activities
- Safer if researching dangerous groups
- Allows the researcher to keep records more accurately
- Helps the researcher avoid going ‘native’
- Less impact on the behaviour of the group
- Any other reasonable response.

One mark for each strength correctly identified (up to a maximum of two).

One mark for each point that is developed (up to a maximum of two).

**(e) Describe two strengths and two limitations of unstructured interviews. [8]**

Strengths:

- Higher validity because people have more opportunity to explain themselves
- Interviewer does not have to keep to the interview schedule so new ideas may emerge which allow the researcher to discover things they wouldn't have thought of
- It is more like a conversation so may allow the respondent to be more at ease and more open with the interviewer
- Takes less time than some other methods, e.g. structured interview
- Any other reasonable response.

Limitations:

- Can be time consuming and expensive as they may take long periods of time to interview people
- Interviewer effect is more likely to occur
- Reliability is low
- Can be too expensive to cover large groups of people because trained interviewers are required
- Difficult to generalise from findings
- Interviewer may lead the interviewee
- Interviewer may lose objectivity
- Any other reasonable response.

One mark for each strength correctly identified (up to a maximum of two) and one mark for description of each strength (up to a maximum of two).

One mark for each limitation correctly identified (up to a maximum of two) and one mark for description of each limitation (up to a maximum of two)

**(f) Explain why the results of participant observation studies may be unreliable. [10]**

Note: Reliability-whether another researcher, if repeating the research using the same method on the same or a similar group, would achieve the same results.

Candidates need to show an awareness of the fact that these types of research are virtually impossible to replicate and check.

Candidates may talk about the following limitations but this must be in the context of reliability not validity:

- Unique nature of each social group would be impossible to replicate
- Too many social variables to reproduce
- Too many environmental variables to reproduce
- Membership of the group may change and couldn't be reassembled
- Each social interaction is unique
- Researchers replicating the original research may have different values, outlooks and personalities which impact on their observations, e.g. Oscar Lewis' (1951) repeat of Robert Redfield's (1930) observation study of the village of Tepoztlan in Mexico
- Any other reasonable response.

Band 0

No creditworthy response.

Band 1 (1–3)

Answers at this level are likely to show limited understanding and be based on common sense or demonstrate little in the way of clear sociological knowledge or terminology, e.g. participant observation can be unreliable because you can't check the results. At the top of the band candidates may begin to use some appropriate knowledge or terminology. Candidates may only give one reason.

Band 2 (4–7)

At the bottom of the band, candidates demonstrate basic understanding of the issue and begin to use some appropriate knowledge and terminology. Supporting explanation may be weak or over simplistic. At the top of the band, candidates use appropriate knowledge and terminology but may not fully focus on the question. Candidates are likely to offer more than one reason, e.g. if sociologist attempt to replicate the research it would be virtually impossible for them to reproduce all the different variables.

Band 3 (8–10)

The candidates' answer is fully focused on the question, e.g. if sociologist attempt to

check the reliability of this research they will face a number of problems, many of the variables like the membership of the group may have changed making it virtually impossible to check the research. There is evidence of good use of sociological terms and candidates may make clear reference to whether it is even desirable to attempt to check the reliability that it is validity that is the key here. At the top of the band, candidates should offer a range of reasons as well as demonstrate accurate use of sociological concepts.

**(g) To what extent does the presence of the researcher affect the validity of the research? [15]**

Candidates do not need to talk about observation to answer this question although they may take their cue from the source and focus on observation.

Arguments for:

- People's behaviour changes or adapts
- Body language and intonation may impact on the behaviour of the subject.
- Researchers lead the respondent
- 'Hawthorne Effect'
- Research changes the dynamics of the group so they are no longer in their natural setting
- Researcher is not objective and becomes involved with the group i.e. goes native
- Researchers social characteristics affect the behaviour/attitude of research participants, e.g. the participant may lie to appear more important
- Individuals feel pressure to give socially desirable responses
- Interviewer effect
- Any other reasonable response.

Arguments against:

- All research is subject to the values of the researcher
- Covert non-participant observation would largely avoid this.
- Structured interviews using standardised questions can minimise the researcher effect
- Personal contact is the only way to establish 'Verstehen'
- Minimise affect by ensuring the researcher has appropriate social characteristic to make rapport more likely
- Use of trained researchers who have experience in maintaining objectivity

Band 0

No creditworthy response.

#### Band 1 (1–4)

Answers in this band may be largely based on common sense showing limited or no knowledge of sociological terms or concepts. Candidates are unlikely to understand the issue of researcher effect and may not clearly understand the difference between the effects in observation and other methods, e.g. the researcher may change the way people behave because he interacts with some of them.

#### Band 2 (5–8)

In this band candidates will tend to offer some basic discussion of researcher effect. They may describe the effect, e.g. researcher effect is where the subject of the research responds to the researcher by changing their behaviour. Alternatively, they may offer an answer which is list-like in nature but there will be no real attempt to address the issue of validity. At the top of the band, candidates may offer a description of more than one method or issue.

A one-sided answer cannot score higher than 8 marks.

#### Band 3 (9–12)

Answers in this band will show good use of sociological language and will make some attempt at addressing the issue of the researcher effect and its impact on validity but this may be weak or focus only on either agreement or disagreement with the question. At the bottom of the band, candidates may provide a good range of points but there might be a lack of focus on the issue. At the top of the band, candidates are likely to show either strong agreement or disagreement with clear focus on the question but are unlikely to discuss both sides.

#### Band 4 (13–15)

Answers in this band will be clearly focused on the question and address the ‘extent’ of the impact of researcher bias on validity. Candidates will offer a range of arguments both for and against the question but this need not be balanced. They show excellent grasp of sociological terms and knowledge. At the top of the band there will also be an evaluative conclusion, e.g. to some extent it could be argued that all research is social construction and a reflection of the researcher’s own values and therefore all research lacks validity to some extent.

## **Section B: Culture and Socialisation**

### **What is meant by the term interaction?**

An interaction is an exchange between two or more individuals and is a building block of society.

### **Describe two features of primary socialization**

Two marks available for each aspect. One mark for identification OR development only, two marks for identification AND development.

Points that can be included are the learning of language, the learning of behaviour, the learning of values and attitudes, and gender role socialisation.

Allow 'primary socialisation takes place in the family'.

1 Identification of points alone without development, such as learning to speak, or simple responses such as the learning of manners, how to dress or learning to do as you are told.

2 A detailed response might be that in primary socialisation, a child will learn if they are a boy or girl through gender role socialisation. This is done by the way parents or carers name, dress and treat the individual child and the social expectations they learn (it is not necessary to have all these points for full marks).

### **Explain how children learn to interact with other people once they go to school. [6]**

Education is the main agent of secondary socialisation.

How do schools prepare us for social life? Whatever the view on education, it is clear that schools are one of the most important agents of secondary socialisation.

Peer groups and teachers have a major impact upon the socialisation of schoolchildren. In the case of the former, such groups exert "peer pressure" which influence students to conform to various norms and values.

Sociologists often see the relationship between society and education results as similar, but explain them in different ways.

Socialisation is the process whereby we learn to become competent members of a group. Primary socialisation is the learning we experience from the people who raise us.

On the other hand, secondary socialisation takes place mostly outside the place where we are raised.

Functionalists see a relationship between education and other social institutions, and the contribution education makes to meet the functional needs of the social system as a whole; education is viewed as meritocratic whereby it is fair on everyone and the main key agents for success are intelligence and effort

### **Explain why socialisation is more influential than biological drives shaping the individual's behaviour.**

The nature versus nurture debate has always conjured deep philosophical questions about free will and determinism.

The “nature” side may be criticized for implying that we behave in ways in which we are naturally inclined, rather than in ways we choose.

Environmental factors and the socialisation process could begin to influence development even before it begins: a substantial amount of individual variation might be traced back to environmental influences that affect prenatal development.

Sociologists point out that our environment is, at least in part, a social creation. It prepares people for social life by teaching them a group's shared norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors.

Socialization is culturally specific, but this does not mean certain cultures are better or worse than others.

But when for the sociobiologists that human behavior, like nonhuman animal behavior, can be partly explained as the outcome of natural selection. They are interested in instinctive, or intuitive behavior, and in explaining the similarities, rather than the differences, between cultures.

The biological theory is very closely allied to the fields of Darwinian anthropology, human behavioral ecology, and evolutionary psychology.

The common behaviors likely evolved over time because they made individuals who exhibited those behaviors more likely to survive and reproduce.

Therefore the “nature” side may be criticized for implying that we behave in ways in which we are naturally inclined, rather than in ways we choose. Similarly, the “nurture” side may be criticized for implying that we behave in ways determined by our environment, not ourselves.

In this way Humans are social beings, and social interaction is essential to normal human development. Social deprivation occurs when an individual is deprived of culturally normal interaction with the rest of society like in the cases of feral children.

### **To what extent is social order based on shared values in modern industrial societies?**

Social order is a fundamental concept in sociology that refers to the way the various components of society work together to maintain the status quo. They include social structures and institutions, social relations and social interactions of individuals in the society.



Argument for...

Durkheim's view became the foundation for the functionalist perspective, which views society as the sum of interlocking and interdependent parts that evolve together to maintain social order through shared beliefs, values, norms, and practices of a given group of people.

Durkheim theorized that it was through the culture shared by a group, community, or society that a sense of social connection—what he called solidarity—emerged between and among people and that worked to bind them together into a collective conscience.

This is referred to a group's shared collection of beliefs, values, attitudes, and knowledge as the "collective conscience."

Durkheim also observed that social institutions—such as the state, media, education, and law enforcement—play formative roles in fostering a collective conscience in both traditional and modern societies.

It is through our interactions with these institutions and with the people around us that we participate in the maintenance of rules and norms and behavior that enable the smooth functioning of society. In other words, we work together to maintain social order.

Argument Against

But on the other hand Karl Marx took a different view of social order. Focusing on the transition from pre-capitalist to capitalist economies and their effects on society, he developed a theory of social order centered on the economic structure of society and the social relations involved in the production of goods.

Marx believed that these aspects of society were responsible for producing the social order, while others—including social institutions and the state—were responsible for maintaining it.

In his writings on capitalism, Marx argued that the superstructure grows out of the base and reflects the interests of the ruling class that controls it.

The superstructure justifies how the base operates, and in doing so, justifies the power of the ruling class. Together, the base and the superstructure create an ideology and maintain social order.

Marx believed that social institutions did the work of spreading the values and beliefs of the ruling class to maintain a social order that would serve their interests and protect their power.

## **Conclusion**

While some sociologists align themselves with either Durkheim's or Marx's view of social order, most recognize that both theories have merit. A nuanced understanding of social order must acknowledge that it is the product of multiple and sometimes contradictory processes.

Social order is a necessary feature of any society and it is deeply important for building a sense of belonging and connection with others. At the same time, social order is also responsible for producing and maintaining oppression.