

## Key introductory terms

<b>Sociology</b>	The study of society. Sociologists look at a range of factors in someone's social world.
<b>Society</b>	A social grouping that shares the same geographical territory and has the same political authority and expectations.
<b>Culture</b>	The whole way of life of a group of people in society e.g. clothes, food, music.
<b>Norms</b>	These define appropriate and expected behaviour in different certain settings e.g. classroom, cinema, restaurant.
<b>Values</b>	Ideas and beliefs that people have about what is desirable and worth striving for e.g. privacy & respect
<b>Socialisation</b>	Learning the norms and values of your culture and society.
<b>Primary socialisation</b>	This takes place in early childhood and is where we learn basic behaviours and skills we need. Family are responsible.
<b>Secondary socialisation</b>	This takes place in later childhood and beyond, learn norms, values and culture. Agencies include education and media.
<b>Nature</b>	The idea that behaviour and characteristics are innate (we are born with them) and due to biology.
<b>Nurture</b>	The idea that behaviour and characteristics are learnt from our environment (sociologists believe this)
<b>Social structures</b>	These form society's framework and set limits and guide behaviour e.g. family, class.
<b>Social processes</b>	The ways that humans are affected by their interactions with others in society e.g. racism.
<b>Social issues</b>	These form society's framework and set limits and guide behaviour e.g. family, class.
<b>Status</b>	A person's social standing or position in society. This can be affected by gender, age, class etc.

## GCSE Sociology Knowledge Organiser Sociological approaches and methods

### Functionalist approach

#### Key sociologist: Durkheim

- \* Society is positive and is in harmony
  - \* There is value consensus – everyone agrees on what is important
  - \* Society is like a human body, we need all parts of it to be able to function
  - \* Agencies such as family, education and crime all help to keep society running smoothly and these are positive
  - \* No group in society has more power than another group
- But... Functionalists are accused of viewing society too positively.

### Marxist approach

#### Key sociologist: Karl Marx

- \* Society is negative and is based on conflict
- \* Capitalism creates a divide between two social classes
- \* The ruling class (bourgeoisie) own the businesses and exploit the working class (proletariat) for profit
- \* Family, education, crime etc. all work to keep the class divide and benefit the ruling class
- \* The working class do not realise they are being exploited
- \* The only way to overcome this inequality is a revolution (and society becoming communist)

### Feminist approach

- \* Society is negative and is based on conflict
- \* Society is divided by gender and is based on patriarchy (male domination and power)
- \* Men have power and dominance in society and women are oppressed
- \* Family, education, crime etc. all work to keep the gender divide and exploit women
- \* For example, women may be victims of domestic abuse and may be taught gender roles that limit their opportunities in society

### Weber's approach

- \* People's ideas, values and skills have more of an influence on their position in society than class and money
- \* Status (someone's social position) is not always linked to their class/money
- \* E.g. some people have high status but do not have a lot of money (junior doctors) whereas some people may have low status but lots of money (lottery winners)

### Interactionist approach

- \* Society does not influence everyone in the same way
- \* Everyone's experiences are different, you can't generalise about behaviour
- \* People can be labelled as something (e.g. clever, naughty) which can affect how they see themselves
- \* People might accept and live up to the label through a self-fulfilling prophecy

### New Right approach

- \* Society should be based on traditional values such as marriage
- \* People should not be reliant on welfare benefits as this can create an underclass
- \* Nuclear families are the best type (with a married mum and dad) and lone-parent families can cause issues

### Consensus vs. conflict theories

#### Consensus theories

- \* These theories believe society is based on consensus (agreement) and is in harmony
- \* Everyone shares the same norms and values and no one group has more power than another
- \* E.g. functionalism

#### Conflict theories

- \* These theories believe society is based on conflict (disagreement) and is divided
- \* People in society have different norms/beliefs/values
- \* Some groups have more power than others
- \* E.g. feminism, Marxism

## Key methods terms

<b>Aim</b>	A general statement about what a sociologist expects to find out in research
<b>Hypothesis</b>	A prediction about what the sociologist expects they will find in research
<b>Pilot study</b>	A small test-run of a study which is carried out before the main study to check for any problems (e.g. equipment)
<b>Sampling</b>	How participants are chosen to take part in a study (e.g. volunteer, opportunity)
<b>Primary data</b>	Data which is collected first hand by the researchers (e.g. using a questionnaire or interview)
<b>Secondary data</b>	Data that already exists and is used by the researcher (e.g. official statistics, letters)
<b>Quantitative data</b>	Data which IS in the form of numbers
<b>Qualitative data</b>	Data which is NOT in the form of numbers and tends to be visual or in letters (e.g. diaries, photographs)
<b>Validity</b>	The accuracy of the findings – how truthful the data is.
<b>Reliability</b>	How consistent the findings are. If we repeated the study, would we find the same results?

## Sampling methods

**Random** – all participants have an equal chance of being chosen (e.g. names out of hat)  
 ✓ Less biased and likely to be more representative  
 ✗ May not be fully representative – could choose all males

**Volunteer** – participants choose/self-select to take part (e.g. responding to an advert)  
 ✓ Easy to gain a sample, less likely to drop out  
 ✗ May not be representative – only certain people will agree

**Opportunity** – participants who are available are chosen  
 ✓ Easy to gain a sample ✗ may not be representative

**Stratified** – participants chosen according to % in the population  
 ✓ Most representative ✗ difficult for the researcher to do

## Primary research methods

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Questionnaires</b>	✓ Participants are likely to be honest as anonymous ✓ Can be given to a large sample so more representative	✗ Participants may not understand the questions ✗ May not be honest as want to appear desirable
<b>Structured interviews</b> (set questions)	✓ Can compare responses easily between participants ✓ Less likely to be biased as set questions	✗ May not get full detail or gain a deep understanding ✗ Cannot ask additional questions
<b>Unstructured interviews</b> (no set questions)	✓ Can get full detail and a deep understanding ✓ You can build rapport/relationship so may be more honest	✗ May not get full detail or gain a deep understanding ✗ Cannot ask additional questions
<b>Group interviews</b>	✓ Can gain a variety of opinions ✓ May be more honest as have group support	✗ Some participants might take over the interview ✗ Participants might be embarrassed to be honest
<b>Participant observation</b> (researcher joins group)	✓ May understand behaviour more as joining in ✓ Can ask questions to help with research	✗ Could be biased as too involved ✗ Difficult to note behaviour so may not be accurate
<b>Non-participant observation</b> (watches from a distance)	✓ Less likely to be biased as not involved ✓ Easier to note behaviour so more likely to be accurate	✗ May not get full understanding of behaviour as not involved in the group
<b>Longitudinal study</b> (follows a group over time)	✓ Can look at the influence of different factors over time ✓ Can gain detailed information of the group you study	✗ Participants may drop out of the study ✗ Sample is likely to be small so not representative

## Secondary sources of data

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Official statistics</b> (quantitative)	✓ Often large sample sizes – more representative ✓ Easy to analyse and compare over time as quantitative ✓ Likely to be accurate as collected by the government	✗ May not give reasons for behaviour (just trends) ✗ May not include all behaviours e.g. crime statistics may ignore the dark figure
<b>Documents</b> (qualitative) e.g. letters, diaries, school reports	✓ Lots of detailed data as qualitative ✓ Can find reasons behind behaviour	✗ May be small sample sizes and not representative ✗ May be time-consuming to analyse ✗ Could be biased and not valid

## Triangulation and mixed methods

Where a sociologist uses more than one method to find out lots of information about a topic e.g. using a questionnaire, interview and observation.  
 Is used to:  
 Gain more data on a topic  
 Check the validity/accuracy of the data  
 ✗ But, the data may be difficult compare as it is collected using different methods.