National identity can be defined as the feeling of being part of a larger community, especially the nation-state, which gives the individual a sense of pride, purpose and meaning. That pride might be expressed through patriotic or nationalistic attitudes, feelings and behaviour, for example, by volunteering to fight for one's country in times of war, fervently supporting the national football team and so on.

Source A shows how national identity might be expressed through costume or dress. The first photograph shows a Scottish piper wearing traditional dress – tartan kilt and sporran associated with Scottish ethnic or national identity.

A second example is the use of flags which act as a symbol or emblem of a particular country and may be the focus of national identity. For example, in the second photograph of Source A, a child has had the national flag of England – St. George’s cross – painted on his face which indicates that the child is following his national team – England – at a sporting tournament. Source B also observes that the Union Jack flag is one of the main symbols of British national identity (along with the Royal Family) and observes that expressing one’s national identity gives a person purpose and pride. This is why during the London Olympics, spectators were often found waving the Union Jack and winning British athletes often wrapped themselves up in it to express their pride in winning a medal.

NB. Other possible examples might have mentioned the playing or singing of national anthems or songs, for example, the playing of bagpipes is mainly associated with Scotland. Some countries may claim that particular landmarks symbolise their national identity, for example, Big Ben, red telephone and post boxes, the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace, the White Cliffs of Dover, village greens and pubs symbolise England. Another example of a symbol of our national identity is our passport.

Individuals are partly socialised into national identity in the family by our parents. As part of primary socialisation we are taught as children our national language – English – and the importance of British values such as respect for free speech and democracy. We may also learn from our parents to recognise and to take pride in national symbols such as sports' teams and athletes such as Mo Farah, the Royal Family and institutions such as the Houses of Parliament. We may learn that certain types of food such as fish and chips and roast beef and Yorkshire pudding are British, while other types of food are ‘foreign’. For example, regarding Source A we will probably recognise because of our parents that the kilt is distinctly Scottish and the St.George’s flag is English. As stated in Source B we learn from the media that we are expected to support our national sports teams.

Another important source of national identity is the education system. The teaching of history, English literature and religion in British schools tends to promote national identity. For example, Shakespeare is often proudly described as the world’s greatest playwright, while traditional history teaching often focuses on Britain’s positive achievements, especially victory in wars.

Religion is another source of socialisation. Britain is mainly a Protestant nation and the Church of England has a close relationship with the State and the monarchy.

Finally, the mass media, especially the tabloid media, tend to encourage ultra-patriotic and sometimes anti-foreign attitudes, especially during war-time and major sporting events like the World Cup. For example, the Sun newspaper often invokes images of the Second World War if England is playing Germany in a football tournament. English fans will often sing offensive songs reminding German fans that Germany lost the war despite the fact that this was 70 years ago. During the Referendum, which resulted in Brexit, many British newspapers expressed extremely patriotic ideas which were very hostile towards Europe.

There are a number of influences on an individual’s identity including social class, gender, ethnicity, religion, age, sexuality, disability and love of country or patriotism.

National identity can be defined as the feeling of being part of a larger community, especially the nation-state, which gives the individual a sense of pride, purpose and meaning. Anderson (1983) suggests that a nation is an ‘imagined
community’ and national identity is socially constructed via the media, education and even religion, using symbols such as flags, national anthems, sporting events and significant national personages such as the Royal Family and Shakespeare.

However, jingoistic some sociologists argue that national identity for British people is often quite confused. There is some evidence that British identity has actually weakened for three reasons. Firstly, Celtic (Scottish, Welsh and Irish) people are less likely than English people to see themselves as British. For example, Welsh speakers identify themselves first and foremost as Welsh rather than British and 45 per cent of Scots voted to leave the United Kingdom in the referendum of 2014. Secondly, some sociologists claim that the English are experiencing an identity crisis because many English liberals and left-wing thinkers are reluctant to identify with either an English or British identity because they believe it to be too closely associated with racism, anti-Europeanism, Brexit, anti-immigration and hate crime. Thirdly, there is some evidence that ethnic minorities living in the UK want to identify as British but are uneasy at the fact that surveys suggested that their presence had not been totally accepted by the White indigenous population.

Sardar (2002) suggests that the world is in the middle of a global identity crisis as globalisation becomes the norm. British people now know more about different cultures and can travel to distant countries and many choose to live abroad. Consequently it is argued that everyday life is less likely to be shaped by British identity and more likely to be shaped by global influences.

Other sociologists argue that other social factors are more influential in shaping people’s identity than nationality or globalisation. Marxists, for example, point out that Britain is a capitalist society and consequently a person’s socio-economic position, that is, their social class, has a massive influence on identity. Marxists argue that occupation, income and possession of wealth are the main shapers of identity, although postmodernists such as Pakulski and Waters argue that social class is no longer important because in postmodern societies there has been a shift from the production of goods to consumption. However, the idea that class is dead is criticised by Marshall (1998) who points out that surveys frequently show that people still see themselves as belonging to a particular class while Savage (2001) found that only a minority believed that Britain was a classless society.

Other sociologists argue that in a multicultural society like the UK, ethnicity and religion play a major role in the social construction of identity. Ghumann found that tradition, religion and family values, especially respect for elders, duty, obligation, honour, the avoidance of shame and the importance of prayer were central aspects of identity in the UK for people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin. He points out that in a racist society, Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (BAME) may use their ethnic identity as a form of cultural defence in order to preserve the culture and tradition they have imported from their country of origin and from being superseded by British national identity. Johal (1998) found that many educated young Asians subscribed to a dual identity that he called ‘Brasian’. He suggests they inherit an Asian identity which they predominantly use in their home environment. However, they also adopt a form of British identity in that they act in ways not dissimilar from their White peers in public spaces such as school to successfully interact and connect with their White peers, for example, Asian boys may follow the England football team.

Finally, feminists argue that the major influence on identity is actually gender and sexuality, particularly heterosexuality. Connell argues that boys and girls are taught by society to conform to culturally dominant or hegemonic masculine and feminine norms of identity. This means that traditionally males were encouraged to see themselves as more powerful than females and were brought up to be leaders, workers, breadwinners etc. whereas girls were taught to see themselves as subordinate to boys and were encouraged to see their future adult identities as mainly revolving around motherhood and the home. However, feminists argue that feminine and masculine identities have undergone massive change during the course of the 20th and 21st centuries. Research by Sue Sharpe clearly shows that girls no longer conform to the norms of feminine identity that dominated British culture thirty years ago. Evidence suggests that women in 2017 are more likely to see themselves as equal to men rather than subordinate. The dominance of heterosexual identity too has come under attack in recent years as cultural attitudes towards homosexuality have shifted so that being gay is no longer regarded as ‘criminal’. Gay marriage was legalised in 2014. The appearance of both transgender and transsexual identities suggests that gender identity is also in a state of flux and ongoing change.

**A-level Exam practice**

**Page 21**

1 A formal sanction is a punishment delivered by a formal or official agency of social control. These are normally state institutions such as the police, social workers, the law courts and prisons
which exist in order to socially control behaviour that fails to conform to the consensus as set out by the law. If laws are broken, this deviant or criminal behaviour may be negatively sanctioned or punished with arrest by the police and a trial in court. If found guilty, the offender may be fined or sent to prison. In some societies, for example, China and the USA, the formal sanction may be death.

2 Source A shows a police officer. The job of the police is to enforce the law in a fair and just manner and to police all sections of society equally, although some sociologists argue that some groups, particularly BAME groups, are subjected to disproportionate and unjustified police attention in terms of stop and search. The police have the power to stop people in the street, to ask questions about their identity and activity, to issue formal and informal warnings, to arrest people on suspicion that a crime has been committed and to physically detain people for up to three days. Sometimes they will use a military style of forceful policing when dealing with demonstrations, football fans or rioters.

Source B also points out that the police have the right to use a reasonable amount of force if an individual resists arrest. Source B observes that the courts also have a number of sanctions that they can apply, for example, community service, probation or prison, if a person is found guilty of a criminal offence.

Functionalist sociologists argue that social control and sanctions benefit society because members of society consent to be policed and punished in order to protect the law-abiding majority from a potentially deviant minority who need to be deterred from committing crime. However, Marxist sociologists in contrast argue that agents of social control and sanctions are actually used by the powerful to keep powerless groups in line.

3 Ethnicity has been defined by some sociologists as a sense of cultural awareness and identity within groups whose members share a common history or heritage. Groups may use their ethnicity to construct notions of difference or boundaries between themselves and other ethnic groups and so reinforce the notion of ‘them’ and ‘us’. This ethnic identity or cultural awareness may be shaped by religion, language, skin colour, regional origin and even racism.

Ghumann found that tradition, religion and family values, especially respect for elders, duty, obligation, honour, the avoidance of shame and the importance of prayer, were central aspects of the primary socialisation of Asian children. The mother tongue was seen as especially important in maintaining links between generations and in the transmission of religious values. Children therefore tend to be bilingual and are often able to use the mother language (for example, Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati and Hindi) and English interchangeably. Such ethnic identities may be important in multicultural societies like the UK because they ‘culturally defend’ traditional beliefs and practices that originate in the country of origin of ethnic groups.

Ethnic identity may also be reinforced by regular attendance at the temple or mosque, migrating to areas with heavy concentrations of people with the same ethnic identity, subscriptions to satellite TV channels that beam in entertainment and news from one’s country of origin and sending children to faith schools.

Jacobson and others have found that the concept of ‘ummah’ – the idea that Muslims wherever they are located should put the interests of the whole Muslim community first – is influencing young British-Pakistani-Muslims to adopt a strong Islamist identity in response to the joint US-UK invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, Islamophobic racism and so on. Controversially it has been suggested this makes such youth more sympathetic to ISIS and the idea of jihad against the West. However, recent research suggests that most young Muslims in Britain generally express a strong sense of belonging to British society and consequently feel very integrated. Research suggests that there is little evidence that young Asians are turning to fundamentalist Islam as an alternative and oppositional Islamist identity which is at odds with British identity. Extremist Islamist views are actually held by only a tiny minority.

However, there are signs that ethnic identity is undergoing hybridisation. A hybrid identity is an identity held by a person who subscribes to two or three important cultural roots. For example, a British-born young Pakistani male may feel a strong connection to his parents’ country of origin and support the Pakistani cricket team when it plays England and India. He may speak Urdu at home with his parents and grandparents but a combination of English and Urdu (even in the same sentence) with his friends and support the England football team at the World Cup. For example, Johal (1998) found that many educated young Asians subscribed to a dual identity that he called ‘Brasian’. He suggests they inherit an Asian identity which they predominantly use in their home environment. However, they also adopt a form of White or British identity when they interact and connect with their White teachers, colleagues and friends. Similarly, Charlotte Butler’s research found that third-generation young British Muslim women had
Finally, Back discovered evidence of ethnic or cultural hybridity among White youth in the 1990s. His research found that White youths were attracted to and adopted many aspects of Black culture including speech mannerisms, dress codes, musical tastes and conspicuous consumption of particular brands and logos. Nyak (2003) describes young White people who imitate Black speech patterns as ‘White wannabees’. White teenagers may be influenced by Black and/or Asian culture in terms of clothing styles, body piercing, gestures of respect (the fist-bump, the high-five and so on), linguistic style and activities such as street dance, rap and hip-hop. In evaluation of these ideas it must be remembered that the identity of ethnic groups often intersects with other aspects of identity such as nationality, gender, social class and age. For example, well-educated and professional British-born Asians are more likely to identify as Brasian than unemployed British-Pakistanis with few qualifications whose disaffection with institutional racism or Islamophobia may lead them to adopt a more confrontational and oppositional Islamist identity.

AS Exam practice

Page 53

1 The dark side of family life refers to the negative consequences of family life. Functionalists believe that families are generally positive and beneficial for their members. However, there is evidence that dysfunctional families exist in which members may experience murder, domestic violence, abuse and neglect. For example, it is estimated that nearly four children a week die at the hands of their parents whilst there are three domestic killings of women each fortnight on average in the UK.

2 One of the most important functions of the family is primary socialisation. This function involves parents and other adult family members teaching children the values and norms of their culture so that they can interact successfully with others and conform to social expectations about behaviour. It aims to help children to successfully take their place in society as good citizens and workers.

Secondly, the family performs an economic function in that parents agree to be responsible for the economic maintenance of their children and home. Parents freely choose to go out to work to earn income and act as units of consumption, buying goods and services aimed at maintaining both the health and standard of living of themselves and their children.

3 There are four ways of looking at how power is distributed in British families. Firstly, until 1972 we can see a glaring inequality in marriage in that the vast majority of petitions for divorce initiated with husbands rather than wives. This was probably because divorce prior to 1972 was expensive and most wives were economically dependent upon their husbands. Divorce was also a complex process. In order to gain a divorce, one partner had to prove the other guilty of a matrimonial offence, which often meant employing expensive barristers. The 1969 Divorce Reform Act (which came into effect in 1971) dramatically changed access to divorce. It reduced the expense of divorce because it took away the need for one partner to prove the other partner guilty of ‘fault’. The Act awarded divorce if both partners agreed that the marriage had ‘irretrievably broken down’ after an official two-year separation, which was extended to five years if one partner objected. A major influence on rising divorce rates in the years after the Divorce Reform Act was the changing role of women in society which led to more women petitioning for divorce. For example, nowadays 65 per cent of divorces are initiated by wives who are unhappy with some aspect of their marriage.

The major difference between wives in the 1960s and wives today is the fact that wives are now more likely to go out to work and are less likely to be financially dependent on their husbands. There is also some evidence that the attitudes of women towards marriage have radically changed over the generations. For example, wives in the past probably tolerated domestic violence, men’s emotional incompetence and inequalities in the domestic division of labour as marital ‘norms’. Evidence suggests that women today see such male behaviour as justifiable grounds for initiating divorce.

Secondly, some functionalist sociologists in the 1970s, most notably Young and Wilmott, argued that marriage was becoming more egalitarian and democratic and that joint conjugal roles...
were becoming the norm in symmetrical nuclear families. They claimed that both childcare and housework were increasingly shared by both spouses mainly because women now pursued careers and went out to work. However, a number of empirical studies have cast doubt on this picture of egalitarian marriage.

Many studies suggest that women often carry a dual burden in that they work a ‘double shift’. That is, they often hold down full-time paid jobs but are unfairly still largely responsible for the bulk of domestic labour. For example, Gershuny found that women, despite holding down jobs, were often responsible for 60 per cent of domestic work whilst Duncombe and Marsden argue that women take the major responsibility for the emotional wellbeing of their partners and children in addition to paid work and responsibility for housework and childcare. In this sense, women actually work a triple shift. A BBC survey conducted in 2016 suggested that ‘chore wars’ were the main cause of marital breakdown.

Thirdly, Young and Wilmott also claimed that men and women in symmetrical families shared power in terms of joint responsibility for decision-making. However, this claim too has been challenged by research from Hardill et al. (1997) who discovered that middle-class wives generally deferred to their husbands in major decisions involving where to live, the size of the mortgage, buying cars and so on, and were only ‘allowed’ to make the less important domestic decisions, such as those about home décor.

Finally, some sociologists argue that there can never be equality in power in marriage so long as the ‘dark side of family life’ and dysfunctional families are tolerated. For example, in the UK nearly one in four women have been physically assaulted by a male partner at some time in their life. Betsy Stanko’s survey of police forces found that one incident of domestic violence a minute is reported to the police by women. It is estimated that three quarters of all violence in the UK is domestic.

This is an essay question so you will need to develop a range of arguments. Here is a plan on how you might organise this.

- Discuss how demographic changes – reduced birth, fertility and death rates plus increased life expectancy – have produced family diversity, for example, extended families, dispersed extended families, beanpole families and dual-career families.
- Discuss how migration has produced family diversity, for example, Asian families – Sikh horizontal extended families, African-Caribbean single-parent family and mixed-race families.
- Discuss how the liberalisation of attitudes has produced family diversity, for example, same-sex families.
- Discuss why postmodernists believe that concepts such as the ‘nuclear family’ or ‘ideal’ family should be abandoned and Carol Smart’s view that sociologists should examine ‘personal lives’ instead.
- Conclude with Robert Chester’s observation that despite family diversity, most children today are still raised in nuclear families.

A-level Exam practice

Page 53

1 One reason for the increase in one-person households is the fall in the death rate which has been brought about partly by the increase in life expectancy. Consequently the UK has an ageing population. In particular, the rise in single-person households is partly fuelled by the number of elderly women living alone which has occurred because females tend to outlive their male partners.

Another possible reason for the increase in single-person households is argued by Klineberg who suggests that young women are likely to live alone before marriage and cohabitation because they are influenced by the cult of the individual which means people put their own needs before the needs of others in the society. This cult of the individual means young women may put their needs before, let’s say, her parents’ desire to be grandparents and this may mean they are likely to live alone while establishing their career and an independent lifestyle.

2 This question requires a mini-essay response. Use the introduction to identify the source of the essay title which is the functionalist theory of the family.

- Use the next two paragraphs to develop the functionalist theory of the family. One paragraph should be dedicated to G.P. Murdock and the other should summarise Parson’s theory of the family.

- Note the examiner is asking you to ‘evaluate’. This word means you should weigh up the
3 This answer too requires you to write an essay along the following lines:

- Your introduction should explain what is meant by ‘socially constructed’ – childhood is the product of particular sets of social attitudes and actions that dominate societies at particular times. Consequently the experience of childhood and adolescence is not universally shared by all children and teenagers. It differs across societies and cultures, places and historical periods.
- Develop this idea by illustrating how today’s ideas about childhood were gradually formed in the 19th and early 20th centuries.
- Show how the State has contributed to the social construction of childhood by passing laws aimed at protecting children and childhood.
- Illustrate how childhood is a diverse experience by showing how it might differ according to social class, gender, ethnicity and global factors.
- Illustrate the social construction of childhood using the concept of age patriarchy with examples.
- Conclude with the observation that the social construction of childhood means that most children experience childhood as a period of innocence but give examples of how this might be under threat from ‘toxic’ influences.

AS Exam practice

Page 75

1 Relative deprivation is a concept mainly associated with the Left Realists, Lea and Young. It refers to how deprived someone feels in relation to others, or compared with their own expectations. This can lead to crime when people feel resentment that others have more than them and that this is unfair. Lea and Young argue that feelings of relative deprivation and powerlessness can result in a subcultural criminal or delinquent behaviour among youth living in economically deprived urban areas.

2 Territorial gang crime is typical of delinquency carried out with others. The Centre for Social Justice defines a gang as a group of street-based young people who share common deviant values and who engage in criminal activity and violence that is often organised around drugs and territory. Their membership is typically male and aged between 12 and 25 years old. Studies of territorial street gangs have found that they tend to be found in the most economically and socially deprived districts of British cities.

3 This answer too requires you to write an essay along the following lines:

- Dedicate at least one paragraph to the Marxist critique of the nuclear family, at least one other to the Feminist critique of the family and one paragraph to the ‘dark side of family life’ and dysfunctional families.
- The essay could be concluded by referring to the postmodernist idea that modern Britain is now characterised by family diversity and that sociological study of the nuclear family should now be replaced with the sociological study of ‘life-course’ or ‘personal life’.

4 Use your introduction to identify deviant subcultures that might be comprised of working-class youth such as territorial street gangs, tagging
in 2016. There are nine main theories which using knives and guns sharply increased in London crime in groups. You should dedicate a fairly detailed paragraph to about five to six of them.

- Albert Cohen blames status frustration – deviance may be a group attempt to compensate for a lack of status and respect at school and in wider society. Use the Nightingale and Bourgeois studies to support Cohen’s ideas.
- Cloward and Ohlin observe that the type of deviance that youth adopt depends on the existence of illegitimate opportunity structures in their localities.
- Walter Miller blames the parents and culture of working-class boys for socialising them into a set of deviant values he calls ‘focal concerns’ which inevitably get them into trouble with the police.
- The New Right blame the dysfunctional parents and families because they have failed to adequately socialise their children. Such children grow up to be anti-authority and often do not know the difference between right and wrong.
- Marxists blame the criminogenic value system of capitalism which encourages greed and material success regardless of the cost to others.
- Left Realists blame a combination of relative deprivation and powerlessness which leaves sections of youth feeling angry, frustrated and disaffected so they turn to each other – in subcultures or gangs – as a solution to these problems.
- Labelling theory blames agents of social control – schools, the police, the courts and the mass media for negatively stereotyping young people as potential trouble-makers. This negative labelling means that some sections of youth, especially the working-class, are subjected to greater surveillance and negative treatment such as stop and search. This often leads to resentment and deviancy amplification.
- Feminists and others such as Connell suggest gang violence may be an attempt to compensate for a crisis of masculinity being experienced by working-class boys and men.
- Postmodernists such as Lyng argue that youth crime is edgework as it is located on the edge, between the thrill of getting away with it and the potential danger and uncertainty of being captured and punished.

A-level Exam Practice

Page 75

1 The Teddy-boy youth subculture was popular among working-class youth in the 1950s. It had a very elaborate dress code, in that male members wore Edwardian-style brightly coloured crepe jackets, winklepicker or blue suede shoes and string ties. Tony Jefferson claimed that this dress code demonstrated working-class contempt for the class system and poked fun at their supposed middle-class ‘social superiors’. The punk rock subculture of the late 1970s wore a costume that was meant to deliberately ‘shock’ mainstream society. For example, punks would re-use ordinary objects or commodities such as sticking safety pins through their noses and ears. They often wore swastikas as part of their dress. Punk girls often wore bin liners or sexual bondage gear. Dick Hebdige concluded that the dress code of punk rockers was a form of resistance to the dominant cultural values of British society in the late 1970s.

2 Cashmore notes that in the 1970s many African-Caribbean youth who had been born in Britain adopted a Rastafarian identity with a very visible style – dreadlocks and clothing and headwear in the colours of the Ethiopian flag – red, gold and green. These youth had a very distinctive ethos – they saw White society as Babylon, which would one day be destroyed by Jah (God) who would send his son Ras Tafari to lead his people back to Africa. Many Rastas deliberately flaunted drug laws by openly smoking marijuana which Rastafarians saw as helping them to achieve a higher level of spirituality. Both Hebdige (1976) and Gilroy observed that Black youth in Britain in the 1970s often adopted the Rasta spiritual lifestyle as a form of resistance to White culture and what they perceived as police racism, symbolised by the frequent and disproportionate police use of stop and search of Black youth. The very visible style and look of the Rastafarians along with their anti-White-society stance meant they were often the focus of police attention and at the forefront of the urban riots and uprisings that were common in the UK throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Interactionist sociologists claim that negative labelling or stereotyping can explain the high levels of arrest and conviction for young Black
males. In the UK, the McPherson Report, which concluded the inquiry into the murder of the Black teenager Stephen Lawrence and the subsequent police investigation, concluded that the London Metropolitan Police was guilty of ‘institutional racism’. There is some evidence that the police engage in racial profiling. Hall criticised the military-style policing methods used by a mainly White police force in ethnic minority neighbourhoods in the UK and argued that such aggressive and insensitive policing methods have led to poor relations between the police and ethnic minority communities, as well as hostility from local youth which has sometimes spilled over into street disturbances and riots, especially after police shootings of young Black men such as Mark Duggan. Sociologists in the UK have also found evidence of a racist occupational or canteen culture among police officers in which police officers negatively stereotype members of ethnic minority groups using derogatory language and racist banter and jokes. Holdaway points out that the police are supposed to police all groups equally but the existence of this unchallenged canteen culture predisposes police officers to see Black and Asian people as potentially more suspicious and criminal.

Finally, Left Realists argue that Black and Asian communities are disproportionately affected by unemployment and poverty. They are also likely to leave school with fewer qualifications compared with their White peers. Consequently their road to material success is more likely to be blocked and they are likely to experience relative deprivation. They also argue that young Black and Asian people are likely to feel frustrated with and hostile towards White society because they suffer marginalisation and feel a keen sense of injustice. They lack the power to change their situation and often feel harassed by the police. Left Realists claim that they attempt to solve these feelings of relative deprivation and marginalisation by turning to other like-minded individuals to form subcultures in the form of territorial street gangs in which they gain respect and status from their peers through committing crime and the use of violence.

However, it must be remembered that only a very small number of people from ethnic minorities commit crime or get involved in gangs. The majority of Black or Asian youth rarely get into trouble either at school or in wider society. 3 This question demands an essay response.

- Use the introduction to acknowledge that interactionist explanations focus on how powerful groups label the behaviour of less powerful groups such as ethnic minorities as ‘deviant’. The powerful also have the power to make rules or laws that criminalise others less powerful than themselves. Define what is meant by anti-school subcultures – these refer to groups of pupils who reject the cultural norms and values of school. Such pupils may award each other praise and status for anti-academic behaviour such as trouble-making, disrupting classes, insolence to teachers and truanting.
- You now need to develop interactionist ideas about education in order to show how anti-school subcultures might result. For example, Becker argues that the social construction of deviance requires two activities: groups such as young people, who lack power, act in a particular another group with more power and teachers responding negatively to it and defining that behaviour as deviant. Becker argues that a deviant is simply someone to whom a negative label has been successfully applied and deviant behaviour is simply behaviour that people with more power such as teachers define and label as wrong or deviant.
- Illustrate Becker’s arguments with examples relating to social class. Gillborn and Youdell found that teachers generally labelled working-class pupils as disruptive, lacking in motivation and parental support and consequently of low ability. This led to teachers having lower expectations of working-class pupils, which meant they were often allocated to lower ability groups.
- Illustrate Becker’s arguments with examples relating to gender. For example, the ‘ideal pupil’ stereotype – the type of pupils teachers prefer to teach is more likely to be female rather than male.
- Illustrate Becker’s arguments with examples relating to ethnicity. Gillborn and Mirza found that classroom interaction between Black youth and White teachers was often characterised by conflict and confrontation. Gillborn found that White teachers were often suspicious of the style, dress and speech of African-Caribbean boys and often interpreted their behaviour as disrespectful. They often felt that the way African-Caribbean boys dressed or talked challenged their authority.
- The rest of the essay needs to show how teacher labelling might lead to anti-school subcultures – follow the same order – class, gender and ethnicity
- Anti-school subcultures and social class. Interactionists argue that pupils in bottom sets are more likely to experience low self-esteem and form anti-school or counter-pupil subcultures in which peers award status to one another for deviant behaviour that breaks school rules. David Hargreaves observed that setting led to the emergence of two pupil subcultures in the school he observed in the 1960s: a conformist subculture which was
made up of pupils in the top sets who worked hard and generally followed school rules and a delinquent subculture which rebelled against the school by smoking, subverting uniform rules and messing around in lessons. Hargreaves argued that boys in the delinquent culture suffered from status frustration. However, they could compensate for this in that they could gain status from their peers by indulging in anti-school activity.

- The relationship between labelling, social class and anti-school subcultures should be evaluated. Willis’s study of an anti-school subculture suggests that it may not necessarily be a response to teacher labelling, setting or status frustration. Willis found that the lads in his study rejected the idea of school and qualifications because they wanted jobs in the local car factory. They redefined the purpose of school as ‘having a laugh’, therefore their subculture was about putting this idea into action. Woods observed that working-class pupils could react to negative teacher labelling and setting in a variety of ways. He noted that pupils often moved between conformity and rebellion, sometimes depending on the teacher or the lesson. He also observed that rebellion did not always mean confrontation and that many rebellious pupils did not involve themselves in oppositional deviant subcultures.

- Anti-school subcultures and gender. Sociologists have found that working-class underachieving boys form anti-school subcultures that regard schoolwork as ‘feminine’ and ‘unmanly’ and which have a tendency to engage in hyper-masculine behaviour such as back chatting teachers, being disruptive in class and bullying the more academic boys. Showing an interest in school work is often defined as silly, soft and weak, and diligent boys are often subjected to homophobic abuse by these anti-school subcultures.

- Anti-school subcultures and ethnicity. Sociologists have observed the emergence of African-Caribbean anti-school subcultures in London schools based on distinct styles of dress, musical taste and linguistic styles (such as the adoption of Rasta slang). Such subcultures awarded status on the basis of anti-school behaviour towards the school and teachers, thus confirming the negative teacher stereotype of African-Caribbean boys.

- In evaluation, it is possible for a group of pupils to be pro-education and anti-school. Mirza’s study of Black girls in two London comprehensives found that the girls believed that teachers had low expectations of them. However, these girls had confidence in their own abilities, worked hard and resisted teacher judgements of their ability. These Black girls were anti-school, but pro-education. Also, interactionism tends to focus exclusively on classroom processes and rarely examines structural or political influences which Marxist and functionalist theorists see as more important. For example, Marxists argue that many ethnic minority groups are part of the working-class and are subjected to the same structural disadvantages as members of the White working-class.

### AS Exam Practice

#### Page 102

1. Source A shows that the poorest fifth and the richest fifth of the population paid a similar percentage of their gross income in tax in 2012–13. This meant that the richest fifth paid on average £29,500 in tax whilst the poorest fifth paid £4,800. However £4,800 makes up 37.4 per cent of the poorest fifth’s income whilst £29,500 only makes up 35.1 per cent of the richest fifth’s income.

2. The Great British Class Survey summarised in Source B operationalises social class by measuring three types of capital. Firstly, economic capital refers to income, wealth, savings and the value of their house or land. Secondly, cultural capital refers to the cultural interests and activities that parents encourage in their children such as visiting art galleries and museums, joining the public library or going to the theatre. Thirdly, social capital refers to the number of high status people a parent might know, that is, their social connections. For example, they might know someone who is a headteacher or someone who works for the local education authority.

3. First, such wealth and income statistics are not usually collected for sociological purposes. This may limit their usefulness and validity because the definitions and concepts used by the government agencies such as HM Revenue and Customs may differ from those preferred by sociologists. For example, with regard to wealth statistics not all experts agree on what ‘wealth’ is. Also, calculating the value of personal wealth is difficult because the value of aspects of wealth such as property and stocks and shares constantly changes. The statistics in Source A are based on tax returns but the very wealthy are extremely secretive about their assets and will often transfer money into offshore accounts in tax havens which offer complete confidentiality to their client. It is also sometimes very difficult to estimate the value of stocks and shares owned.
by a particular individual because these might be in the names of other family members or owned by different ‘shell’ companies in complex arrangements which makes it difficult for the official tax authorities to track ownership back to one particular individual.

Similarly, income statistics are based on tax returns to HM Revenue and Customs which are also likely to under-report income, especially if the wealthy are using accountants and lawyers to move cash around the world in an attempt to avoid paying tax. Source A is more likely to be accurate about the tax paid by the bottom fifth because this group of earners cannot afford the army of accountants and lawyers used by the richest fifth to ‘hide’ money and pay less tax. However, the statistics relating to the poorest fifth may lack validity because some avoid tax by working in ‘cash in hand’ jobs and consequently do not declare their true income.

4 Questionnaires are composed of standardised lists of questions that result from operationalising a hypothesis. In the case of Source B, the BBC’s Great British Class Survey aims to operationalise the influence of social class in people’s lives by asking questions which measure the impact of three forms of economic, cultural and social capital. Social survey questionnaires are useful because their use of closed questions with tick boxes means that they can hoover up a large quantity of quantitative data or facts about occupation, income, housing etc. from large numbers of people. If a postal questionnaire is used or, in the case of the BBC, a website which anyone anywhere in the UK can access, the sample of those filling in the questionnaire can be nationally representative, meaning that the researcher might be able to generalise the results to the UK population. Some questionnaires will also use open-ended questions to collect qualitative data about people’s attitudes, beliefs and experiences relating to social and cultural capital.

Questionnaire surveys such as the BBC Great British Class Survey have a number of strengths. They are relatively cheap and quick to carry out compared with other methods. They can also focus on relatively large samples which increases both their representativeness and the possibility of generalising to large research populations. In terms of ethics, surveys normally are accompanied by a letter asking for informed consent. Anonymity and confidentiality can also be easily be ensured. Positivist sociologists prefer questionnaire surveys because they are standardised. They are also highly reliable. If another sociologist was to objectively repeat the BBC survey in Source B question for question with a similar sample, they ought to get similar results. Social surveys carried out by Savage have suggested that there is a gap between people’s subjective interpretation of their class position and the objective criteria used by government classifications such as the NS-SEC. Teachers, for example, often describe themselves as ‘working-class’ whereas the government’s NS-SEC categorises them as middle-class.

However, survey research with regard to social class may suffer from problems of reliability and validity. For example, people may misunderstand or misinterpret questions because the sociologist is not present to explain the meaning of sociological concepts such as social or cultural capital. The questionnaire is also asking for information about income, savings, house prices and so on that some people may be sensitive about because they regard this information as private. They may be concerned that it falls into the hands of the tax authorities regardless of the sociologists’ assurances that it will not. Interpretivist sociologists believe that questionnaires produce data low in validity because they are artificial measuring tools rather than naturalistic or ethnographic. A practical problem of questionnaires is that the quantitative data they generate is one-dimensional in its emphasis on closed questions. Closed questions may give sociologists information about patterns and trends but responses often lack depth about the motives or reasons for particular types of behaviour, for example, a closed question may ask about how many times a parent takes a child to a museum but is unlikely to give much insight into why a parent feels this is important or beneficial. Interpretivist sociologists prefer to use in-depth interviewing techniques or participant observation to see how the possession of cultural or social capital actually works in practice and is passed from parent to child.

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1 Source A suggests that older pensioners aged 75 or over are more likely to be on lower incomes than younger pensioners aged 65-74, whether they live in single-person households or whether they are a couple. However, single female pensioners are between five and ten per cent more likely than single male pensioners to have low incomes.

2 In Source B, Jones et al are using in-depth qualitative interviews with retired senior managers. This type of interview is like a guided conversation, in that the interaction and talk between the sociologist and the interviewee...
are informal but the researcher plays an active yet subtle role in managing questions about the research topic to ensure that the interviewee remains focused on it.

Such interviews can often result in unexpected findings – the interviewee may tell the sociologist things the latter had not thought of, for example, Jones et al. discovered that the pensioners in their study feared for the future of their children because of increased unemployment and job insecurity. Unstructured interviews therefore allow sociologists to learn as they go along.

Skilled interviewers can expertly and flexibly probe and follow up responses in such a sympathetic and empathetic way that the interviewee feels that a bond or rapport has been established and they trust the interviewer so much that they are willing to volunteer richly detailed and qualitative information about their personal choices. Jones et al. found that their senior managers were willing to discuss ways in which retirement was a lifestyle and cultural choice.

3 A strength of using secondary data to assess the impact of low income on pensioners is that governments normally collect such statistics using scientific and standardised measuring tools such as social surveys using large geographically scattered and representative samples. The data therefore is usually high in reliability.

However, interpretivist sociologists note that the statistics tell us very little about the human stories or interpretations that underpin them; for example, statistics tell us very little about the daily impact – the humiliation and stress of daily life on a low income.

4 An essay response is required here. Think about the following ideas to help plan your response.

- Introduction: The essay title just focuses on ‘interviews’. Use the introduction to differentiate between structured interviews (a formal question-answer session in which an interviewer reads out a list of standardised closed questions to the interviewee in a robotic fashion which produces lots of quantitative data), unstructured interviews (a more relaxed conversational chat with more open questions, the answers to which can be flexibly probed for meaning by the interviewer and which produces more qualitative data about the interviewee’s feelings, motives etc.), group interviews which may be more suitable than interviews involving children and teenagers – explain why – and semi-structured interviews which involve a combination of closed questions for gathering facts and open questions which can flexibly probe for reasons for the answers to closed questions.

- In the second paragraph, briefly state why some positivist sociologists prefer structured interviews. They are supposedly scientific because they are standardised – all interviewees are asked the same questions, objective – the questions should be free of all bias and the sample of interviewees should be randomly selected or chosen. Such interviews are regarded as highly reliable because another interviewer using the same interview schedule or list of questions and a similar set of interviewees should get very similar results. The use of closed questions and groups of pre-set answers from which interviewees must choose a response produces quantifiable data which can easily be turned into charts and tables, and be used to construct correlations and cause/effect relationships.

- Your third paragraph should focus on why structured interviews might not work with children and teenagers. For example, the interviewer is likely to be older and may be associated with authority, thus reducing the interviewee’s desire to be cooperative. The structured interview may also be too formal for children or teenagers who may feel sensitive about their behaviour and feelings. These fears may be magnified if they feel that they are being interviewed by an unsympathetic adult interviewer.

- Your fourth paragraph should clearly state why an unstructured interview, especially in a group situation, may be more useful because it is less formal and more like a friendly conversation, and is aimed at eliciting trust and rapport between the interviewer (who should share some social characteristics with the sample, for example, he or she might be in their early 20s like the interviewee so hopefully the latter will open up about behaviour and feelings they would not mention in more formal circumstances). Unstructured interviews are usually carried out in environments in which the interviewee feels comfortable. Interviewers are trained to be both sympathetic and empathetic so that the interviewee might be willing and trusting enough to confide information that they would not usually pass on to a stranger.

- You should now start to assess the weaknesses of using interviews with children and teenagers. Think first about the drawbacks of using group interviews, for example, how some children may be ‘led’ or pressured by their peers, how some might avoid admitting to certain types of behaviour because they fear being bullied.

- Discuss some of the other drawbacks of interviews which might affect children and teenagers such as aspects of interview bias.
Wilkinson and Pickett (2014) found that poverty brings with it disadvantages such as poor diet which leads to weak immune systems and therefore higher levels of illness and disability, lower life expectancy and higher than average infant mortality rates.

Poverty also brings about high levels of stress as the poor slip into debt as well as high levels of depression and a disproportionate number of suicides.

Liberal feminists like their Marxist and radical peers are focused on explaining the existence of patriarchal inequalities in most areas of social life. However, while Marxist feminists and radical feminists analyses of gender inequality have generally been pessimistic, the liberal feminist approach is reasonably optimistic regarding the battle against patriarchy and acknowledges that women have actually achieved great progress over the past century.

Liberal feminists have mainly focused on reforming society by identifying and highlighting inequalities in education, the workplace, the family and politics and campaigning for equal rights for women in these areas. Oakley, for example, sees patriarchy as in retreat because institutional discrimination is now constantly challenged. She argues that it is now recognised that sexism and its consequent patriarchal discrimination is often based on ignorance and a mistaken view of the biological differences between males and females.

Liberal feminists are therefore mainly concerned with eradicating this ignorance and misinformation about the role of the sexes through education and with obtaining equal opportunities and rights and having these embodied in laws such as the 2006 Equality Act.

Oakley and others have highlighted the role of gender role socialisation in the subordination of girls which they claim have persuaded boys in particular that their future involves exerting power and authority over others, while girls ‘learn’ that they their main future responsibilities will revolve around family and children.

The work of liberal feminists has been very influential in practically reducing patriarchal inequality since the 1960s. For example, Somerville points out that women today enjoy more choice than their mothers and grandmothers about whether to marry, cohabit or live alone, whether to have children or not, what career path they might take, whether they should stay married or get divorced and so on. Liberal feminism is also partly responsible for the seismic change in women’s attitudes which Helen Wilkinson calls a ‘genderquake’. She argues that women today have a radically different attitude towards family responsibilities, education and men compared with their mothers and grandmothers. They are no longer content to see their lives as being defined by men, marriage, family and children. Today’s generation of women are consequently more likely to aspire to university, a high-flying career and economic independence from men.

Note: The question is asking you to evaluate. There are two ways of doing this.

1 You can make specific criticisms:
   - What criticisms might inter-sectional feminists make?
   - Have all patriarchal inequalities disappeared, e.g. it will still take 50 years at present trends for pay between men and women to equalise.

2 You can evaluate by juxtaposing or comparing liberal feminism with other theories:
   - How do radical feminists differ from liberal feminists? They claim that the social structure and culture of society is permeated with patriarchal ideas which lead to patriarchal attitudes, actions and inequalities being taken for granted.
   - How do Marxist feminists differ from liberal feminists? They claim that socio-economic or class inequality is more important than gender inequality. Patriarchy is merely an ideological tool used to divide and rule the working-class.
   - How do Functionals differ from liberal feminists? Men have more human capital than women and are therefore more deserving of high rewards.
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1 Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2007 showed that 40 per cent of ethnic minority communities in the UK live in poverty – double the poverty rates of White communities. In 2001 and 2011, they found that BAME groups were more likely to live in severely deprived inner-city neighbourhoods than the White majority and were consequently more likely to experience high levels of crime and poor access to services such as education and health care.

Platt found that the risk of living in poverty is highest for Bangladesis, Pakistanis and Black Africans but is also above average for African-Caribbean, Indian and Chinese households. Over half of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African children were growing up in poverty.

Alcock argues that BAME groups are most at risk of social exclusion. They face significant deprivation in terms of the quality of both their housing and neighbourhood; for example, they are more likely to live in overcrowded rented accommodation or terraced housing which suffers from damp, poor ventilation and infestation, which can have a detrimental effect on the health of children. Surveys clearly show that members of BAME groups report more ill health than White people. Mortality rates for BAME groups are very similar to those for the White working-class, although the infant mortality rates of BAME groups, especially Pakistani and Bangladeshi babies, are twice as high as working-class White babies. Living in deprived neighbourhoods increases the chances of BAME groups being victims of crime, especially hate crimes such as racial harassment and attacks.

2 The ‘secondary labour market’ is a concept associated with Barron and Norris who were very influenced by Weber’s concept of status inequality. According to Barron and Norris, the economy is organised in the form of a dual labour market. The primary labour sector of this market is characterised by secure, high-status and well-paid jobs, with long-term promotion prospects. Jobs in this sector are monopolised by White men. The secondary labour sector of the dual labour market mainly consists of low-paid, low-status, unskilled and insecure jobs and is dominated by both female and BAME workers.

In 2004, the Ethnic Minorities Employment Task Force reported that ethnic minorities generally earn lower incomes than White people, on average £7,000 less per year. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2007 found that men from ethnic minorities in managerial and professional jobs earn up to 25 per cent less than their White colleagues. The Labour Force Survey of 2011–2013 found that in London 44 per cent of Bangladeshis and Pakistani employees were paid below the living wage compared with only 20 per cent of White employees. Barron and Norris argue that ethnic minorities are less likely than White workers to obtain primary sector jobs because employers may subscribe to racist beliefs about their unsuitability and practise discrimination against them, either by not responding to their job applications or by denying them promotion opportunities. Furthermore, Barron and Norris point out that the legal and political framework supporting Black people is weak. Trade unions are generally White dominated and have been accused of favouring White workers and being less interested in protecting the rights of Black workers. In support of the idea that racial prejudice and discrimination are responsible for the heavy BAME presence in the secondary labour market, Li found that many Muslim women had to remove their hijabs or to adapt their names to make them sound more English to avoid discrimination in the job market. Li also found that interviews by prospective employers of ethnic minority women deteriorated when interviewers realised women with European-sounding names were Black. In 2009, researchers from the National Centre for Social Research sent out nearly 3,000 job applications under false identities using the surnames of Mahmood, Namagembe and Taylor. Each application had a similar level of work experience, a British education, a good set of qualifications and excellent work histories. However, the researchers found that the Taylor identity sent out on average nine applications before receiving an invitation for an interview, whilst the Mahmood and Namagembe identities had to send out an average of 16 applications before they received a positive response.

Evaluate either specifically:

- For example, in criticism of Weberian theory, there is considerable overlap between the White and Black population in terms of poverty and unemployment, although the constant threat of racism does suggest that some members of the White working class do not recognise the common economic situation they share with Black and Asian workers.

Or by juxtaposition:

- How do functionalists explain ethnic inequality in the workplace?
- How do Marxists explain it?
- How does Miles explain it?
1 As Source A states, a major feature of the digital age has been the appearance and rapid spread of social media platforms. Social media refers to a participatory culture or network of websites and applications such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and so on which enable a community of users to interact and collaborate. These social networks have to some extent replaced more physical forms of communication such as meeting in person, writing letters and talking on the telephone. As Source A notes, before social networks people were constrained by geographical distance and time zones and were forced to use forms of communication such as letters which were slow or telephones which were expensive. Social networks in contrast are instantaneous and are not restricted by either time or distance. Social networks are used by some social groups more than others. For example, in the UK, over 90 per cent of 16- to 24-year-olds send at least one text per day, while 73 per cent also use social networking sites to send messages and maintain relationships. Sociologists argue that young people’s involvement in public digital networks helps them to manage the transition from adolescence to adult society and assists their understanding of how to successfully negotiate public life. This is possible because sites like Facebook mirror and magnify both the positive and negative aspects of everyday life. There is evidence that younger women in particular use digital forms of communication to maintain social relationships, especially social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. In Source A, Van Dijck argues that social networks free people of the burdens of geographical distance and time or distance. Instantaneous media such as Turkle argue young people are mentally ‘tethered’ to their digital devices. This is possible because sites like Facebook mirror and magnify both the positive and negative aspects of public everyday life. Identity is therefore a social product constructed by members of social networks for consumption by others in return for admiration and social approval. According to Turkle, internet-based social networks free people of the burdens of their physical identities and allow them to present ‘better’ versions of themselves. However, as Source B indicates, critics of social media such as Turkle argue young people are mentally ‘tethered’ to their digital devices. This can be seen in their frequent need to track and check their connections. She argues that this has weakened their ability to develop an autonomous sense of self. They are too dependent on how other people react to them online. It is as if their thoughts and feelings are not real until they have been digitally validated by others. The quality of online relationships or ‘friends’ has also been questioned by Turkle who observes that people boast about how many people they have ‘friended’ on Facebook, but research on the nature of friendship in the USA concludes that Americans say they have few real friends. Miller observes that critics of Facebook suggest that ‘friending’ represents a ‘kind of inflation of superficial and weak relationships that diminishes the value of true friendship’. It is argued that the quality of Facebook relationships can feel inauthentic because they lack the intimacy, vulnerability and physical closeness that characterise real relationships. Other negative consequences might include conflict caused by others violating privacy, for example, via sexting or revenge pornography, coming into contact with people who are only interested in spouting hate, for example, trolls, and exploiting young people, such as those who ‘groom’ young people. Anonymity makes it easier for some to bully, abuse or threaten others online. Finally, people’s offline relationships may suffer as a result of the time they spend online. Both Miller and Clayton found that internet use significantly decreased loneliness and depression while perceived social support and self-esteem increased.

2 Some sociologists argue that young people’s involvement in public digital networks helps them to manage the transition from adolescence to adult society and assists their understanding of how to successfully negotiate public life. This is possible because sites like Facebook mirror and magnify both the positive and negative aspects of public everyday life. Bjorklund argues that Facebook allows young people to construct an ongoing autobiography online. Facebook is essentially a record of how young people see their lives. Hart argues that young people use social media platforms in order to construct both their social identity and the self that they want to project out into the social world. Identity represents a ‘kind of inflation of superficial and weak relationships that diminishes the value of true friendship’. It is argued that the quality of Facebook relationships can feel inauthentic because they lack the intimacy, vulnerability and physical closeness that characterise real relationships. Other negative consequences might include conflict caused by others violating privacy, for example, via sexting or revenge pornography, coming into contact with people who are only interested in spouting hate, for example, trolls, and exploiting young people, such as those who ‘groom’ young people. Anonymity makes it easier for some to bully, abuse or threaten others online. Finally, people’s offline relationships may suffer as a result of the time they spend online. Both Miller and Clayton found
that time spent on Facebook and Twitter could cause damage to relationships between parents and children and between married spouses.

3 The Marxist sociologist Castells argues that Western societies have entered a late-modern period of capitalism in which the main resource is information. Castells suggests that this change has resulted in the empowerment of ordinary people because the emergence of digital technology and culture and its easy availability mean that communications and information are now organised horizontally. Ordinary people can now politically organise and influence the world of politics via social media, Twitter and blogs. Castells argues that digital forms of communication have decentralised power. Digital technology has resulted in more political power in the hands of the people. However, other Marxists argue that ownership and control of digital social media is a potentially powerful way for the ruling class to bring about cultural hegemony. Marxists argue that the capitalist system uses social media to shape and manipulate how people think about the world they live in so that they only get a narrow range of ‘approved’ views and knowledge, with the result that ‘alternative’ and critical points of view are rarely heard or are dismissed as too extremist. They also argue that social media is mainly focused on non-critical issues such as identity, entertainment and consumption in order to distract their audiences from arguments which are critical of the way the capitalist system is organised and managed. However, in criticism of Marxism, it assumes a unified conspiracy on behalf of the providers of digital forms of communication. However, the capitalist owners of digital forms of communication are not united because their companies are involved in competition with one another for a bigger share of the market and therefore profit.

Feminists have noted ways in which digital technology can be utilised for the political good of women. Cochrane argues digital technology is encouraging women to build an empowering, popular and reactive feminist movement online. In other words, women’s voices are no longer muted. A good example of this online empowerment is Laura Bates’ ‘Everyday Sexism’ project which in 2015 had 108,000 followers on Twitter and Facebook. This is a consciousness raising initiative which encourages women to send in examples of their everyday experiences of street harassment, sexual harassment, especially on public transport, workplace discrimination and body shaming. However, evidence suggests that women who use digital forms of communication may still be subjected to sexism, abuse and threats. For example, women who use new media such as the internet may experience the sorts of everyday sexism experienced in older forms of media. For example, women’s rights campaigner Caroline Criado-Perez was subjected to online rape and murder threats in 2013, while the academic Mary Beard and the MP Stella Creasy have also received threats and sexist abuse via Twitter.

Some sociologists argue that digital forms of communication have contributed to positive social change. Kirkpatrick observes that digital communication can play a major role in mobilising profound and widespread social change because it: enables instantaneous communication; it allows individuals to come together in online social movements; it provides anonymity in sharing sensitive information, such as reporting human rights abuses and it provides the oppressed and exploited with a means of being heard. It may provide the only means by which protests can be heard, especially if governments are cracking down on free speech. Kirkpatrick has documented what he calls the ‘Facebook effect’ in Colombia – he argues that a Facebook site mobilised 10 million people to take part in street demonstrations which pressurised an armed revolutionary movement to enter into peace negotiations with the Colombian government. Other sociologists have argued that the so-called ‘Arab Spring’ movement that occurred between 2010 and 2013 succeeded in removing totalitarian dictators in Tunisia and Egypt because of global social networks. For example, Facebook was used in Egypt to schedule public protests, Twitter to co-ordinate and YouTube to show the world how the authorities had reacted. Kassim argues that these global networks helped Arab people in Egypt and Tunisia to overcome their fears and to take to the streets. However, critics argue that the role of social media in the Arab Spring has been grossly exaggerated. Curran argues that the Arab Spring was actually caused by deep-seated economic, political and religious factors while Wilson and Dunn found that face-to-face interaction, television and print media were more important than social media in getting people onto the streets. Curran concludes that social media played a role in the build-up of dissent and the co-ordination of protests but it did not cause the uprisings – it merely facilitated them (along with other forms of traditional media). Despite these doubts about the efficacy of social media in bringing about social change, other sociologists argue that digital media and social platforms have also proved extremely useful in terms of co-ordinating social protest movements such as the Occupy protests in London and New York in 2011, while websites such as WikiLeaks have challenged the power of both the state and large corporations by publishing leaked documents alleging government and corporate misconduct.
Statistical evidence shows that the older a person gets, the less likely he or she is to commit a crime. Most crime is committed by those under the age of 40. In 2016, only 10 per cent of the total prison population was aged 60 and over. Official statistics also suggest that half of all street robberies, especially ‘acquisitive robbery’ which involves mugging school children for their mobile phones and other gadgets; one in three burglaries and a fifth of violent crimes, sex crimes and shoplifting offences are committed by the 10–17 age group. However, the majority of violent and sexual crimes are carried out by adults, as are white-collar and corporate crimes. Drug and territorial gang violence is mainly committed by young people, for example, a lot of juvenile delinquency has a collective or subcultural character – it is committed as part of a larger group or gang. Much delinquent criminality is also non-materialistic. This is because it is not committed for a monetary goal. Rather it aims to impress others and aims to obtain status from peers. Crimes that fit into this category include tagging or graffiti, joy-riding, football hooliganism, anti-social behaviour derived from being bored and hanging around street corners or shopping centres or from drunkenness.

However, it should also be acknowledged that young people, especially young African-Caribbean young people, may be stereotyped and targeted by the police so that they are more likely than adults to be stopped, searched and arrested. The evidence also suggests that young people are more likely than adults to be victims of crime.

Victim surveys are very useful in identifying factors that contribute to some people being more likely than others to become victims of crime. The Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW), for example, is an annual victim survey which has been carried out by the Home Office since 1982. It asks a sample of the population – around 35,000 people in 2012 – which offences have been committed against them in the previous year and whether they reported those crimes to the police. The CSEW was introduced because a large number of crimes are never recorded by the police. Interpretivist sociologists refer to these as a ‘dark figure of unreported and unrecorded crimes’. For example, a recent Home Office report indicates that out of every 100 crimes, only 50 are reported to the police by victims whilst only a third are actually officially recorded by the police as crimes. The CSEW is intended to provide a more balanced and informed picture of crime, and as a result, CSEW data is now regularly published alongside the OCS.

Data from the CSEW has given sociologists useful insights into which groups are likely to be victims of crime. CSEW data clearly shows that the main victims of crime are young males aged 16–24. This contradicts the popular view that women and the elderly are most at risk of being victims of crime. In fact, CSEW data suggests that the risk of being a victim of crime for most people is fairly low. However, the CSEW’s findings also suggest that ethnicity may be a factor that may contribute to people becoming victims of crime. The CSEW found that African-Caribbeans and British Asians were more likely than Whites to be the victims of street robbery and racially motivated hate crimes.

However, the CSEW data has been criticised on a number of counts. First, it has been criticised as unrepresentative because it fails to include certain types of crimes such as crime against shops (e.g. shoplifting) and other businesses. Ellington argues that the CSEW sample over-represents people who own their own homes whilst under-representing the unemployed, the poor and the homeless. Second, it fails to include victimless crimes such as prostitution and drug use which depend on police detection. Marxists are critical of the CSEW because it omits people who have been the victims of white-collar, corporate and environmental crimes carried out by the economically powerful. Third, the CSEW depends on people’s objective recall of traumatic events. Unfortunately, memory is unreliable and people may exaggerate or even underplay their experience of crime.

Realist sociologists such as Young and Lea and Kinsey have criticised the CSEW because it does not provide detailed information about particular places in which the risk of being a victim of crime is particularly high. Consequently realists have set about designing their own victim surveys which aim to ethnographically measure the impact of crime on inner city communities such as the Islington Crime Survey (ICS) and the Merseyside Crime Survey (MCS). Using unstructured interviews, the ICS found that crime was a powerful influence which shaped the lives of poor people, especially ethnic minorities, living in inner city areas and on council estates. Many were afraid to go out at night whilst Zedner points out that fear of sexual assault is these areas is very real (contradicting CSEW data that women are not at risk of crime). The MCS also discovered that the poor are more likely than any other social group. Their experience of crime is sometimes more traumatic because they are often the repeat victims of crimes such as mugging and burglary.
they often do not have the money to design crime out of their lives, they often do not have insurance and they tend to believe that the police are unsympathetic to their plight.

Finally, feminist sociologists are also critical of the CSEW because they believe it neglects crimes against women such as rape and domestic violence. Feminist victim surveys such as Hanmer and Saunders’ study of one street in Leeds found that 20 per cent of females had not reported serious sexual crime against them. Feminist research into female victims suggests that the level of unreported domestic violence and sexual crime undermines the CSEW claim that women have less to fear from crime than men.

3 Subcultural theory focuses on explaining why young working-class males commit what are known as delinquent crimes in groups – gangs or subcultures. Subcultural theory also tries to explain why juvenile delinquency has a collective or subcultural character – why it is committed as part of a larger group or gang.

In the 1950s, Cohen claimed that juvenile delinquency was caused by status frustration. He argued that the main goal of working-class boys was status but that they were prevented from achieving this for two reasons. First, their parents failed to equip them with the skills and attitudes needed for academic success. Second, schools and teachers placed them in the bottom sets and labelled them as failures. The boys’ opportunities to achieve status were therefore blocked and this produced a type of ‘anomie’ in the form of status frustration. To compensate for this treatment, Cohen notes that working-class boys formed anti-school subcultures or gangs which turned the value system of the school upside down. Status is awarded by the subculture to those who break the school rules and who engage in anti-social and delinquent behaviour. However, Willis criticises Cohen’s ideas because Cohen does not explain why most working-class youth actually conform at school and never turn to delinquency. Cohen has also been criticised by feminists for ignoring female delinquency. Miller claims that working-class delinquency is simply the result of adolescents exaggerating already deviant working-class values such as toughness, contempt for authority and risk-taking (focal concerns) to compensate for the boredom of school, jobs and unemployment. Working-class subcultures are due to the inherently deviant nature of working-class culture.

Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin are sceptical of the notion of status frustration. They suggest that the type of delinquency and crime that young people get involved in depends on the type of illegitimate opportunity structure that exists in the area in which they live. Cloward and Ohlin identify three types of illegitimate opportunity structure that produce three very distinct types of deviant or criminal subcultures. Firstly, criminal subcultures may recruit young people into organised criminal gangs in which they serve an apprenticeship of crime and are given the opportunity to ‘impress’ their superiors and to move up a criminal hierarchy. Secondly, in some inner city areas, young people will be ‘pressed-ganged’ into the conflict subcultures, that is, the territorial street gangs that thrive in deprived urban areas such as inner-London. Thirdly, if young people fail to gain access to either criminal or conflict subcultures, they may form retreatist subcultures, in which the major activities are recreational drug use.

Walter Miller presents an alternative subcultural theory in which he claims that working-class youth behave in a delinquent or criminal way because they are exaggerating behaviour which is valued by working-class culture, which they have learned from male adult role models. Miller refers to these working-class values as ‘focal concerns’ and claims that the ‘acting out’ of concerns, such as a heightened sense of masculinity and the belief that violence is a legitimate problem-solving device, brings working-class youth into confrontation with authority figures such as teachers and police officers. Miller dismisses the idea that delinquency is caused by strain or status frustration. Rather he argues it is merely an expression of a deviant working-class culture which functions to compensate for the boredom of school and factory work.

However, Cohen’s theory is still very relevant today because studies of the social backgrounds of rioters and looters convicted after the 2011 London riots clearly show disproportionate educational failure. Pitts’ study of gangs also showed an obsession with status or respect/disrespect which is probably responsible for the high level of gun and knife crime that exists as part of territorial gang violence, especially among Black youths, in London today.

However, labelling theory argues that media and police stereotyping is a major cause of deviant subcultures. It is argued by Lambert that police officers stereotype or label young people as more criminal than other social groups. Moreover, labelling theory also argues that youth crime is socially constructed by the mass media who manufacture moral panics about youth activity. This stereotyping results in the demonisation of young people. They become folk devils. Labelling theory argues that this police and media stereotyping results in the police stopping and arresting young people more often than other
age-groups. This stigmatisation of young people allegedly creates a self-fulfilling prophecy and deviancy amplification as young people react resentfully to this negative treatment by forming delinquent and criminal subcultures or gangs.

In contrast, Marxist subculturalists like Phil Cohen and Tony Jefferson have suggested that the appearance of deviant youth subcultures such as teddy boys and skinheads are a form of symbolic, albeit temporary, resistance to the dominant adult value system shaped by middle-class and capitalist values as well as a protest about the radical economic changes that were being forced on the working-class by capitalism. However, Marxist subcultural theory can also be criticised. Firstly, it is likely that deviant youth styles and cultures are the product of a range of influences, e.g. the mass media, moral panics, pop culture, the fashion industry, the USA etc. There is little evidence that skinheads and other youth groups viewed themselves as class warriors. They also fail to account for why the majority of working-class youth did not involve themselves in such subcultures.

In recent years, right realists such as Charles Murray argued that the welfare state has encouraged a welfare dependency subculture or underclass consisting chiefly of the long term unemployed and single parents, particularly in inner-cities. Fatherless families and a culture of idleness are blamed for group values that encourage crime as an alternative to working for a living. However, critics like Charlesworth argue that there is no evidence that an underclass with a distinctive value system separate to that of mainstream society actually exists.

Left realist writers such as Young and Lea suggest that some sections of youth feel relatively deprived compared with their better-off peers because of factors such as inequality, poverty, unemployment, racism, etc. Moreover, they feel marginalised or powerless to change their situation. These feelings of deprivation and powerlessness create frustration, anger, hostility towards the police and society among young people etc. that may express itself through riots and street crime. Some youth may turn to subcultures – these may be positive and offer status through conventional and legitimate means (e.g. church groups) or negative and award status for delinquent and criminal behaviour. However, the left realists have conducted little research and consequently there is little evidence that such subcultures exist or that membership of gangs is based on feelings of relative deprivation or powerlessness.

Sewell argues that young Black boys living in the inner city turn to crime as a result of a triple quandary. Firstly, because they lack fathers in their lives, they are easily influenced by older and more deviant boys. Secondly, they resent white society because they see racism to be part and parcel of their daily lives. Thirdly, they form territorial subcultures or gangs whose value systems see status or respect as wrapped up in materialism, masculinity and violence. Sewell suggests these factors are fuelling the recent increase in black on black violence in urban areas in the UK.

As we can see, then, the concept of subcultures is an important one in understanding crime and deviance, and has been used by a range of sociological theories. However, it is a concept that has mainly been used to explain why poorer groups commit crime and consequently it could be argued that these theories downplay subcultures of criminality among the middle and ruling classes too.

### A-level Exam practice

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1. Gender seems to have a major impact on subject choice at school as well as in further and higher education. Feminists have drawn attention to stereotypical subject choices and the under-representation of females studying physics and maths at A-level and their over-representation in A-level subjects such as English literature, sociology and psychology. It is believed that these gendered subject choice are also impacting on choices of degree courses which in turn may be partly responsible for women’s under-representation in well-paid jobs. For example, women are less likely to study engineering and maths at university but they are more likely than males to be studying for degrees in arts and humanities subjects. It is believed that these gendered subject choices may negatively impact on the entry of adult males and females into the job market and may be partly responsible for both the glass ceiling and pay gap experienced by women in employment.

2. Many educational policies since the 1980s have been aimed at creating an educational free market. A key idea of the New Right approach to education is that the best way to deliver educational services is through the free market. The New Right views state provision of services as expensive and wasteful and unresponsive to consumer demand. The New Right influenced the Conservative government’s introduction of the Education Reform Act in 1988. This Act was probably the most important re-organisation of education in England and Wales since 1944. It aimed to introduce competition, diversity and
choice as well as to raise educational standards. The key to the Act was introducing a market in education. It had four important consequences. Firstly, it extended parental choice via open enrolment and introduced the notion of a parentocracy. Secondly, it created diversity in secondary education provision. Thirdly, it introduced a national curriculum. Fourthly, it attempted to create free market competition between schools by introducing league tables and Ofsted inspections.

The 1988 Act also led to the government publishing league tables every year from 1992 onwards which ranked schools in terms of exam results. The intention was to promote competition between schools which it was believed would raise standards. The most important effect of the 1988 Act was to encourage schools to be more like businesses competing for customers – parents and pupils. Schools were expected to produce marketing brochures and prospectuses to sell themselves, while parents were expected to use league tables and Ofsted reports to choose high-performing schools. Those schools which attracted the most pupils would receive the best funding and be able to recruit the best teachers, thus driving standards further up in those schools.

Supporters of the Education Reform Act argued that it did improve educational standards which had been sliding since the introduction of the comprehensive system in the 1960s. However, critics of marketisation claim that some schools actually spent large sums of money on marketing rather than the education of their pupils. Ball suggests educational markets are unfair because highly educated parents are more likely to have greater knowledge of the choices available to their children. They also have more social capital than poorer parents. This means that middle-class parents are more likely to know the ‘right’ people from whom they can seek relevant advice and guidance. They also have the money to buy private tuition for their children to supplement state education and they can afford to buy houses in the catchment area of high achieving state schools. In contrast, working-class parents are less able to make informed choices because they lack money plus social and cultural forms of capital. A study by Gewirtz et al seems to confirm this picture. She studied 14 London schools and found that the parentocracy supposedly encouraged by the 1988 Act was a myth because parental power was not equally distributed across all parents. Middle-class parents have more power than working-class parents to choose schools because they are able to use their economic, cultural and especially social capital to ensure that their children entered the ‘best’ schools.

The 1988 Act was also criticised because popular schools quickly filled up thus restricting parental choice. The best schools ‘creamed off’ the most academic pupils and created a ‘two-tier’ educational system, leaving schools situated lower in the league tables to hoover up the pupils not wanted by the top schools. High achieving schools were often over-subscribed. Ball argues that parental choice was often secondary in importance because schools were often allowed to select their pupils. There is some evidence that such schools preferred to select middle-class children because their parents had the economic and cultural capital to support their children. Working-class pupils, on the other hand, may find that they are a less attractive option for selective schools. Critics therefore point out that it is middle-class parents and pupils who have benefitted the most from marketisation and consequently marketisation has widened class inequalities in achievement. For example, the number of working-class students going to university has only slightly increased compared with a much larger increase in the number of middle-class undergraduates.

The educational policy of New Labour which was in power between 1997–2010 was also influenced by the New Right’s emphasis on marketisation, competition, parental choice and their alleged effect of raising educational standards. Labour continued to encourage the marketisation of education by introducing specialist schools and academies and they continued the regime of testing, Ofsted inspections and the publication of league tables. They also introduced performance targets for schools.

However, in criticism Stephen Ball argues that middle-class parents and pupils benefitted the most from Labour’s expansion of academies. Ball criticises the marketisation of education because it has led to a coherent system of state education being replaced by a haphazard patchwork of academies, free schools and faith schools, providing an uneven and unequal standard of education. He argues that the idea that parents can now exercise greater freedom of choice is an illusion. In reality, parents are more like the customers of water or power companies in that they can choose to change providers but they have no control over those who provide the service. Moreover, how much choice parents have often depends on the region in which they live; for example, there may be more choice in urban areas compared with rural areas.

Finally, Ball has argued that there is a danger that competition between schools in an educational marketplace will narrow the aims of education. Such schools may become ‘exam factories’ aimed only at academic pupils and may exclude...
Plan: The introduction should describe ethnic differences in educational achievement. Try to distinguish between particular ethnic groups. For example, some minority ethnic groups, such as Indian and Chinese pupils, outperform their White counterparts in education, while others such as African-Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils do less well than their White peers. Recently, Bangladeshis have become more and more successful in education, whereas others such as African-Caribbean and Pakistani boys have made less progress. In all ethnic groups (apart from travellers of Irish heritage) girls do better at GCSE than boys.

The focus of the essay should be on school-based factors.

- Paragraph 1 – should focus on the 'Ethnocentric curriculum' - the organisation of knowledge and teaching so that it reflects the culture of the dominant ethnic group and marginalises the cultures of less influential ethnic groups. For example, the curriculum in most British schools focused almost entirely on White culture, history and literature and language and which only pays lip service to ethnic minority culture, for example, through Black History Month. This often fails to recognise the contribution of other nations and cultures in history and science or the part played by troops from British colonies during the Second World War.

- Paragraphs 2-3 – should focus on ‘racialised expectations’ or negative stereotypes/labels held by teachers about ethnic minorities held by some teachers which may mean that such teachers negatively stereotype/label pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and treat them more harshly than White students. You should therefore reference studies by Gillborn and Youdell, Gillborn and Mirza and others.

- Paragraphs 4-5 – should focus on the anti-school subcultures formed by disaffected ethnic minority pupils. Reference should be made to studies by Mirza and Mac an Ghaill.

- Paragraph 6 – general evaluation. For example, Foster, Gomm and Hammersley claim that the research of Gillborn and Youdell has failed to provide evidence of racial discrimination against ethnic minority pupils. Foster et al. also claim that the evidence is limited and often based on unrepresentative samples. Other sociologists argue that race cannot be divorced from social class. It is argued that although the quality of schooling is significant, social background is of much greater impact. Research has found that children from better-off ethnic minority families are three times more likely than their poorer classmates to gain five good GCSEs.

- Paragraphs 7-10 – explore other out-of-school possible causes of minority ethnic underachievement such as:
  - cultural factors – explore Tony Sewell’s ideas about why Black boys underachieve
  - material factors – explore the impact of poverty on achievement
  - Marxism – they argue that many ethnic minority groups are part of the working-class and are subjected to the same structural disadvantages as members of the White working-class.