1 Culture refers to the whole way of life of a society, which includes its values, morals, beliefs, knowledge, norms, traditions, customs, music, language and fashion.

2 Norms shape the way males and females dress – traditionally, females conform to feminine norms with regard to appearance and dress, e.g. they are more likely to have long styled hair and to use cosmetics. They are more likely to wear blouses, skirts, dresses etc. Males generally conform to masculine norms regarding appearance and dress, e.g. they are more likely to wear shirts, trousers, suits, ties etc.

3 The concept of intercultural diversity simply means that cultures differ from one another in terms of their values and norms. What is considered normal in one society may be considered offensive in another.

4 This idea arises from the fact that high culture is associated with wealthy elites who have the power to label their cultural pursuits as having greater value than the cultural pursuits followed by the masses. High culture refers to the cultural products and activities that are allocated exceptionally high status because they supposedly represent humanity’s finest achievements, e.g. art, classical music, opera, ballet, Shakespeare etc. These are thought to be superior to other activities because they supposedly have an improving effect on those who invest in them. In contrast, popular culture refers to those activities enjoyed by the mass of the population, which are viewed – particularly by those who subscribe to high cultural activities – as shallow, dumbed-down, trivial and inferior. These activities involve watching television, going to the cinema, listening to pop music and reading popular fiction such as Harry Potter.

5 In consumer cultures, the mass media and advertising encourage individuals to value materialism and consumerism. Shopping is the major leisure activity and conspicuous consumption – the acquisition of high-status goods and brands – has become a major means of expressing identity.

6 Global culture refers to the growing trend whereby some cultural products and services are becoming universal because they are both produced and marketed globally by transnational corporations. For example, Coca-Cola, McDonald’s, Google, Apple and Amazon are global brands in that their products and services are known, marketed and consumed in most societies across the world.

7 Intracultural diversity has come about because over the last sixty years the UK has become a more culturally diverse society. Intracultural diversity can be illustrated in the UK by regional differences (for example, the Celtic cultures of Scotland, Wales and Ireland differ in some important respects from English culture), class differences (for example, it can be argued that Britain is a class society and that upper-class culture differs significantly from working-class culture), ethnic and religious differences (for example, Britain is made up of a White ethnic majority which exists alongside several ethnic minority groups).

8 A multicultural society is one which contains and tolerates a diversity of ethnic groups living alongside each other.

9 Values are principles or ideas that society believes to be important whereas norms are rules of behaviour accepted by most, which aim to put values into practice. For example, society may value privacy and consequently people agree to abide by the norm of not prying into the behaviour of others, knocking on doors before entering, not reading other people’s mail or diaries etc.

10 A subculture is a minority group of people who share values, norms, beliefs and dress codes which mark them out as different from the dominant mainstream culture which they exist alongside. There is some evidence that within the UK there have existed subcultures based on age, e.g. youth subcultures such as hippies, punks, teddy boys etc, subcultures based on political belief systems such as environmentalism, veganism, feminism and belief in anarchy, religious subcultures such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, Muslims, Sikhs and Jews and culture and ethnic subcultures such as...
the Italian community in Bedfordshire and the Polish community in Nottingham.

11 Popular culture is culture which is mass produced for popular consumption and for profit. For example, pop music or soap operas such as EastEnders on television. It normally aims to entertain rather than to educate. It usually attracts extremely large audiences.

12 A society with many subcultures is said to be culturally diverse.

13 There is evidence of cultural hybridity among the children of immigrants to the UK, especially among young Asians who mix aspects of British culture with elements of Asian culture. For example, Asian teenagers may aspire to and enjoy the same aspects of consumer culture as their White peers but they may also listen to Bhangra, wear henna tattoos and respect their parents’ wishes in terms of traditional dress and arranged marriage. Johal refer to this type of cultural hybridity as ‘Brasian’.

Page 8

1 This refers to social control wielded by non-official groups such as the family and peer group in order to ensure conformity. For example, parents may reward and praise children for ‘good’ behaviour whilst friendship groups may punish those who do not follow the group’s values by excluding them or by bullying them.

2 Feminists believe children are socialised into gender roles through the process of primary socialisation in the family. This is reinforced by secondary agents of socialisation, especially the hidden curriculum of the education system and the mass media’s representation of males and females. Oakley observed that parents engage in canalisation which means channelling children’s interests into toys, games and activities considered to be the norm for their gender. Oakley also notes that parents use gendered language to describe children, for example, ‘pretty’ or ‘princess’ for girls and ‘little man’ or ‘handsome’ for boys.

3 Sociologists reject the idea that gender is the result of nature because if gender roles were biologically determined, men and women would behave in the same way in all societies. However, this is not the case – there are significant cultural variations across the world in gender behaviour.

4 Although people may no longer be going to church on a regular basis or claiming that they have no religion, most people still abide by a moral code which originates with religion. Among ethnic minority groups religious belief and practice is still important and consequently in these communities religion still operates as a powerful social control agency which shapes the behaviour of believers with promises of heaven/paradise and negative sanctions such as hell/damnation if they are wicked or sinful.

5 The hidden curriculum can be defined as the ways in which the routines and organisation of schools, classrooms and teaching shape pupil attitudes and behaviour in order to produce conformity, for example, pupils may have to queue outside classrooms and conform to uniform rules before they are allowed access to the classroom. Marxists argue that the function of these elements of the hidden curriculum is to teach children to follow authority without question and to not question hierarchy.

6 Older forms of media such as tabloid newspapers and magazines may engage in the ‘fat-shaming’ of celebrities, whilst social media users may use ‘trolling’ to show off their disapproval of particular points of view.

7 This is the view of social commentators such as Neil Postman and Sue Palmer who believe that the media and especially social media are now more influential over the behaviour of children and adolescents than their parents. Others argue that post-puberty the peer group exerts more influence over teenagers’ behaviour than their parents.

8 These are children who lack language and social skills because they have been denied regular human contact from a very young age or have supposedly been brought up by wild animals.

9 Peer groups may positively control their members’ behaviour by rewarding them with friendship and punish those who do not follow the group’s values by excluding them or by bullying them.

10 Socialisation refers to the teaching and learning of cultural values and norms whilst social control is the means by which people are reminded of their commitment to culture and have it reinforced.

11 Formal agents of control exist which function to ensure conformity to the law which reflects agreed values and norms which society believes to be so important that punishment should result if members of society do not conform to them. These formal agencies of control include the police, CCTV surveillance, the courts and prisons. In some societies, capital punishment (the death penalty) may be the outcome of not obeying the law. Informal agencies of control such as families, schools, churches, the peer group and workmates function to make sure we conform to everyday norms and values.

12 Secondary socialisation occurs when we come into contact with agencies that exist outside
the family, for example, by reading newspapers, watching the television, listening to the radio, hanging out with friends, going to school etc. It occurs throughout our lives.

13 This view is argued by Postman and Palmer. Postman argues that television has had the most negative effect on childhood because it blurs the distinction between childhood and adulthood because it makes information about sex, money, violence, death and other ‘adult’ matters available to both adults and children. Sue Palmer argues that children are experiencing a toxic childhood because they are being damaged by a diet of junk food and excessive exposure to television and computer games as a result of their parents’ long working hours which are undermining the quality time parents can spend with their children.

Page 20

1 Murray defines the underclass as a minority grouping at the bottom of society. He argues that it includes people who are workshy and happy to be dependent upon state welfare benefits. It also allegedly contains a disproportionate number of teenage single mothers who have allegedly inadequately socialised their children and lost control of them. It is argued that the underclass is responsible for social problems such as rising crime, drug addiction and anti-social behaviour among young people. Murray identified the underclass as a Black problem which was mainly found in the inner city. In the UK, the underclass was associated with problem families whose members were long-term unemployed.

2 Pakulski and Waters (1996) argue that social class is no longer important because in postmodern societies there has been a shift from the production of goods to the consumption of goods. As a result, they argue, people no longer identify with being working or middle class because people no longer share the common unifying experience of full-time work. Consequently social class is no longer imposed upon us and we are free to construct our own identities based on the diversity of choices offered by globalisation, the mass media and consumer culture. Pakulski and Waters argue that postmodern identity is now shaped by consumption of designer brands, consumer logos etc.

3 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 ethnic identity of Asian groups living in the UK. Jacobson and others have found that some young Pakistani-Muslims are adopting a strong Islamic identity in response to the joint US-UK invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, belief in the conspiracy theories that surround 9/11, the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, Islamophobia in the media and so on. 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 identity which is at odds with British identity. Extremist Islamist views are held only by a tiny minority.

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 identity which Johal calls a ‘white mask’ which they use in public spaces such as school to interact and connect with their White peers. Similarly, Ghuman’s research found that Hindu and Sikh children were brought up to respect tradition and to put religious commitment and family honour before their own interests.

Gilroy (1993) argued that African-Caribbean identity could be described as ‘Black Atlantic’ because young Black people in the UK identified with the racism and powerlessness they saw themselves as sharing with their American peers.

4 Feminist sociologists believe gender is socially constructed via gender role socialisation. This means that boys and girls are taught by society to conform to culturally dominant or hegemonic masculine and feminine norms of behaviour. Hegemonic femininity encourages females to be subordinate to men, to see themselves primarily as mothers, to take on without complaint the responsibility for childcare and housework etc. However, evidence suggests that hegemonic femininity is being challenged as 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. Sociologists observe that there now exists a range of feminine identities in the UK including the traditional, culturally dominant version focused on motherhood as well as the breadwinner/career woman, single mother and ladette. Jackson (2006) defines the latter as working-class girls who smoke, drink and swear (like boys or lads) and who...
disrupt lessons in order to be popular and to be considered ‘cool’.

Traditional or hegemonic masculine identity was once bound up with being in paid work, being the family breadwinner and being the head of the family. Hegemonic masculinity went into decline from the 1980s on because of a rise in unemployment brought about by globalisation. In particular, in the late 20th century, men’s status as breadwinners and as heads of the household came under threat as women went out to work and were often the sole breadwinner.

Connell identifies two other forms of masculinity: ‘Subordinate masculinity’ refers to males who demonstrate traits which are the opposites of hegemonic masculinity, for example, ‘gay’ versions of masculinity which have become more socially acceptable. Another example is the metrosexual male who is supposedly meticulous about his grooming and appearance. Some feminists have modified the idea of subordinate masculinity to refer to men who have successfully adapted to a more feminised economic environment by taking more responsibility for housework and childcare as women go out to work and become the main wage-earners. Males who voluntarily choose to stay at home as househusbands or those described as ‘new men’ may be typical of this type of masculinity.

Ageism refers to prejudice and discrimination which is practised against particular age groups, particularly the elderly. Writing off old people as a burden to society or seeing them as useless or decrepit are examples of ageism. Hockey and James found that the elderly in care homes were deliberately kept in a state of dependency whilst Featherstone and Hepworth argue that media images of ageing are often derogatory and condescending although there is some evidence that the media is abandoning such stereotypes as advertisers realise that the elderly have money to spend. However, it is important to realise that young people are often victims of ageism too.

The rise in male unemployment has led to some sociologists such as Mac an Ghaill declaring that males are experiencing a ‘crisis of masculinity’ because they are no longer sure of their masculine identity and role. This ‘crisis’ is allegedly leading to problems such as depression and suicide as traditional men felt emasculated by unemployment.

Mac an Ghaill and Sewell have suggested that one response to this crisis of masculinity has been the emergence of a hyper-masculinity among young males who look to violence and promiscuity as a means of earning respect from their peers. Faludi’s study of a subculture of young American males called the ‘Spur Possee’ observes that young working-class males have responded to this crisis of masculinity by blaming feminism for their troubles and by engaging in sexual violence. She observes that such violence is their only remaining source of power.

Both hegemonic masculinity and femininity have undergone fairly radical change especially with regard to sexuality. Hegemonic versions of both masculinity and femininity stressed that heterosexuality was the norm and that homosexuality and lesbianism were deviant. However, in the 1960s, cultural attitudes towards homosexuality began to shift and homosexual acts between consenting adults over the age of 21 years were decriminalised in the 1960s. The Equality Act 2010 made discrimination on the basis of sexuality (as well as many other identities) unlawful. Gay marriage was made legal in 2014.

There is also evidence that sexual identities are undergoing profound change. In recent years Western society has seen the appearance of transgender identity. In many cultures all over the world there exist gender-fluid identities. For example, UK Facebook users can now choose from one of 71 gender options, including asexual, polygender and two-spirit person. In addition, people who select a custom gender will now have the ability to choose the pronoun they would like to be referred to publicly – male (he/his), female (she/her) or neutral (they/their).

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.

Firstly, they may express their identity by pursuing educational qualifications at university in order to become career-orientated rather than be a mother-housewife. Secondly, they may express their identity by proclaiming their independence from men.

Shakespeare argues that disabled people are disabled by society, particularly by the negative attitudes and stereotypes held by non-disabled people about disabled people. These prejudices create social barriers that discriminate against disabled people and prevent them from leading independent lives. Social barriers include the built environment, which is often more suitable...
for the needs of non-disabled people rather than those with impairments, for example, toilets, access to buildings and transport systems, although this is improving. Employers may be often reluctant to employ people with impairments. This means that disabled people are more likely to be on state benefits and to be living in a state of poverty. There is evidence of widespread bullying of disabled people, that is, ‘hate crimes’ in both care homes and in wider society.

There is evidence that childhood, adolescence and old age are socially constructed because people’s experiences of these life-stages differ according to social class, gender, ethnicity and culture. For example, in some cultures old people are revered for their wisdom and experience. In contrast, in the UK there is evidence that the elderly are generally viewed as a burden and consequently treated very negatively.

A hybrid culture and identity comes about when two very different cultures mix or merge. For example, Johal claims that many educated young Asians subscribed to a dual identity which he terms ‘Brasian’. He suggests they inherit an Asian identity which they predominantly use in their home environment. However, they also adopt a form of identity which Johal calls a ‘white mask’ which they use in public spaces such as school to interact and connect with their White peers.

Back (1996) 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.

Societies too may be hybrid because they may combine the best of global culture with aspects of their localised culture. A good example of this is the Indian film industry which is known as Bollywood – this has combined aspects of Asian culture with the commercial norms of the American or Hollywood film industry. British cultural habits with regard to food and drink are particularly hybridised. For example, the British love Chicken Tikka Masala which combines curry and gravy.

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. In a survey conducted in September 2017, one in four British white people admitted they were racist.

Page 44

1 A household is a person or couple or group of persons who live at a particular address or under the same roof. If it is a group, they need not be related – they might, for example, be students or friends or young professionals who share rented accommodation. However, the majority of households in the UK are made up of families or people who are related to one another by blood or marriage.

2 Firstly, New Right sociologists are critical of one-parent families because they believe that the absence of a father figure or role model results in children experiencing an inferior primary socialisation, therefore, increasing their children’s potential for anti-social behaviour. Secondly, New Right sociologists believe that one-parent families are a symbol of welfare dependency and that some teenage girls are deliberately getting pregnant in order to gain benefits and council houses.

3 People in the UK no longer live in extended families situated under the same roof as most housing is generally designed and built for nuclear families. There is also less need because of the Welfare State for the mutual support system offered by the extended family. Also, because of improved educational and job opportunities, people have experienced both social and geographical mobility and are therefore less likely to live near extended kin.
However, studies do suggest that although people are more likely to live in nuclear families separated by distance from extended kin, they still subscribe to a set of family obligations and duties which lead to nuclear families offering services to extended kin, especially aged parents who may suffer from chronic illness. For example, a daughter might look after an ailing mother or father. Other obligations may become visible as nuclear families visit each other on special occasions such as Christmas or come together at weddings and funerals.

In 1971 the law as regards obtaining a divorce became more straightforward and the process became cheaper. Consequently the number of divorces granted steadily increased throughout the 1970s. Divorce has had five profound effects on family life. Firstly, it has increased the number of single-parent families. These are usually headed by females because family courts tend to award custody rights to mothers rather than fathers. Secondly, the number of reconstituted families or step-families has also increased as divorced people with children remarry. Thirdly, there is some evidence that high divorce rates increase cohabitation as couples choose to live together as a form of dress rehearsal before marriage in order to test for compatibility for one another. There is some evidence that cohabitation before marriage iron out problems that might result in divorce and consequently minimises the possibility of divorce. Fourthly, divorce has probably increased the number of single-person households particularly among those who are middle-aged. Finally, there is some evidence that divorce has contributed to a change in women’s attitudes towards marriage and family life. Pre-1971 the majority of divorces were initiated by husbands. However, today the majority of divorces are initiated by wives who are no longer willing to put up with an empty shell marriage. Overall, there is some evidence that the existence of divorce has heightened individualised expectations of what should be expected of marriage by both men and women.

As Beck has observed, individualisation may become the norm in postmodern society. Living Apart Together [LATs] may reflect our more individualistic society.

Another possible cause is proposed by Giddens who argues that in late-modernity, romantic love has been replaced by a more pragmatic confluent love. Giddens argues that people no longer believe in the romantic ideal of a ‘one and only’ or ‘love for forever’. Rather they believe that relationships are ‘alright for now’. This is because in late-modernity people have much more choice. They are no longer compelled to stay together if a relationship is not working. People now weigh up the pros and cons of a relationship and if it continues, it is because people choose to stay together in their own unique way – together but apart – compared with the past when stigma and community controls forced loveless couples to stay together in empty shell marriages. LATs allow individuals to combine the freedom of living alone with the intimacy of being part of a couple.

In the 21st century, societies like the UK are experiencing a process of individualisation – people are breaking away from traditional rules, taboos and social pressures in order to choose their own family lifestyles and identities. Consequently, society has seen the emergence of ‘families of choice’, in which individuals may choose to include people as family members who are not traditionally related, for example, a cohabiting couple may interpret each other as ‘husband’ and ‘wife’, despite the fact that they are not formally married, or close friends of parents may be adopted as honorary aunts and uncles. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim argue that people now feel they can best fulfil their needs as individuals by pursuing looser, less risky intimate arrangements such as singlehood, cohabitation and living apart together.

Postmodernists such as Stacey argue that the concept of family is too inflexible and judgemental for two reasons. They believe that family life is not about living in a static and unchanging ideal type of family structure. Postmodernists argue that families and households are no longer concrete things that people should strive to attain as argued by functionalist and New Right sociologists. This is because they believe that family life is in a continual state of flux and change. Stacey, for example, believes that there is no such thing as the perfect family because interactions between family members and the family dynamics that result are unique to that group of people.

Serial monogamy refers to the fact that in the 21st century, people over the course of their lives are now more likely to have a series
of long-term monogamous relationships rather than a single relationship that lasts a lifetime.

Firstly, most couples cohabit on average for about four years before marrying. Research shows that about 80 per cent of couples who marry have previously cohabited with each other. Secondly, since the 1990s the number of people aged 16 and above living together outside of marriage has almost doubled from 6.5 per cent in 1996 to 11.7 per cent in 2012.

Firstly, social attitudes towards gay people have relaxed and become more liberal, probably because of the decline in religious beliefs and practices. Secondly, as a result of liberal attitudes, laws have decriminalised homosexuality. For example, in 2014 homosexual marriage was legalised.

The view that cohabitation is a threat to marriage is a New Right idea. New Right sociologists believe that the heterosexual nuclear family underpinned by marriage is the ideal type of family that all should aspire to. The New Right has criticised successive governments for not doing enough to protect the nuclear family and for creating the conditions in which ‘immoral’ alternatives such as cohabitation have been encouraged to emerge. Cohabitation increased by about 30 per cent between 2004 and 2014 and is now recognised by the government as the fastest growing family type in the UK. However the New Right stance on cohabitation can be criticised for four reasons. Firstly, there is evidence from Beaujouan and Ni Bhrolcháin (2011) that cohabitation before marriage may actually strengthen the marital relationship and make it less likely to break down into divorce. Secondly, there is also some evidence that for poorer couples, cohabitation may provide a living arrangement that reflects their economic uncertainty. Young couples with low-paid jobs may choose to cohabit because it helps them to leave the parental home, by sharing living costs such as renting property. Thirdly, marriage is still healthy today. Surveys clearly show that most people see marriage as the ultimate goal and that cohabitation is seen as a rehearsal for marriage rather than as an alternative to it. Finally, the popularity of marriage can also be seen in the number of remarriages. About a third of marriages are undertaken by people whose previous marriage has failed. This experience has clearly not put them off marriage.

Firstly, the major influence on why more women than men file for divorce is the changing role of women in society. 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. They are less likely to be trapped within a loveless empty-shell marriage. Secondly, there is some evidence that the attitudes of women towards marriage have radically changed over the generations. For example, married women today have higher expectations of marriage compared with wives in the past who probably tolerated domestic violence, men’s emotional incompetence and men’s failure to equally share housework and childcare. Evidence suggests that women today see such male behaviour as justifiable grounds for initiating divorce.

The idea that government social policies have damaged or weakened the nuclear family is a New Right idea. The New Right believes that the nuclear ideal is under attack and in threat of extinction because of government social policy which has encouraged the emergence of alternative lifestyles such as cohabitation, homosexuality and same-sex marriage, divorce and single-parent families. The New Right has criticised successive governments for not doing enough to protect the nuclear family and for creating the conditions in which ‘immoral’ alternatives have been encouraged to emerge. For example, governments have been criticised for creating ‘problem’ families who as part of an ‘underclass’ have encouraged their children to underachieve at school, to avoid paid work and to be dependent on benefits, to engage in criminality and to disrespect authority. Such families have been blamed for inner-city riots, youth unemployment, street gangs and teenage pregnancy. Murray, for example, believes that the welfare state is causing the disintegration of the nuclear family because he alleges that benefits encourage teenage pregnancy and single-parent families who lose control of their children. However, this New Right view has been heavily criticised by feminist sociologists who argue that that most social policy has largely supported the patriarchal nuclear family. Feminists claim that family social policy has largely confined women to the home, by confirming that they should take prime responsibility for children, and ensured that women do not challenge men for jobs, income and power. The New Right are also accused by Bernardes of portraying a picture of family life that is ‘too good to be true’. It also fails to acknowledge the negative side of the family, for example, the effects of divorce, violence, abuse, poverty and so on.

Demographic changes refer to changes in the birth, fertility, death and migration rates which affect population growth. Firstly, sociologists
have observed that both birth and fertility rates in the UK have fallen. This has had the following effects on the family. Families have become smaller over the past one hundred years. The modern-day nuclear family averages about two children compared with the Victorian family which averaged between five to six children. Furthermore, there has been an increase in the number of childless or childfree couples and single-female households as women choose to not to have children as a lifestyle choice. Thirdly, children in 2014 are less likely to have siblings compared with children in 1964 because women are having children at a much later age compared with their mothers and grandmothers. This has led to an increase in what Brannen calls ‘beanpole’ families.

The decline of the death rate has led to increasing life expectancy and an ageing population which has affected the family in several ways. For example, the number of extended families may grow as children care for and support elderly relatives as their physical and mental health deteriorates.

Elderly relatives may move into the homes of their children because they may not have the economic resources to go into private residential care homes. There is also likely to be a growth in the number of single-person households composed of elderly women because they live longer than males. Thirdly, there may be more qualitative and enriching contact between grandparents and their grandchildren which result in more positive experiences of socialisation as grandparents pass on life-lessons. One in three families in 2017 rely on grandparents to provide some kind of childcare on a weekly basis.

Migration has contributed greatly to family diversity in three main ways. Firstly, Asian families are more likely than White families to feel obliged to support extended kin. Such families strongly socialise their families into religious values. Marriage is highly valued and arranged marriages are still relatively popular. Cohabitation is, however, rare, while divorce is regarded with shame. Secondly, African-Caribbean communities have a higher proportion of one-parent families compared with White communities – over 50 per cent of African-Caribbean families with children are one-parent families. Thirdly, African-Caribbeans are more likely than any other ethnic minority group to inter-marry with members of another ethnic group, especially White people. Ali observes that such marriages result in inter-ethnic families and mixed-race (sometimes called ‘dual heritage’) children.

There are three feminist approaches to the family. Radical feminists are very critical of the nuclear family because they argue that patriarchy is rooted in the family and that patriarchal ideology (the idea that men are dominant and women are subordinate and that this is normal and natural and therefore, men and women are suited to different roles) is taught to children during gender role socialisation. Marxist feminism, Benston, in particular, claims that women’s labour in the family is exploited by capitalism in order to increase profit and wealth. Liberal feminists observe that women have come a long way since Victorian times. They no longer have to be economically dependent on men and they have acquired much the same set of legal and political rights as men, for example, most divorces today are initiated by women. They are very critical of both Marxist and radical versions of feminism because Liberals such as Somerville claim that they fail to acknowledge the progress made by women in modern societies such as the UK and fail to observe that the choices available to women today are probably responsible for the diversity of household and family types in the UK. On the plus side, feminism has strongly contributed to our understanding of the patriarchal nature of the family by investigating gender role socialisation, the domestic division of labour, marriage, domestic violence and so on.

Page 53

1. Functionalist such as Talcott Parsons see men and women in families as equal but different. Parsons, for example, sees men as ‘instrumental leaders’ who are biologically best suited to the role of breadwinner, while he describes women as ‘expressive leaders’ who are best suited to an emotional role as nurturers responsible for primary socialisation and stabilising their husband’s personality.

2. Firstly, within the symmetrical family domestic labour is shared between the spouses. Joint conjugal roles are the norm. Secondly, the symmetrical family is very home-centred because technology such as television has made the home a more attractive place in which to spend time. Consequently spouses often spend their leisure time together.

3. Feminists are critical of the idea that marriage and the distribution of domestic labour are egalitarian and that joint conjugal roles are shared because the hard evidence from sociological studies does not support Wilmott and Young’s ideas. For example, Oakley carried
out a study on housewives in the 1970s and found that only 15 per cent of husbands in her study demonstrated a high level of participation in housework. This rose to only 25 per cent in childcare. More modern studies suggest little has changed. For example, Gershuny used a ‘time budgeting’ approach to record how much time women spend on domestic labour compared with men. He asked both men and women to keep a time diary documenting how much time they spent on household and childcare. He found that women, despite holding down jobs, were often responsible for 60 per cent of domestic work. Feminists have also concluded 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 still largely responsible for the bulk of housework and childcare. 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.

In the 1970s the UK underwent profound changes as particular industries such as coal-mining, shipbuilding and manufacturing, which mainly employed men, went into decline because of globalisation. Male unemployment increased quite dramatically. However, other service sectors of the economy, particularly the education and health sectors, the financial sector and retail expanded. Most of the new jobs available in these sectors targeted females. Consequently, the workforce became feminised as both married and single women went out to work in unprecedented numbers. This had a number of effects on family life.

Firstly, there is evidence from Sharpe that young women saw education and a career as more important than settling down and starting a family. We can see this change in attitude reflected in a number of trends; the age at which females got married increased; women started to have fewer children; women started having children later in their lives; some women chose to be childfree and to live independently of men in single-person households.

The most obvious effect of the feminisation of the workforce on the organisation of the family is that families got smaller in terms of the number of children they contained. It became quite common for families to only have one or two children, leading to what Brannen calls the beanpole family. Another effect of the feminisation of the workforce was a rise in family living standards as both spouses were earning in this dual-career family. However, feminists argue that there have been some negative effects too. They would argue that the working mother often carries a dual or triple burden in that she works outside the home for wages, yet is still mainly responsible for the bulk of domestic and emotional labour in the home. There is also evidence that men may view the fact they are unemployed and that their wife is supporting them as emasculating. This ‘crisis of masculinity’ may even lead to domestic violence and divorce, and single-parent families.

One trend identified by sociologists such as Young and Wilmott was the decline in male sectors of employment and the rise in the number of female service sector jobs which resulted in record numbers of women going out to work for the first time. It was argued by Young and Wilmott that men began to take on a fairer share of domestic labour to support their working wives.

Secondly, there is evidence from surveys conducted by sociologists such as Sharpe that young women no longer see themselves primarily as wives and mothers and now expect more from marriage than previous generations of women. For example, they expect men to play a more active part in childcare and housework.

Sociologists such as Young and Wilmott argue that most nuclear families are symmetrical. This means that husbands and wives supposedly share childcare and housework and that their domestic division of labour is egalitarian. However, Feminists argue that egalitarian marriage is probably not the norm. 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 still largely responsible for the bulk of housework and childcare. Gershuny, for example, found women, despite holding down jobs, were often responsible for 60 per cent of domestic work.

Postmodernists point to the diverse nature of families and their domestic arrangements. For example, they argue that the domestic arrangements of heterosexual married couples cannot be generalised to other family arrangements such as gay families or one-parent families. Gillian Dunne’s study of 37 cohabiting lesbian couples with dependent children found evidence of symmetry in how they organised their domestic division of labour. She found that both partners gave equal importance to each other’s careers and viewed childcare positively. However, she did find that where one partner did much more paid work than the other, the time that each partner spent on domestic work was likely to be unequal.
Man Yee Kan (2008) found that middle-class women do less housework than their working-class counterparts because they can afford to employ others to do the work for them. Berthoud (2001) found that patriarchal ideas about men and women’s roles in families meant that conjugal roles and the domestic division of labour in Asian households were segregated along traditional lines. Roberts suggests that there may be age diversity in domestic arrangements. Younger couples are more likely to share housework and childcare compared with older generations. However, stay-at-home dads or househusbands are still relatively rare in the UK. The Office for National Statistics estimated that there were only 200,000 househusbands in 2007.

Dysfunctional families are essentially ‘problem’ families that belong to a so-called ‘underclass’. New Right sociologists such as Charles Murray have criticised successive governments for not doing enough to protect the nuclear family and for creating the conditions in which ‘immoral’ alternatives have been encouraged to emerge. For example, governments have been criticised for creating ‘problem’ families who are part of an ‘underclass’ which supposedly encourages its children to underachieve at school, to avoid paid work, to be dependent on benefits, to engage in criminality and to disrespect authority. Such families have been blamed for inner-city riots, youth unemployment, street gangs, teenage pregnancy and for rising crime.

The absence of extended kin means that if a married couple within a nuclear family fall out, relatives are not there to mediate and intervene or to give advice and guidance on how to deal with the problem. Secondly, if the nuclear family lives away from extended kin there may be no-one picking up on signs of unhappiness, abuse or domestic violence and therefore, no intervention from extended kin.

This idea is associated with the work of Aries. He argues that until the mid-19th century children worked alongside adults in the factories, mills and mines and were not regarded as particularly special or as in need of protection from adults. In other words, childhood was not regarded as a unique status that was different from adulthood. Children were often subjected to the same treatment as adults. Childhood as we know it today did not start to emerge until the mid-19th century when the state excluded children from working full-time in mines, mills and factories. In 1880, education became compulsory for children in England, which prevented children going out to work.

Sociologists argue that childhood as we know it today, as a separate, distinct and special period of dependence and as a special period of innocence which children are regarded as having fundamentally different needs from adults, is largely a 20th-century invention.

10 Firstly, state education is compulsory between the ages of 5 years and 18 years. Secondly, there are laws protecting children from unscrupulous adults. Children are banned from full-time paid jobs and from taking part in adult activities such as sex (the State has set the legal age of sexual consent at 16) as well as smoking and drinking.

11 The inequality in power between parents and children is referred to by sociologists as ‘age patriarchy’. Age patriarchy means that children only have limited opportunities to earn money and so they are still economically dependent on their parents for food, shelter, clothing and so on. It also means that parents exercise controls over their children’s time – adults in modern society control children’s daily routines, including the times when they get up, eat, go to school, come home, go out, play, watch television and sleep. Age patriarchy also means that parents control the speed at which children ‘grow up’. It is they who decide whether a child is too old or too young for this or that activity, responsibility or behaviour. Parents also exercise control over children’s bodies. For example, how they sit, walk and run, what they wear and their hairstyles. It is taken for granted that children’s bodies may be touched in certain ways by certain adults; they are washed, fed and dressed, have their heads patted and hands held, are picked up, cuddled and kissed. At the same time, adults restrict the ways in which children may touch their own bodies. For example, a child may be told not to pick their nose or suck their thumb.

12 Improved life expectancy now means that grandparents play a greater role than ever in the lives of their grandchildren. There is a growing recognition that families benefit from the presence of grandparents and that the interaction between grandparents and grandchildren is more qualitative compared with the past. This is because today grandparents live longer and are more healthy and active compared with the previous generation. Consequently they can make a significant contribution to the parenting and socialisation process. A study carried out by the insurance company RIAS in 2012 estimated that 5.8 million grandparents currently look after their grandchildren regularly for an average of ten hours a week, and this represents 47 per cent of the nation’s grandparents aged over 50. This amounts to a saving of nearly...
In Jewish culture the bar-mitzvah ceremony is an important rite of passage that indicates the change of status from boy to man. In the UK an 18th birthday may symbolically mark adulthood although as recently as 30 years ago youth was seen to give way to adulthood at the age of 21. However, Chambers notes three negative trends. Firstly, she observes that some grandparents are still in employment or may lead very active social lives and consequently lack the time to play an active role in their grandchildren’s lives. Secondly, grandparents may not live locally and may not be in a position to offer support. Thirdly, she observes that divorce may mean that some grandchildren may have lost contact with their grandparents.

Page 63

1 A social construct is something that is manufactured or created by society rather than being a natural outcome of biology.

2 In Jewish culture the bar-mitzvah ceremony is an important rite of passage that indicates the change of status from boy to man. In some pre-industrial societies girls may be married off at puberty whilst in some tribes boys may be decorated with ceremonial tattoos or scars to mark their new status as adults. In the UK an 18th birthday may symbolically mark adulthood although as recently as 30 years ago youth was seen to give way to adulthood at the age of 21.

3 The ‘teenager’ or youth as we know it today emerged as a distinct social category in the 1950s when rising wages meant that young people had more disposable income to spend and a pop-culture orientated youth industry selling commodities such as music, fashion, cosmetics and magazines developed in reaction to this.

4 Some sociologists argue that there is a generation gap because children are exposed to adult influences such as pop culture far too early and this is having a corrupting influence on their attitudes and behaviour. For example, Postman complains that the media and fashion industry is guilty of sexualising female children by encouraging them to emulate adults in dress, cosmetics, body image and so on. The appearance of spectacular youth subcultures reinforced this generation gap idea because their behaviour created some social anxiety in society and media speculation about their perceived lack of respect for traditional authority. However, Functionalists such as Eisenstadt suggest that youth subcultures function as a temporary means of ‘letting off steam’. This means that young people are generally happy to eventually take on adult roles and responsibilities.

5 The Neo-Marxist sociologist Dick Hebdige (1979) studied punk rockers. He firstly looked for the meanings behind the clothes that punks wore, for example, they would often include symbols such as the Union Jack flag and the Nazi Swastika as part of their clothing. Female punks would routinely dress in sexual bondage gear. Secondly, Hebdige observed that punks would re-use ordinary objects or commodities to create new meanings. For example, they often stuck safety pins through their noses or employed razor blades as earrings whilst female punks would wear sexual use bin-liners as a form of clothing in order to deliberately shock and resist mainstream society and the establishment.

6 Parsons saw youth as a social category which acts as a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood. He recognised that youth is also potentially a very stressful and isolating period because the young are expected to negotiate the very difficult and uncertain path from dependence to independence and adult responsibility. This transition from childhood to adulthood is fraught with tension and consequently it has the potential to undermine young people’s commitment to consensus and integration, and therefore social order. Eisenstadt claimed that the role or function of youth culture is to socially integrate young people into society. Youth culture provides young people with a set of values and norms that they can share with their peers and consequently a sense of belonging to a common cause or outlook. He concluded that youth culture provides a safe and tolerable context in which young people can release the stress and frustration caused by the uncertainty involved in the journey from childhood to adulthood.

7 A subculture is a social group that exists within a broader mainstream culture (for example, British culture) and which subscribes to a set of values, norms and traditions which substantially differ from that followed by the majority. Subcultures may be visible and spectacular in the way they dress and behave. Youth
subcultures such as teddy boys, punks, goths and hipsters are examples of youth subcultures. Some subcultures may be based on ethnicity and religions such as Jews and Muslims. Some may be political, for example, hacktivists and anarchist squatters.

8 Postmodernists believe that youth subcultures have been brought about by features of postmodern society such as globalisation and the rapid expansion of digital media, especially social media which have promoted greater choices in lifestyle and more fluidity especially hybridity, which have supposedly reduced the influence of traditional sources of youth identity and culture, such as social class, gender and ethnicity. Postmodernists such as Maffesoli prefer to use the term ‘neo-tribes’ rather than youth subcultures because members of these groups are usually concerned with single-issues and are loosely attached rather than committed to a subcultural style. Moreover, young people are often simultaneously involved with more than one tribe, for example, modern primitives might also immerse themselves in a hacktivist subculture. Bennett’s study of Newcastle night-life found neo-tribes based around fashion, music and lifestyle. People moved in and out of these tribes and rarely identified with one rather than another.

9 Cultural appropriation refers to members of more powerful cultures stealing elements of less powerful cultures. For example, dreadlocks are viewed by the Rastafarian religion as a symbol of Black African pride and a form of resistance to White racism with regard to standards of beauty. The adoption of dreadlocks by some White neo-tribes such as travellers can be seen as a form of cultural appropriation.

10 Firstly, migration has brought many ethnic minority groups such as African and Polish people to the UK. People who belong to ethnic minority groups are normally attracted to areas in which people of similar ethnicity live, work and worship. In some Eastern parts of England, such as Boston in Lincolnshire, distinctive Polish and Portuguese subcultures are very visible. Bedford has a very distinctive Italian subculture. Secondly, alongside the Christian and secular majority there exist very visible religious subcultures such as the Muslim, Sikh, Rastafarianism and Orthodox Judaism.

11 First of all, the UK is made up of four very distinctive national subcultures; the English, the Welsh, the Scots and the Irish, who all subscribe to very distinct and unique values and norms. Secondly, Britain is a multicultural society – immigration has resulted in dozens of different ethnic minority and religious subcultures settling in the UK. Thirdly, Britain is a class society – upper-class subculture differs considerable from that of the middle and working-classes. Fourthly, young people tend to participate in subcultures which are very different from those of their elders. Finally, subcultures in the UK are likely to be hybrid subcultures because of the influence of multiculturalism and the rapid spread and use of digital social media and technology.

12 Postmodernists argue that social class no longer has a great influence on subculture. Instead they argue that young people in particular are more likely to be members of subcultures which are based on the conspicuous consumption of designer labels and fashion. Another postmodern argument suggests that via the global media there exists a ‘supermarket of style’ from which young people can pick and choose when constructing their identity. This means commitment to one style is less common, for example, individuals may construct their identity by combining future and retro styles. A range of subcultural styles may be plundered and put together to create a postmodern hybrid form of identity and style.

13 According to Thornton there are two reasons why youth subcultures are dominated by males. First, girls were less likely to be involved in spectacular youth subcultures because they had less disposable income than their male counterparts. Secondly, girls generally devoted more time and energy to doing well at school compared with boys.
monetary success and materialism. However, they found their route to these goals blocked by racism and poverty, and turned to violent gangs as an alternative route to acquiring status and material success. Marxist sociologists argue that like White people, Black people join territorial street gangs because the criminogenic nature of capitalism encourages such criminal behaviour. The neo-Marxist Paul Gilroy argues that some young Black people may be motivated to join territorial street gangs as a political act, as a form of protest against the injustice of the institutional racism that exists in both society and the police. Walter Miller blames focal concerns - deviant characteristics of lower-class groups into which children are socialised by inadequate parenting. Miller claims that these focal concerns include a heightened sense of masculinity that encourages young males to prove to other young men their toughness. Miller also argues that focal concerns lead to a craving for excitement, risk and thrills which are satisfied by gang membership. Finally, the Left Realists Lea and Young suggest deviant subcultures result from two important social processes: relative deprivation and marginalisation. The former refers to young people feeling resentful because they do not have access to resources taken for granted by their peers. The latter refers to feeling powerless and discriminated against. This may lead to disaffection which is compensated for by joining territorial street gangs. There are also other more simplistic reasons why boys join gangs. They may be forced by violence or threats to themselves or their families. They may therefore feel peer pressure to get involved. They may enjoy the feeling of camaraderie or solidarity which gang membership brings them.

Mac an Ghaill argues that some working-class boys interpret school as threatening their families. They may therefore feel peer pressure to get involved. They may enjoy the feeling of camaraderie or solidarity which gang membership brings them.

Jackson found evidence of girls' involvement in anti-school cultures. However, she observed that such girls acted up in a 'ladish' way: they smoked, swore, acted 'hard' and openly talked about their sex lives. They believed it was cool to be clever but not to work hard. These working-class girls, consequently under achieved. Similarly, Blackman uncovered evidence of a female anti-school subculture known as the New Wave Girls. This group resisted school expectations and traditional stereotypes about femininity. However, they were anti-school rather than anti-education. Most were applying to university. They mainly objected to the school's attempt to stereotype them according to gender.

It is argued by interactionist or labelling sociologists that the official statistics are socially constructed by police prejudice and discriminatory behaviour. They argue that racial profiling or labelling underpins police officers' decisions to stop young Black and Asian people. Consequently, official police stop and search statistics in 2011 showed that African-Caribbean young males are eight times more likely to be stopped and searched than young White males. The statistics therefore only give us insight into police behaviour and attitudes rather than criminality.

Cloward and Ohlin suggest young people may become involved in retreatist subcultures if they fail to gain access to either criminal or conflict subcultures. These retreatist subcultures are often organised around recreational drug use, for example, heroin addicts may work with another to commit petty crime in order to raise the cash to buy drugs.

Mugging or street robbery and burglary.

Albert Cohen argued that young people yearn for status and respect. He argued that working-class youth (who are less likely than middle-class youth to be supported by their parents) are more likely to be written off by their teachers and placed in bottom streams in school where they find it difficult to achieve status. Working-class youth therefore experience a strain between their immediate goal of wanting status and the means of achieving it – school. These processes, according to Cohen, lead to 'status frustration'. They compensate for this strain and frustration by becoming increasingly hostile towards their school and their teachers. They turn the value system of the school upside down and award status to one another for committing anti-school and delinquent acts.

Cohen's ideas are supported by Carl Nightingale who studied young Black males in the USA and found they subscribed like everyone else to the
goals of monetary success and materialism. However, they found their route to these goals blocked by racism and poverty and turned to violent crime as an alternative route to material success.

However, Miller (1958) rejects Cohen’s ideas and argues that delinquency and crime committed by working-class youth are rooted in the values and norms of working-class subculture. Miller argues that this culture has deviant characteristics which he calls focal concerns such as toughness which result in delinquent activities and trouble with the law. Cohen is also criticised because most working-class boys actually conform at school. Moreover, even when they leave school with few qualifications and little hope of a decent job or career, most do not break the law or join gangs. Marxists suggest that Cohen should be asking why young men who have been so badly treated by society actually conform most of the time to the rules of both school and society. Feminists are critical of Cohen because his theory of status frustration ignores working-class girls. He may therefore be guilty of being gender-blind and assuming that crime and deviance are mainly a male phenomenon.

Most sociological research on anti-school subcultures has found that they are mainly male. For example, Mac an Ghaill (1994) focused on a male anti-school culture called the ‘macho lads’ who valued fighting, football and sex. These boys interpreted school as threatening their masculine identity and bullied more academic boys, whom they dismissed as ‘gay’ or girl-like. Members of this group were hostile to school authority and learning because they expected a future of unemployment and consequently did not see the point of school.

Secondly, some of these anti-school subcultures may not be anti-education. For example, Blackman uncovered evidence of a female anti-school subculture known as the New Wave Girls. This group resisted school expectations and traditional stereotypes about femininity. However, they were anti-school rather than anti-education. Most were applying to university. They mainly objected to the school’s attempt to stereotype them according to gender.

Campbell claims that boys express their masculinity through the type of deviant behaviour exhibited by anti-school subcultures. It is argued that a number of factors, particularly globalisation which has resulted in the decline of manufacturing industry and a steep rise in male unemployment, have created a crisis of masculinity by denying boys and men access to legitimate masculine status through academic success or employment and the breadwinner role. Mac an Ghaill found that the male anti-school subculture he observed were hostile to school authority and learning because they expected a future of unemployment and consequently did not see the point of school.

Interactionist theories of anti-school subcultures generally blame their formation on teacher behaviour, especially teacher stereotyping or labelling of working-class White and Black males. It is argued that these negative labels are internalised by pupils who react by acting up to the label, that is, they mess about in class and underachieve. This is known as a self-fulfilling prophecy. However, Paul Willis famously rejected this idea. His study challenged the idea that teacher labelling was responsible for the formation of anti-school subcultures. The lads in his study chose not to subscribe to the educational value system of the school. This was because they wanted the types of semi-skilled jobs available in the local car factory that their fathers and brothers had and which did not require qualifications. In this sense, they viewed school as a waste of their time and teacher labels as irrelevant.

Focal concerns are a concept associated with Walter Miller. He argued that working-class culture contained deviant characteristics or focal concerns which give meaning to the lives of working-class males outside of work and school. These focal concerns include a heightened sense of masculinity, an acceptance that violence is a part of life and that working-class boys need to be able to look after themselves and a craving for excitement, risk and thrills. Living out these focal concerns is likely to bring youth into negative contact with authority, for example, teachers and the police. However, Miller has been criticised because he provides little evidence that these focal concerns are characteristics which are unique to working-class people or culture.

Most sociological accounts of crime and delinquency, for example, Cohen and Miller, have only focused on male delinquency. However, recent research suggests that violence committed by young females may be on the increase, although Burman points out that it still only makes up a tiny fraction of total violence. Feminist research suggests that females avoid crime and delinquency because they are subjected to greater controls from both their parents and their peers. For example, Lees observes that girls fear attracting a ‘bad reputation’ and may see crime as unfeminine. It may also be the case that female deviance is less likely to come to public attention because police officers do not profile females as potentially criminal in the way that they do.
It is not usually possible for a researcher to collect data from every person in the population they are studying, for practical and financial reasons. Usually, the sociologist has to make do with selecting a smaller number (a sample) which is representative of the wider population the researcher is interested in. The smaller sample should have much the same characteristics as the wider population. If the sample is truly representative of the wider population, the researcher will probably want to generalise from the data collected. In other words, they will want to say that certain behaviour or attitudes found in the sample are typical of the wider population, that what is true of the smaller group is probably also true of the larger group.

Firstly, positivist sociological research aims to achieve value freedom or objectivity. This means that the sociologist should carry out research and interpret evidence with an open mind, setting aside their own prejudices, values and political and religious beliefs.

Secondly, positivists believe that sociology is a science and that sociological research should be scientific, that is, it should adopt the logic and methods of the natural sciences.

Quantitative data refers to statistical or numerical data that can be converted into tabular or graphical information. Such data has comparative value because it can be observed for patterns, trends, correlations and so on, and used to establish cause and effect relationships in order to deduce ‘facts’ about human behaviour. It is preferred by positivist sociologists but is seen as lacking in validity for various reasons by interpretivist sociologists.

Qualitative data, which is preferred by interpretivist sociologists, is data which often comes in word rather than numerical form. It is regarded as richer in detail and validity than statistical data. It is usually presented in word form, for example, those being researched may be quoted verbatim in the form of an interview transcript or their observed behaviour may be described in depth by the observer. Such data is normally presented in the words of those being researched and consequently lets research subjects speak for themselves. Positivists, however, see this type of data as resulting from unreliable methods.

Interpretivists believe that positivist research methods such as questionnaires and structured interviews are artificial and alien and consequently people may feel threatened by the research and/or researcher and consequently may be tempted to give false or inauthentic answers. Researchers may also ask the wrong questions or fail to provide a range of experiences embodied in boxes the research subjects are asked to tick. In a sense, the researcher has already decided what is important by inventing a series of questions and answers. These may bear no similarity to the actual experience of the research subjects and consequently the data collected may be low in validity.

Interpretivists are also very keen on reflexivity. This refers to the process by which sociologists periodically review the degree of objectivity that they have achieved in their research, their rapport with their research subjects and the way they have collected and processed their data in order to ensure methodological integrity. Another aspect of reflexivity is respondent validation. This involves the observer cross-checking their interpretation...
of a particular situation with those who are being researched to make sure that researcher and researched agree on what was happening.

7 The most common sociological research method used by positivist sociologists is the social survey which incorporate questionnaires and/or structured interviews. They are also keen on using official statistics and public documents, especially historical documents.

8 Firstly, interpretivists take a micro rather than a macro approach to studying society because they believe the individual is more important than society. For example, interpretivists are more focused on how people see or interpret the world around them. They argue that it is important to appreciate how the world looks from the point of view of those being studied. This is called subjectivity. Secondly, interpretivist sociologists believe that sociological researchers need to get inside the heads of their research subjects in order to document how they interpret reality. They believe that researchers need to experience a form of empathy called verstehen.

9 Verstehen is a form of empathetic understanding. It refers to the ability of the researcher to get inside the head of his or her research subjects so that the researcher can see and interpret the social world through their eyes.

10 An ethnographic method is a sociological research tool which can be used in the natural everyday context of the research subjects without arousing suspicion and hostility, because the method is a natural extension of real life. Unstructured interviews are regarded as ethnographic because they resemble informal conversations or chats and are usually conducted in a natural context in which interviewees can feel comfortable and unthreatened such as in their homes. Similarly, participant observation involves the sociologists becoming part of the community which is being researched and taking on an unobtrusive role which hopefully does not interfere with the day-to-day activities of the group. This is obviously more achievable if the group is unaware of the presence of a covert observer. Ethnographic methods are preferred by interpretivist sociologists because they generate highly valid social data.

11 Interpretivists take an anti-positivist position because they do not believe people’s actions are shaped by society. They reject the positivist idea that people are the puppets of society. In contrast, interpretivist sociologists suggest that society is the product of individuals interacting with each other in social groups. They observe that human beings have consciousness which differentiates them from the subject matter of the natural sciences. People have free will. They can choose how to behave, unlike chemicals, plants, animals and so on. Consequently the behaviour of any one human being is unique and cannot be predicted. Interpretivists argue that such cause and effect relationships are impossible to establish in regard to human behaviour because human behaviour is generally unpredictable.

12 Firstly, positivists believe that just as behaviour in the natural world is the product of natural laws, so people’s behaviour or social action is the product of ‘social laws’ or ‘social facts’ which arise out of the way societies are socially organised or structured. Secondly, positivists believe society is more important than the individual. They see human or social behaviour as a product of social forces or laws such as social class, patriarchy and racism, over which people have little or no influence.

13 Firstly, it is believed that the sociologist should carry out research and interpret evidence with an open mind, setting aside their own prejudices, values and political and religious beliefs, otherwise the research and its findings will be biased. Secondly, subjectivity (personal views and values) may undermine the choice of people – the sample – who are willing to take part in the research. An objective researcher will use a random sampling technique so that the sample is chosen without prejudice.

14 Structuralists believe that the way societies are socially organised or structured is important in understanding why people behave in the way they do. Positivists who tend to be structural sociologists, such as functionalists and Marxists, believe people’s behaviour is shaped by aspects of social structure such as value consensus or the economic infrastructure. They believe that this results in people behaving in very similar and predictable ways. Structuralists also generally believe that members of society are socialised into a similar set of values by societies and consequently behave in very similar ways.

15 Interpretivist sociologists (also known as social action theorists) are mainly interested in exploring how people interact with each other in social groups and how people apply meaning to social life. For example, labelling theory or interactionism which is an offshoot of interpretivism is interested in how labels imposed by powerful groups are interpreted by powerless groups such as schoolchildren and criminals and how they impact on those groups in the form of a self-fulfilling prophecy.
Primary data is collected by sociologists themselves during the course of their research whilst secondary data is collected by non-sociological sources such as the government, for example, official statistics.

1. **Primary data** is collected by sociologists themselves during the course of their research whilst secondary data is collected by non-sociological sources such as the government, for example, official statistics.

2. • Official statistics, for example, on crime.
   • Official documents such as the official findings of government enquiries.
   • Novels written during times of social change, for example, the novels of Charles Dickens are useful for insight into social life and especially poverty in 19th century London.

3. This type of data focuses on how people who are the subject of sociological study see or interpret the world around them. It normally allows research subjects to speak for themselves via verbatim quotes from the transcripts of interviews or selected quotations from conversations that occur during a participant observation study.

4. An independent variable is a possible cause of a dependent variable or effect.

5. A person’s social class might be operationalised by asking questions about occupation and using the government’s National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification to categorise that job into a particular middle-class or working-class strata. More detail on social class could be gleaned by asking questions about income, education and lifestyle choices.

6. Firstly, they are interested in how people interpret the world around them. Secondly, qualitative data is often rich in detail regarding people’s beliefs, experiences and attitudes whereas statistical data tells sociologists very little about how people feel or interpret the world.

7. One strength of longitudinal research is that it allows sociologists to document the impact of social factors such as social class on people’s lives over a period of years. One weakness of longitudinal research is that the original sample may drop out, move away or die, and the remaining members may no longer be representative of the group originally studied.

8. Pilot surveys are useful because researchers can use them to check the reliability of the research tool, for example, check whether everybody who takes part in the research understands the questions in the same way. They also give researchers some idea of the response rate that can be expected from questionnaires and whether the questionnaire is well-designed. Pilot interviews are useful because they give insight into the skill of the interviewer and can be used to advise interviewers on how to avoid bias through their body language and facial expression. Pilot research can also check that the data collected is the type the research team is looking for and therefore ensure validity.

9. Ethics are important because sociological research often involves asking intimate questions about aspects of their lives that they may not want publicised. It often involves intrusion into people’s privacy and may have the potential to inflict emotional or psychological damage. Sociologists require the voluntary cooperation of research subjects and require them to be truthful with their responses. It is therefore important that the sociologist is objective, non-judgemental and does not engage in immoral behaviour such as deception which may result in research subjects feeling threatened and non-cooperative.

10. Some groups required for social research, especially in the criminal world, are normally closed to sociologists. Many researchers have attempted to solve this problem by using an intermediary or gatekeeper who can gain them entry and hopefully explain to the group that their research is not threatening. It is obviously beneficial if the gatekeeper is someone the group trusts and looks up to. For example, Venkatesh was able to access a crack cocaine dealing gang in Chicago called the Black Kings because he was befriended by the gang leader who ordered the rest of the gang to co-operate with Venkatesh.

11. • The electoral roll or register.
    • The Postcode Address File.
    • School or college registers of attendance.

12. Positivist sociologists aim to minimise bias by using random sampling techniques in which every member of the research population has an equal chance of being included in the sample, so those chosen are likely to be a good cross-section of the population. Secondly, positivists are keen on samples being representative cross-sections of the social group they are studying because they wish to generalise, that is, to conclude that what is true of the cross-section or sample is probably true of the wider social group to which they belong.

13. These types of techniques are useful for identifying specific or specialised samples required by the sociologists. Purposive or opportunity sampling is useful for targeting specific social groups such as regular churchgoers or skateboarders. Deviant samples especially belonging to groups who would normally cooperate with sociologists may be gathered using a snowball sample, whilst quota sampling is useful to gather a sample from a
city-centre or outside a supermarket that belong to a gender or age category.

14 Objectivity is the state of being free from bias – the objective sociologist does not allow their beliefs or personal feelings to influence how they go about designing a piece of research. Subjectivity is the opposite of objectivity. It refers to personal feelings, opinions, tastes and biases which to positivist sociologists have no place in the research process.

15 Social policy generally refers to attempts by governments to influence how society is organised and how members of society should behave by bringing in new laws, guidelines and controls. Social policy is often aimed at bringing about social change. Most sociological research is therefore aimed at understanding how society is organised and consequently sociologists help policy-makers to solve social problems like crime. For example, sociologists who feel strongly about juvenile delinquency, poverty or inequalities in educational achievement have conducted research aimed at helping policy-makers to discover solutions to these social problems.

Page 101

1 One practical factor is the cost of the research and how much funding is available. If a sociologist does not have access to large funds, a questionnaire survey might be used because this is a relatively cheap method that only involves printing and postage costs and avoids the greater expense of hiring skilled interviewers who need to be paid a wage. Secondary data is attractive as a low-cost resource because it has already been collected and is usually free at source.

A second practical factor is the time available. If the researcher only has a few months to complete the research, the sociologist may choose to use structured interviews or survey questionnaires because these can be completed relatively quickly. If the researcher is under no time pressures, he or she might decide to use a more in-depth longitudinal method that requires more time to produce valid data, such as participant observation (PO) or unstructured interviews.

2 Firstly, such observation is covert, so the sociologist fails to ask for the informed consent of those being observed. Secondly, it involves deception – the research subjects are lied to and deceived by the researcher.

3 Firstly, such questionnaires often suffer from very low response rates which can undermine their representativeness. Secondly, people may misunderstand or misinterpret questions because the sociologist is not present to explain their meaning. This undermines the reliability of the method.

4 The data gained from overt participant observation may be more valid because the presence of the observer may result in the group behaving in an artificial and less valid way. If the sample is unaware of the presence of an observer they are likely to behave more naturally. However, an overt observer is able to use informal conversation as a form of respondent validation – to cross-check that the observer’s interpretation of an event that they witnessed is shared by members of the group, therefore increasing the validity of the data. Similar behaviour by a covert observer may provoke suspicion.

5 A theoretical strength of covert participant observation is that the researchers see things through the eyes and actions of the people in the group. The researcher is placed in exactly the same situation as the group under study and experiences what the group experiences. The sociologist as a result of this closeness to the group experiences verstehen. This results in highly valid research data. However, an ethical shortcoming is that some observers can get too close or attached to the group they are observing and consequently their observations become biased and invalid.

6 Participant observation is regarded as an ethnographic method because by watching and listening, an observer has the chance to discover the priorities and concerns and to uncover the meanings and definitions of social reality used by people in their everyday natural and social contexts. Unstructured interviews too are regarded as ethnographic because they are normally carried out in the everyday environment of the interviewee to reduce any ‘threat’ perceived by the group being researched.

7 A strength of content analysis of media reports is that it is a cheap method of carrying out research. All the sociologist needs to do is to buy the magazines or newspapers or watch the television programmes. However, a weakness of content analysis is that it can be a very time-consuming method because media products might need to be checked and analysed over a fairly long period of time.

8 Structured interviews are useful because an interviewer can ensure that the right person responds to the questions. An interviewer can explain the aims and objectives of the research, clarify instructions and generally make sure the
respondent is happy to take part in the research. This may reduce potential non-response. Positivists are keen on structured interviews because the method is regarded as scientific because interview schedules are standardised – all members of the sample are exposed to the same stimuli in the form of questions. They are also scientific because these interview schedules are regarded as highly reliable because the questionnaire the interviewer uses are standardised or all the same and the interviewers are trained to conduct each interview in precisely the same way, with the same questions, sequencing, tone of voice and so on.

However, structured interviews are often criticised by interpretivist sociologists because they are artificial devices which are not a normal part of everyday reality and people may therefore respond to them with suspicion. There is always the possibility that interview data may contain evasive, partial or false and therefore invalid information. They are also thought to be too inflexible because the questionnaire or interview schedule is drawn up in advance and the interviewer must stick to it rigidly. This makes it impossible to pursue any interesting leads that may emerge in the course of the interview. Thirdly, there is often a gap between what people say they do and what they actually do, because people often do not put their beliefs or prejudices into action and they may not be aware that they behave in certain ways.

Unstructured interviews resemble an informal conversation. The researcher usually has a list of topic areas but no pre-determined questionnaire/interview schedule is used. The emphasis is on the interviewer asking open-ended questions and the questions asked are often a flexible response to what the interviewees say. They are preferred by interpretivist sociologists because they often result in unexpected findings – the interviewee may tell the sociologist things the latter had not thought of. Unstructured interviews therefore allow sociologists to learn as they go along. Furthermore, such interviews are seen as particularly suited to researching sensitive groups (people who might usually be suspicious of or hostile to researchers). This is because a good interviewer should be skilled at gaining the trust of the person being interviewed. Trust is established by the interviewer making sure that the interviewee feels that their contribution is valued and worthwhile. Interpretivists are keen on unstructured interviews because they believe in validity through involvement – valid data can only be obtained by getting close to people’s experiences and meanings.

However, unstructured interviews can be problematic because they are both expensive and time-consuming. Secondly, some people may not be able to tell the truth in an unstructured interview because they are not aware that they behave in certain ways. Thirdly, positivists regard unstructured interviews as unscientific because the lack of a standardised questionnaire or interview schedule means that interviewees are not exposed to the same standardised questions, which undermines reliability. Fourthly, positivists regard unstructured interviews as unreliable because the data collected is the product of a unique relationship between the sociologist and the interviewee. Positivists therefore regard this type of interview as unreliable because the research cannot be repeated by another sociologist and verified, because another interviewer might not be able to reproduce the trust and rapport established with the research subject. A second interviewer might end up obtaining qualitatively different data. Finally, positivists regard unstructured interviewees as too subjective (and therefore potentially biased) because the interviewers may get too friendly with the interviewees to the extent where they may fail to be detached enough to be objective.

Participant observation is criticised by positivist sociologists for lacking objectivity because some observers can get too involved with the group they are observing and become biased in their interpretation of the group’s activities. This is known as ‘going native’. There may also be an observer effect in that the group’s knowledge that they are being observed may result in them ‘acting up’ in front of the observer. In other words, the group may behave in an artificial rather than natural way. Unstructured interviews may suffer similar problems. Positivists regard unstructured interviews as too subjective (and therefore potentially biased) because the interviewers get too friendly with the interviewees. They are not detached enough to be objective and consequently their data may be biased.

Interviews and questionnaires are regarded as artificial devices which are not a normal part of everyday reality. People may therefore respond to them with suspicion, so there is always the possibility that interview data may contain evasive, partial or false information. Another disadvantage of both questionnaires and interviews is that often people are often unaware of the way they behave. Participant observation is more likely to record this behaviour because it is carried out in the everyday natural context of those being
observed and is more likely to record truly valid data about people’s behaviour and motivations.

11 The biggest potential problem with any type of interview is interview bias or effect, in that the interviewee may regard the social status of the interviewer as threatening in some way and adjust their answers accordingly. Gomm argues that the major problem of interviews is ‘demand characteristics’ – artificial responses shaped by how those being researched interpret the researcher’s motives and aims. Gomm observes that some research subjects may wish to please the researcher or want the research team to think well of them. For example, the interview may produce a social desirability effect – people may over-report ‘desirable’ behaviour such as giving to charity, caring about the environment, being kind to children and animals and so on. However, they may under-report activities or opinions that may be regarded as ‘undesirable’ and may attract disapproval such as racial prejudice, domestic violence or the smacking of children. Interviewers may inadvertently influence responses through their facial expression, tone of voice or body language.

12 Verstehen refers to empathetic understanding or the ability to get into the head of others in order to see through their eyes and to understand the social world from their perspective and to truly understand why they behave in the way they do.

13 Triangulation is mainly an approach to research that sociologists adopt in order to cross-check the validity of the data they collect. Hobson defines triangulation as the use of more than one method of research in order to assess the validity of other research methods and especially the data produced. It normally involves the use of a method which generates quantitative data. This may be primary data from a survey or secondary data from official sources. This may show patterns or trends in behaviour. The use of an interpretivist method such as unstructured interviews allows the researcher the opportunity of finding out whether people really behave in these patterned and predictable ways or whether there are actually differences between the way they behave that questionnaires have failed to spot. The function of the qualitative data is therefore to cross-check the validity of the quantitative data.

In contrast, methodological pluralism refers to the employment by the social researcher of more than one method of research. The emphasis here is not on the validity of the data, rather it is to build up a fuller and more comprehensive picture of social life by using a range of different methods. This might involve the use of both positivist and interpretivist methods thus producing both quantitative and qualitative data.

14 Positivists regard PO as unscientific because research subjects are not being subjected to standardised or controlled stimuli. Furthermore they do not believe that observation is rigorously objective enough and consequently the method is viewed by positivists as low in both reliability and quantifiability. However, interpretivists would counter this criticism by arguing validity is more important than reliability or science.

Page 123

1 Sociologists mainly use occupation as an objective factor to measure social class because occupation is something that the majority of the population have in common. Sociologists have discovered that occupation governs many aspects of people’s lives, such as their level of education, lifestyle etc. Until 2000, the government used the Registrar-General’s (RG) classification of occupations to measure social class, which involved the ranking of thousands of jobs into six classes. The RG scale was replaced by the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) in 2000 which identified eight classes based on categorising jobs according to ‘employment relations’ – whether people are employers, self-employed or employed (and whether they exercise authority over others) – and ‘market conditions’ – salaries, promotion prospects, pensions, job security and control over hours worked.

A second way sociologists have operationalised and measured social class is by carrying out in-depth unstructured interviews asking people to subjectively identify their social class. Savage interviewed over 170 people in Manchester in 2001 and found that only a minority of his interviewees had the confidence to express their class position in an articulate way. However, the majority of his sample identified with a particular class in a ‘muted’ way rather than with any enthusiastic commitment.

A third way of operationalising and measuring social class is to look at levels of wealth and income. This has led to some sociologists concluding that groups who take on zero-hour contract insecure jobs on minimum pay levels and whose children claim free school meals are probably part of a new class known as the ‘precariat’.

2 Firstly, because of the RG scale which only focused on male jobs. Females were classed according to the occupation of their husband if married and their father if unmarried. Women’s jobs were not recognised. The NS-SEC recognises women
workers as no longer class women according to the occupation of their fathers or husbands.

Secondly, Abbot claims that women's experience of social class is worth exploring because women's experience of work is very different from that of men. For example, women are more likely to be in part-time work and they are more likely to carry a dual burden of paid work and unpaid domestic labour.

3 Official statistics are the main source of data on income. The government carries out two annual surveys; the Family Resources Survey (FRS) provides information about the living conditions and resources of households in the UK, while the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) provides data about earnings and hours worked in all industries and occupations. ASHE is based on a 1 per cent sample of HM Revenue and Customs’ income tax records. However, respondents are more likely to under-report their income because they may fear that the tax authorities may use this information to tax them more. Tax returns to HM Revenue and Customs 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.

Similarly, data on wealth is difficult to come by because not all experts agree on what ‘wealth’ is and therefore calculating the value of personal wealth is difficult because the value of property is constantly changing. The very wealthy are also extremely secretive about their assets and will often transfer money into offshore accounts in tax havens which offer complete confidentiality to their clients. It is particularly 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 companies in a complex arrangement which makes it difficult to track ownership back to one particular individual.

4 Standing identifies a new socio-economic group which has appeared since the 1990s that he calls the ‘precariat’. Members of this group occupy low-skilled and low-paid jobs (often minimum wage). These jobs are also often insecure, for example, these workers are likely to be on zero-hour contracts. Standing argues that the precariat often enjoy fewer rights than other workers who are entitled to holiday and sickness pay and pension rights. The precariat also have no occupational identity or community that they can take pride in or feel loyal to because they are forever moving in and out of jobs. Members of the precariat are forced to do jobs that they would not normally choose as a career path. However, they often take on menial work which often involves long unsociable hours for little reward because it is preferable to claiming benefits. Moreover, some members of the precariat may hold down two or three jobs.

The New Right political scientist Charles Murray argued in the 1990s that those on welfare benefits in both the USA and UK constituted a subculture of poverty that he termed the ‘underclass’. Murray argued that this underclass was the result of over-generous welfare benefits. Murray claimed the underclass was made up of ‘people who were long-term unemployed and overly-dependent on benefits and consequently workshy’. He claimed that members of the underclass were no longer willing to take responsibility for standing on their own two feet but instead were happy to let the state support them.

However, studies of the poor and long-term unemployed do not support Murray’s view that a distinct underclass united by a shared and deviant value system exists. The evidence suggests that the poor are not workshy. Many poor people actually hold down more than one job because, as the Low Pay Unit (LPU) argues, low pay is the main cause of poverty. Surveys of the unemployed show that the majority share the same cultural goals as those in work. Many sociologists argue that poverty is not self-imposed by individual weakness but shaped by social forces that are beyond the control of the individual, such as globalisation which has made it more profitable for British companies to shift manufacturing to, and import goods and raw materials from, the developing world. Standing argues that neo-liberal economics with its emphasis on slashing costs and making greater profits is partially responsible for the low wages, zero-hour contracts and job insecurity of a precariat that should not be mistaken for Murray’s idea of an underclass.

Absolute definitions of poverty fail to take into account that what is regarded as poverty changes over time. Critics of the absolute poverty approach argue that poverty is actually a relative concept because what is a luxury today may be a necessity tomorrow, as fashion, acceptable standards of housing and general standards of living change. Secondly, absolute definitions only allow for a person’s physical needs and take no account of their social needs, for example, their ability to participate in social or leisure activities, their ability to buy their children birthday or Christmas presents or their ability to go on holiday. In contrast, relative definitions of poverty define poverty in terms of the normal expectations or living standards of a society at a particular time. As societies change and become more (or less) affluent,
Now test yourself answers

7 Low pay impacts on a person’s life chances in several ways. It may bring about poverty and various socio-economic disadvantages, including debt, poor diet, weak immune systems and therefore higher levels of illness and disability, lower life expectancy, high divorce rates, low educational achievement, poor housing, depression and a disproportionate number of suicides. It may be difficult, if not impossible for the poor or their children to get on the private housing ladder.

8 The Office for National Statistics defines the following as forms of wealth when compiling official statistics: property wealth – houses and land; physical wealth – cars, jewellery, antiques, paintings; financial wealth – money in bank accounts, savings and investments such as stocks and shares, and private pension wealth – the cash value of pension funds. Another source of data is the Sunday Times Rich List, a list of the richest individuals and families in the UK compiled by ‘experts’ who examine the business and personal assets of the rich and then estimate their wealth accordingly. It is thought to be reasonably accurate with regard to business assets because these can be measured using information that has to be lodged for legal reasons with Companies House but information regarding personal wealth is thought to be speculative rather than based on hard evidence.

9 The most famous consensual poverty survey was the Breadline Britain survey carried out by Mack and Lansley. This began by asking large samples of people what items or activities they believed were ‘customary, socially approved and of vital importance to social life’. Mack and Lansley classed something as a ‘necessity’ if a consensus among the respondents was achieved, that is, if over 50 per cent of the sample said it was essential. On the basis of this consensus, the survey identified 22 items to include in their ‘deprivation index’ including a damp-free home; fresh fruit and vegetables daily; a warm, waterproof coat and so on. The surveys then asked their respondents what necessities they lacked but also asked whether this was a matter of choice or affordability. Mack and Lansley decided that those respondents who lacked three or more necessities were ‘poor’ whereas Gordon et al. decided to set their poverty line at the lack of two or more necessities.

10 There seems to be a strong relationship between social class and education because at all stages of education, students from working-class backgrounds achieve less than their middle-class counterparts. Private schools educate only 7 per cent of British children. These are mainly the children of the upper-class whose parents can afford the fees. However, according to research by the Sutton Trust in 2015, private school pupils dominate entry into Oxbridge and other top universities. Furthermore, nearly three quarters of the top judiciary, over two thirds of British-educated Oscar winners, six out of ten top doctors, over half of the top journalists, over 50 per cent of the Cabinet and a third of all Members of Parliament were privately educated or attended Oxbridge.

11 The official statistics on morbidity and mortality indicate that if you are from a manual or working-class background, you are generally more likely to die younger, age faster and encounter more long-term chronic physical and mental illness than someone from a non-manual or middle-class background. Over the last 25 years, life expectancy has risen for those in the higher and those in the lower social classes, so that the difference between those in the higher and those in the lower social classes has actually increased. Some Marxists argue that the health gap is a direct result of the wealth gap caused by the unequal organisation of capitalist society.

12 The most well-known study of social mobility is the Oxford Mobility Study (OMS) carried out by Goldthorpe and Halsey in the 1970s which examined the social mobility of a sample of 10,000 men across two generations. They came to two main conclusions. Firstly, they argued
that mobility in the UK was shaped by the 1:2:4 Rule of Relative Hope which meant that for every working-class boy who managed to climb into the professional service class, two boys from the intermediate or lower middle-class would achieve the same, while four sons of professionals would themselves become professionals one day. Secondly, the study found evidence of ‘absolute mobility’ – an increase in the number of working-class boys who got better jobs than their fathers. They concluded that this was due to an expansion in the number of service sector jobs in the 1950s.

However, Saunders has accused the OMS of left-wing bias and accused it of perpetrating what he saw as a false view of Britain as a closed and unmeritocratic society. Saunders claims that this is because the OMS put too much emphasis on relative rates of social mobility. Saunders claims that absolute rates of social mobility are more important because they show lots of working-class children making the most of educational opportunity and progressing to university and middle-class jobs. Feminists have criticised the Oxford study because it focuses exclusively on men.

The functionalist sociologist Talcott Parsons argued that stratification systems are the product of consensus – agreement that some members of society are deserving of greater rewards because they are more talented, skilled, beautiful and so on. This idea was further developed by Davis and Moore who argue that if societies are to operate effectively, they have to ensure that their most functionally important and senior positions are filled by people who are talented and efficient. Davis and Moore argue that class societies are meritocracies which guarantee high rewards in the form of income in order to motivate gifted people to make the necessary sacrifices in terms of education and training. They argue that the function of social institutions like education is to allocate all individuals to an occupational role that suits their abilities (role allocation) via examinations and qualifications. Davis and Moore therefore argue that people’s class position is a fair reflection of talent, skill and ability.

However, there are three criticisms of the view that some members of society are deserving of greater rewards because they are more talented and skilled. Firstly, the top of the stratification system is not only occupied by those with functionally important jobs. It is also occupied by those who live off inherited wealth and by celebrities. Neither of these two groups is necessarily functionally important to society. Secondly, Davis and Moore assume the pool of talent from which people emerge to do the top jobs is very small but the way that capitalist societies are organised may be restricting the opportunities of talented people from working-class backgrounds. Thirdly, evidence also suggests that not all those who occupy top jobs are the most talented. They may have achieved these positions because the UK is not really a meritocracy in which there is authentic social mobility. Family connections, the ability to pay for exclusive and expensive private education, the old-boy network and hidden forms of institutional patriarchy and racism may have propelled the children of the White wealthy elite to the top, rather than talent or ability.

This is a New Right argument and is associated with Peter Saunders (1996) who believes that inequality is the price to be paid for the effectiveness of the neo-liberal free market economy that has delivered the economic growth and prosperity that has generally raised the living standards of all sections of British society. Saunders argues that capitalist societies have to offer incentives to those with talent and enterprise in the form of more income and wealth because these people are the innovators – the only ones capable of catching the public imagination with a constant stream of in-demand consumer goods, such as smartphones and social media, such as Facebook and Instagram. Saunders concludes that class stratification and therefore the inequality that it produces is a necessary by-product of society’s demand for the latest consumer innovations.

However, this New Right perspective has been criticised for generally neglecting the fact that social and economic inequality tends to result in envy, resentment and hostility among those at the bottom of the stratification system that might motivate them to engage in crime and social disorder.

This is a Marxist argument. Marxism is very critical of the capitalist organisation of the social structure of modern societies because it argues this has had a negative effect on human behaviour in the sense that it has resulted in one powerful minority bourgeoisie class exploiting the labour of the majority working class (proletariat).

According to Marxism, the most important part of the capitalist social system is the infrastructure or economic system. Marx claimed that this is dominated by a wealthy and powerful minority – the bourgeoisie or ruling capitalist class – who own and control the means of production, the capital, land, factories, technology and raw materials. However, in order to manufacture goods in factories, the bourgeoisie need the labour-power provided by
the proletariat. The relationship between the bourgeoisie and proletariat is known as ‘the social relations of production’. Marx argued that the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is unequal because the bourgeoisie set wage levels and control the organisation of the workplace, such as the speed of the assembly line in factories. More importantly, the wage paid to the worker is only a small fraction of the true value of their work – according to Marx, the bourgeoisie monopolises wealth because they exploit the ‘surplus value’ of working-class people’s labour. The difference between what their labour is actually worth and the wage they are paid becomes profit and is the main cause of inequalities in wealth, power and so on.

Marx argued that this exploitation and inequality is tolerated by the proletariat because of the existence of a superstructure which is made up of important social institutions such as the family, the education system, the mass media, the political system, religion and the criminal justice system. According to Marx, the function of the superstructure is to transmit the ruling-class ideology – ideas that originate with the bourgeoisie but which the majority of members of society are ‘persuaded’ to accept as ‘normal’ or ‘natural’. Marx believed that it was inevitable that the conflict between the bourgeoisie and proletariat would eventually result in the overthrow of the capitalist class and a revolution of the proletariat.

However, Marxism has been criticised for presenting an over-socialised picture of working-class people being turned into conformist workers and being duped into false class consciousness by the superstructure’s transmission of ruling-class ideology because there is evidence that some sections of the working class have resisted capitalist exploitation. Industrial action in the form of strikes, riots and voting for political parties that oppose the present organisation of capitalism suggest that many working-class people can actually see through ruling-class ideology and exploitation.

Page 136

1 Firstly, women experience vertical segregation which negatively affects their ability to experience upward social mobility. This means that different sectors of employment are dominated by either male or female workers. For example, women make up about 79 per cent of the health and social work workforce whereas men are mainly found in the skilled manual and upper professional sectors.

Secondly, the UK labour market is also characterised by vertical segregation, meaning that males and females dominate different levels of jobs in terms of status and skill. For example, the evidence suggests that within occupational groups, women tend to be concentrated at the lower levels. When women do gain access to the upper professional or management sector, the evidence suggests that they encounter a ‘glass ceiling’ – they can see the top jobs but restrictions or discrimination create barriers that prevent women getting into them.

Thirdly, a gender pay gap also exists. According to the Office for National Statistics, the pay gap between men and women in 2016 stood at 18 per cent as measured by gross hourly pay. This gap increases to nearly 25 per cent in the private sector but is only 17.1 per cent in the public sector.

2 Firstly, Radical feminist theories of the family have dated fairly badly, because they fail to account for recent economic and social changes, such as the feminisation of the economy, the educational success of young females, women’s use of divorce and many women’s rejection of domestic labour as their exclusive responsibility. Secondly, Radical feminist sociologists portray women as passively accepting their lot but surveys of modern young women such as that conducted by Sue Sharpe in Just like a Girl suggest that they generally reject the notion that they should be subordinate to males.

3 One outcome of the feminisation of poverty is that about a quarter of women will live in poverty when they retire compared with about one in ten men. A second outcome of the feminisation of poverty is that women also experience ‘time poverty’ which means women are more likely to be poor because men spend their younger years building up their career and working their way up the pay scale, whilst women spend this time having and raising children. When they re-enter the workforce, they normally have to begin their career over at the bottom of the pay scale.

4 When women do gain access to the upper professional or management sector, the evidence suggests that they encounter a ‘glass ceiling’ – they can see the top jobs but their entry to these jobs are restricted by male gate-keepers. The Fawcett Society estimated in 2016 that it will take 50 years for female judges to achieve equal status with men at senior levels in the judiciary and 70 years at the current rate of progress for gender equality to be achieved in terms of top management jobs within Britain’s
top 100 companies. One reason for this is that women's rights at work are very poorly enforced by the State which seems reluctant to prosecute employers who blatantly discriminate against women employees to achieve equal status with men at senior levels in the judiciary and 70 years for equality to be achieved in top management jobs in Britain's top 100 companies. Furthermore this glass ceiling remains in place according to the Fawcett Society because women's rights at work are poorly enforced by the state which seems reluctant to prosecute employers for blatant discrimination against women in the workplace.

5 Functionalists argue that women are less committed to paid work and are more likely to take career breaks or to opt for part-time work in order to continue to care for their families. Secondly, Parsons claimed that women were less-suited to the labour market compared with men.

6 Mac an Ghaill suggests that working-class boys are experiencing a 'crisis of masculinity'. They are socialised into seeing their future male identity and role in terms of having a job and being a 'breadwinner', but the economic landscape has changed because manufacturing industry has declined and long-term male unemployment has risen. Consequently Mac an Ghaill concludes that many working-class boys feel that education and qualifications are irrelevant to their futures and look for alternative sources of status in anti-school subcultures and/or delinquency. Diane Abbott argues that this crisis in masculinity has resulted in a 'Fight Club' generation of boys, which is increasingly violent, sexist and homophobic. According to the mental health charity CALM (the Campaign Against Living Miserably) in 2014, this crisis in modern masculinity, is allegedly the reason why male suicide rates in the UK are at a 15-year high.

7 Radical feminists note that patriarchal ideology is used to control women for the benefit of men. Women learn but are also told how to look, dress and behave. When patriarchal ideology fails, then women are always under the threat of male violence and sexual aggression, which limits their capacity to live as free and independent beings. Johnson describes men's potential threat or use of violence as patriarchal terrorism. Delphy and Leonard also claim that men engage in 'familiar exploitation' and that they learn subordination in the family and marriage. They argue that men are the major beneficiaries of both marriage and family life because women contribute more work to family life but get fewer benefits. Moreover, men exert economic power and therefore more decision-making power.

8 In 2015, The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission concluded that relative social mobility rates for men have flat-lined, whereas the odds ratio for women has improved. It reported that girls born in the 1940s to middle-class parents were eight times more likely than working-class girls to grow up to be middle class. However, middle-class girls born in the 1970s were only four times more likely than their working-class peers to achieve middle-class status in adulthood. This suggests that the relative social mobility rates of working-class women have caught up and overtaken those of men, although it remains the case that those born in working-class families still face challenges in breaking through the glass ceiling to professional work. There are three reasons why females born in the 1970s have experienced more social mobility than women born in the 1940s. Firstly, well-paid jobs, which were dominated by men in the 1970s, went into decline because global industrial competition resulted in the decline of Britain's manufacturing industry.

Secondly, the 1980s saw an expansion in the service sector of the economy which resulted in a massive rise in the number of women going out to work in pink-collar consumer services, for example, in the public services (particularly education and health) and the financial and retail sectors. Thirdly, this feminisation of the workforce was made possible by a noticeable improvement in the educational performance of girls, particularly at GCSE, A Level and degree-level. However, evidence suggests that relative mobility is declining for both males and females born in the 1980s who have reached their 30s in the 2010s.

9 Marxist feminists such as Benston claim that capitalism transmits the idea that women's family role as mothers and housewives is their most important function it is the role of the mother/housewife to reproduce and to bring up the future workforce free of charge for the capitalist class. Secondly, the present adult male workforce requires maintenance – men need to be fed and their batteries recharged to be efficient. Women's domestic labour maintains the health and efficiency of the male workforce at no extra cost to the capitalist class. Fran Ansley also notes the negative side of this experience – women soak up the frustrations of men who are unhappy with their jobs in the form of domestic violence. Other Marxist feminists see women as part of a reserve army of labour, which is only hired by capitalist enterprises in times of rapid economic expansion, but fired when recession sets in. Marxists argue that women are vulnerable to trends such as economic recession, downsizing and mergers, and so make up a more disposable part of the workforce.
Benatar claims men are now more likely than women to be the victims of discrimination. He calls this the ‘second sexism’. Benatar argues that men are conscripted to fight in wars more than women and that men are more often victims of violence than women, whether through casual crime or politically inspired purges and genocides. In marital break-ups, women are more likely to gain custody of children than men. In many contexts it is harder for men to maintain bodily privacy than women. They are also more likely to occupy the least desirable, the most dangerous and the least secure jobs. Farrell also claims that a ‘glass ceiling’ exists with regards to men’s employment. He argues that in an analysis of the 25 lowest ranked jobs, 24 of them are dominated by males and these jobs are often poorly paid and offer little job security. Feminists counter these claims by showing that in almost every area of social life women are generally subordinate to men because most social institutions are patriarchal and consequently work against women’s interests.

Barron and Norris (1976), whose theory is very influenced by Weber’s ideas about status, argue that a dual labour-market exists, that the labour market is divided into two sectors: a primary sector consisting of secure, well-paid jobs with good prospects and a secondary sector characterised by poor pay, insecurity and no ladder of promotion. It is very difficult to move from the secondary to the primary sector. Barron and Norris argue that women are more likely to be found in the disadvantaged secondary sector for three reasons. There is some evidence that employers may hold stereotypical beliefs about the ‘unsuitability’ of women for primary-sector roles. Women are likely to experience disrupted career development. Jobs with good promotion prospects often recruit people at a young age and require several years of continuous service. It is difficult in most jobs to take long periods of time out of work and return to a similar position. However, social pressure to have a family often leads to women taking extensive time out of employment. Consequently, they lack experience compared with men and often miss out on promotion when they do return to the workplace. The legal and political framework supporting women’s rights in the workplace is weak and ineffective.

Dual labour-market theory has two strengths as an explanation of vertical segregation. It stresses that the social organisation of work in Western societies is essentially patriarchal, with men in positions of power making gendered discrimination and women’s subordinate status at work seem ‘normal’ and ‘natural’.

It undermines the popular assumption that better qualifications and increased ambition for women would automatically dismantle gender divisions in employment. Women with the same qualifications as men will continue to be disadvantaged as long as these two sectors exist and continue to be underpinned with patriarchal stereotypical assumptions about the role of women.

However, Bradley (1996) points out that the theory fails to explain inequalities in the same sector. For example, teaching is not a secondary labour-market occupation yet women are less likely than men to gain headteacher posts.

Radical feminists argue that men originally acquired power over women because of biological factors (pregnant women and those with babies and very young children could not make the same economic contribution to society as men). This power was then consolidated as men took over the running of cultural institutions such as religions and political organisations.

The 1st wave of feminism occurred in the 18th century and is mainly associated with the suffragette movement, the main aim of which was to gain the right to vote. Some of these early feminists campaigned for women to have the right to own their own property, for women to go to university and for women to enter the professions. By the mid-20th century most of these goals had been achieved.

The 2nd wave is associated with the 1960s and 1970s. This period saw the emergence of the feminist movement which splintered into three competing wings: liberal, Marxist and radical. Most feminists in this period aimed to explore the idea that the ‘personal is political’ and research accordingly focused on female experiences of marriage and the distribution of power in families. Many of these feminists saw patriarchal inequalities and divisions in society as originating in the family. The 3rd wave of feminism focused on identity politics rather than shared experience of patriarchal inequality. This type of intersectional feminism is more individualistic and points outs that women come from a range of diverse backgrounds and therefore their experience of inequality is also diverse. It also argues that women should take an individualised approach to feminism and that they should be able to adapt and shape this label so that it reflects their own identities and beliefs. The 4th wave of feminism, according to Cochrane, is defined by new media technology and involves encouraging women to build an empowering, popular and reactive feminist movement online. A good example of this online empowerment is Laura Bates’ ‘Everyday
The liberal feminist Ann Oakley was one of the first sociologists to highlight the role of patriarchal ideology and discrimination. She attempted to explain the source of gender discrimination in the UK by examining the process of gender role socialisation in families and by other agents of socialisation such as education and mass media. Oakley argues that gender role socialisation often involves girls and boys learning about and believing stereotypical but unfounded beliefs about ‘differences’ in gendered behaviour. She observes that boys are often ‘persuaded’ by socialisation agencies that their future path involves exerting power and authority over others; while girls ‘learn’ that they their main future responsibilities will revolve around family and children. Marxist-feminists argue patriarchal ideology transmits the idea that women are inferior or subordinate to men and this makes it easier for capitalism to control and exploit both men and women. However, capitalist ideology also transmits the idea that women’s family role as mothers and housewives is their most important function because women’s domestic labour is crucial to capitalism.

Radical feminists argue that the nuclear family is the main arena in which patriarchal ideology is transmitted to children via gender-role socialisation. This childhood experience results in males and females subscribing to a set of ideas that largely confirm male power and superiority. This ideology encourages the notion that the sexual division of labour is ‘natural’ and unchangeable. It also results in the exploitation of women because patriarchal ideology mainly views women as sexual objects when single and mothers/housewives when married. Radical feminists note that patriarchal ideology is used to control women for the benefit of men. Women are told how to look, dress and behave. When patriarchal ideology fails, then women are always under the threat of male violence and sexual aggression.

Page 146

1 Firstly, poverty leads to 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. Secondly, poverty impacts on the health of BAME families because they cannot afford healthy nutritional food. For example, the infant mortality rates of BAME groups, especially Pakistani and Bangladeshi babies, are twice as high as working-class White babies. Thirdly, poverty increases their risk of being a victim of crime, especially hate crimes such as racial harassment and attacks.

2 Black youth may feel disaffected by their experience of an educational system in which some teachers may negatively label them because the teachers subscribe to negative stereotypes about the behaviour of young African–Caribbeans and therefore discipline them for behaviour that their White peers get away with. They may feel disaffected because the knowledge taught in schools is largely ethnocentric and has little relevance to their everyday experience. The institutional racism embedded in the hidden curriculum of schools may mean they experience more punishment, suspension and exclusion than their White peers.

3 The criminal justice system (the police and courts), the NHS and the immigration service
have all been accused of being institutionally racist.

4 According to the Marxist sociologists Castles and Kosack, capitalist employers benefit from the cheap labour of ethnic minorities in terms of profits they make. They note that ethnic minorities, like women, are a reserve army of labour that is only taken on in large numbers during periods of economic boom. This surplus of labour power is regarded as necessary by the capitalist class because it keeps wage costs down as well as weakening the bargaining power of White workers.

However, Castles and Kosack’s theory is really a study of migrant labour and is probably more relevant to the first generation of minorities that arrived in Britain in the 1950s. It is not clear how it explains ethnic inequalities sixty years on, especially as Britain has experienced deindustrialisation because of globalisation. Moreover it is unlikely that Black workers in 2017 are competing against White workers for skilled factory or other manual forms of skilled work because these jobs no longer exist in large numbers. The fact that BAME workers are more likely to be unemployed than White workers suggests that the British economy is no longer in need of a reserve army of labour.

5 Firstly, Patterson’s host-immigrant model sees pre-immigration Britain as a stable, homogeneous and orderly society with a high degree of consensus over values and norms.

Secondly, this social order was disturbed when the first wave of immigrants arrived in Britain in the 1950s. She contrasts the boisterous and noisy African-Caribbean culture unfavourably with that of their English hosts and claims a culture clash disrupted the social order that had dominated British society before immigration.

6 Racism in the workplace impacts on ethnic minority workers because it means that they are over-represented in the unskilled and semi-skilled, low paid and insecure service sector, particularly in the restaurant, transport and retail industries; for example, one in eight taxi drivers in the UK come from Pakistani or Bangladeshi backgrounds. It also means very few ethnic minorities are engaged in white-collar, professional or managerial work.

Thirdly, it means that BAME unemployment is significantly higher than White unemployment especially among young people.

7 Oliver Cromwell Cox argues that racism is socially constructed by those who control the means of production – the capitalist class – in order to justify the exploitation of less powerful groups, for example, those who belong to BAME groups. Cox argues that racism is a type of ideology – a set of powerful beliefs that aimed to assert the superiority of White people in the 18th and 19th centuries and which aimed to justify the imperial goals of global capitalism.

Castles and Kosack argue that racist ideology aims to legitimate inequality. By this they mean racism helps to justify low pay and poor working conditions because ethnic minority workers are generally presented by employers, trade unions and the mass media as second-class citizens undeserving of the same rights as White workers. They also argue that racist ideology functions to divide and rule the working-class. They point out that if ethnic-minority and White workers unite in a common economic interest, they are in a stronger position to campaign for better wages and conditions. Castles and Kosack argue that racism benefits employers because it divides the workforce. The White workforce will fear losing their jobs to the cheaper labour of ethnic minority workers. Employers play on these fears during pay negotiations to prevent White workers from demanding higher wages or going on strike.

Castles and Kosack also argue that racist ideology functions to scapegoat ethnic minorities. They argue that when a society is troubled by severe social and economic problems, then widespread frustration, aggression and demands for radical change can result. However, instead of directing this anger at the capitalist class or economic system, White people are encouraged by racist ideology and agents such as the mass media to blame relatively vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities for unemployment, housing shortages and inner-city decline, for example, ‘they have come over here and stolen our jobs and taken over all our corner shops’. Thus, ethnic minorities become the scapegoats for the social and economic mismanagement of capitalism. This process works in the interest of the wealthy and powerful capitalist class because it protects them from criticism and deflects attention away from inequality and the need for radical change.

8 The neo-Marxist Miles suggests that ethnic minorities are members of racialised class fractions. He argues that the White working class stress the importance of their ethnicity and nationality through prejudice and discrimination, while ethnic minorities react to such racism by using their ethnicity as a form of cultural defence in terms of their observance of particular religious and cultural traditions. Consequently, although ethnic minorities occupy similar jobs as the White working-class, the racism practised by the latter means that White
workers do not regard or treat ethnic minority workers as having the same status.

Miles acknowledges that some ethnic minorities may be economically successful and become part of the middle classes. These professionals and owners of businesses may see their interests lying with capitalism. For example, recent statistics suggest there are currently over 5,000 Muslim millionaires in Britain. Furthermore, their ethnicity may be a crucial influence in their business practices and financial success. However, the fact of their ethnicity probably makes it difficult for them to be fully accepted by the White middle-class. They are, therefore, a racialised class fraction within the middle-class.

9 According to Barron and Norris, the economy is organised in the form of a dual labour market. The primary labour sector 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 mainly consists of low-paid, low-status, unskilled and insecure jobs and is dominated by both female and ethnic minority workers. 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.

10 Marxists such as Cox argue that racism is a type of ideology – a set of powerful beliefs that were developed in the 18th and 19th centuries which aimed to assert the superiority of White people and to justify the imperial goals of global capitalism. However, Cox has been criticised as ‘race-blind’ because his theory is more focused on capitalism and his evidence that racism is deliberately constructed by the capitalist class is not convincing.

Castles and Kosack also argue that racism is an ideology aimed at legitimating class inequality, dividing and ruling the working-class and blaming and scapegoating ethnic minorities for the social problems experienced by capitalist societies. However, Marxists often ignore the fact that some ethnic minorities have been very economically and politically successful, for example, the think tank ‘Powerful Media’ annually compiles a list of Britain’s ‘100 most influential Black people’ which includes male and female BAME billionaires, millionaires, politicians, film stars, sports stars, CEOs of top companies, finance capitalists and educationalists. Moreover, although institutional racism may reflect legitimisation, divide and rule and scapegoating, it is more likely to be the product of the failure of a conservative White culture’s failure to adapt to social change. The last fifty years have seen a radical change in attitudes, and surveys suggest that the majority now disapprove of openly racist comments, jokes and actions. It therefore could be argued that racism as an ideology no longer has a credible culture base in 2017.

11 Sewell blames three factors or quandaries for ethnic inequality. Firstly, he believes that African–Caribbean families fail their boys because they often lack fathers and therefore boys lack positive role models, especially when they hit puberty. Secondly, Sewell claims that society has failed to tackle the institutional racism that exists in some schools and police forces which mean that Black teenagers are often unfairly stereotyped as potential troublemakers and consequently excluded from school or frequently stopped and searched by the police. Consequently, Black youth grows up suspicious and resentful of White authority in schools and on the streets in the form of the police. They are generally disaffected and therefore it does not take much for them to slip into deviant habits such as getting involved in gang violence or low-level drug dealing. Thirdly, Sewell identifies the media culture organised around the Black music scene, especially rap music which celebrates individualism, hyper-masculinity/sexuality and materialism. Sewell is very critical of the cultural messages sent out by rap music which strongly suggest that the acquisition of consumer goods and respect from peers may be more important than educational success. Another strong message of this scene is that if respect is not forthcoming, violence is the only way to deal with disrespect.

However, Sewell has been accused of scapegoating African–Caribbean culture. This criticism is probably unfair because he sees White society as equally to blame. He does not deny that racism in schools exists but notes that in 2017 there are so many checks and balances in place in British schools that it is almost impossible and improbable that professionals such as teachers in schools with significant numbers of BAME pupils would act in openly racist ways towards such pupils.

12 This is a Marxist statement and is argued by Castles and Kosack who claim that ethnic minorities are generally part of the exploited
working class and it is this that determines their fate in capitalist society. Marxists see racial conflict, discrimination and inequality as symptoms of some deeper, underlying class problem. They argue that racism is an ideology deliberately encouraged by the capitalist class for three ideological reasons: to legitimate class inequality; to divide and rule the working-class and to scapegoat ethnic minorities for the problems experienced by the White working-class.

There is some evidence that there has been radical change in social attitudes towards race and racism. Surveys suggest that the majority now disapprove of openly racist comments, jokes and actions. It therefore could be argued that racism as an ideology no longer has a credible culture base in 2017. However, in contrast there is evidence that institutional racism is deeply embedded in police forces and demonstrated by the fact that members of ethnic minorities are disproportionately more likely to be stopped, searched, arrested and charged with a criminal offence by police forces whose officers consistently demonstrate racist beliefs, banter and practices. Members of ethnic minorities are also more likely than White offenders to be sent to prison even if found guilty of the same crime. Moreover, there is evidence of institutional racism in the workplace. Ethnic minorities are more likely to be found in low-paid low-skilled jobs or to be unemployed. Li found that many Muslim women removed their hijabs or adapted 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 stressed the dominance of the male sex and the subordination of the female sex. Postmodernists have highlighted the role of global factors over which the poor have no control rather than institutional racism in bringing about unemployment, low pay and poverty.

Feminists highlight the role of patriarchy. For example, Brewer suggests that ethnic minority women face a triple disadvantage because they experience sexism and racism and because they are working class. In other words, race, class and gender simultaneously shape the lives of ethnic minority women.

Finally, some sociologists point out that ethnic minority poverty may be caused by cultural factors such as religions which stress the dominance of the male sex and the subordination of the female sex. Postmodernists have highlighted the role of global factors over which the poor have no control rather than institutional racism in bringing about unemployment, low pay and poverty.

Page 154

Firstly, there are legal restrictions on what type of work young people can do and the number of hours they can work. Employers are legally required to pay them a minimum wage. For example, if a young person is in school full-time they are not allowed to work more than 12 hours in a school week. Secondly, young people are regarded by employers as cheap labour. Consequently young workers earn relatively little, and are given less responsibility and status in almost every occupational sector. Thirdly, unemployment for 16- to 24-year-olds has risen since 2004.

Ray et al. also note that the retirement age often differs according to social class and status. For
example, senior business executives, tycoons and political leaders have the power to resist the official legal retirement requirement and consequently they may avoid the potential poverty and negative connotations associated with being elderly or retired. Scase and Scales argue that middle-class retirees are likely to be reasonably affluent, whereas working-class elderly may have to continue working beyond retirement age in order to avoid poverty.

3 The NHS, the media and the legal system can be described as institutionally ageist because they discriminate in various ways against the elderly. For example, the NHS denies the elderly life-saving operations, the media negatively stereotype the elderly as a dependent burden on younger people and the legal system sets age limits which deny the elderly the right to participate in civil society, for example, if a person is aged above 75 years of age, he or she cannot serve on a jury.

4 Functionalists, such as Cummings and Henry (1961), suggest that the way society treats the old has positive benefits for society. The ageing process and the social reaction to it is part of a mutual process in which the elderly, either by voluntary choice or legal compulsion, are encouraged to socially disengage from their occupational roles. This process of ‘social disengagement’ functions to allow younger members of society to take the place of the old in the specialised division of labour with minimum disruption to both social order and economic efficiency. Critics of disengagement theory point out that retirement from work and society is often not voluntary. Moreover, this disengagement also has negative consequences for the self-esteem and social status of the elderly. Disengagement could lead to the neglect of the experience, skills and talents of older members of society which may still be of great benefit to society. Furthermore, disengagement theory ignores the fact that many old people continue to be active participants in society.

5 Work is important because it confers identity, status, self-esteem, purpose and social well-being, and provides people with social contacts. Retirement, on the other hand, often means social redundancy, that is, loss of identity, status and purpose. It may also mean loneliness as the retiree is cut off from their regular social contacts at work. However, Jones et al. found that retirees in their study interpreted retirement in very positive ways. For example, many had deliberately taken early retirement because they saw it as a positive opportunity to be creative and to pursue new challenges and interests.

6 Young people may negatively stereotype elderly people as a burden on society and consequently fail to value the contribution the elderly make or have made to society. This negative labelling along with the institutional ageism found in the NHS, adult social care, the media and advertising may have a self-fulfilling prophecy effect on the elderly. They may be forced into acting out an ‘elderly’ role despite the fact that they report they don’t feel any different compared to when they were younger. However, surveys of elderly people have found that they were aware that dressing or behaving as though they were younger would attract social derision. They therefore chose to act according to how society viewed them. Ray et al. argue that negative stereotypes or labelling about old age can also impact on the way people react to ageing themselves. They may view themselves as ‘useless’ and unable to learn. However, not all young people treat the elderly with disdain. There is some evidence that elderly Asians are viewed with much greater respect by young people and therefore are less likely to experience the sorts of ageism that may be common in White communities. Furthermore, class and wealth can protect some sections of the elderly community from ageism. Some old people, particularly those from an upper-middle-class background, have more power and status because their earning power during their working lives was greater and they were able to accumulate savings and wealth. The relationship this group has with capitalism is beneficial. This privileged sector of the elderly has the economic power to consume services, such as private health schemes, and they therefore enjoy greater life expectancy and better health. They may even decide to continue to work well into old age.

7 The UK is experiencing an ageing population; for example by 2021, 33 per cent of the population will be aged over 55 years and the number of over 65s will outnumber the number of those aged 16 years and under. The ageing of Britain’s population has been described as a ‘demographic time bomb’ because there are serious worries about the costs of future pensions and how the government will pay for the extra strain put on adult social care and the NHS. However, Pollock declares that this time bomb is a myth because there is no evidence for the claim that ageing itself will lead to a funding crisis. Rather, the NHS funding crisis is due to cuts in funding for the NHS and adult social care coupled with the high costs of marketisation and privatisation. Cuts in spending due to austerity has led to service closures such that NHS funded services including GP services,
Standing identifies a new socio-economic group which has appeared since the 1990s that he calls the ‘precariat’. Members of this group who are mainly young people occupy low-skilled and low-paid jobs (often minimum wage). These jobs are also often insecure, for example, these workers are likely to be on zero-hour contracts. Standing argues that the precariat often enjoy fewer rights than other workers who are entitled to holiday and sickness pay and pension rights. Some sociologists have suggested that this precariat is disaffected and therefore potentially dangerous, for example, it may be more willing to participate in riots and disorder. However, in criticism, Standing observes that members of the precariat rarely share a community identity because they do not spend enough time together to construct a shared identity, outlook or community or common grievance.

Marxists, such as Phillipson (1982), suggest that the logic of capitalism, which is about exploiting workers and consumers for profit, is incompatible with the needs of the elderly. The elderly, despite their greater needs, are neglected by the capitalist system because they no longer have the disposable income or spending power which is so attractive to capitalists. Phillipson claims that the elderly have historically been used as a reserve army of labour. He suggests that this role has grown in recent years as the retail sector has expanded and taken on elderly labour. However, some old people, particularly those from an upper-middle-class background, have more power and status because their earning power during their working lives was greater and they were able to accumulate savings and wealth. The relationship this group has with capitalism is beneficial. This privileged sector of the elderly has the economic power to consume services, such as private health schemes, and they therefore enjoy greater life expectancy and better health.

Postmodernists often paint old age as a positive time of life because they argue retirement allows people greater freedom and challenges, for example, the University of the Third Age encourages older people to come together to share their skills and life experiences and to learn together for pleasure. Postmodernists such as Blaikie (1999) argue that chronological age, ageism and age-determined inequality are less likely to shape people’s life experience in the 21st century. He suggests that UK society has undergone a social transformation from social experiences based on collective identities originating in social class and generation to an increasingly individualised and consumerist culture in which old age can be avoided by investing in a diverse choice of youth-preserving techniques and lifestyles. Powell and Biggs observe that new technology and cosmetic surgery allow some older people to continually re-invent themselves. Postmodernists also stress the role of globalisation in bringing about social change; for example, as Britain has become multicultural, the experience of being an elderly person has become less predictable as cultural and religious norms and values change. However, Vincent (2001) suggests that global capitalism is still the major determinant of age experience and inequality. He argues that decreasing labour-market stability and rapidly changing employment patterns have produced age groups which are still shaped and differentiated along social class lines.

Globalisation has had a significant effect on the British economy. In particular it led to a decline in manufacturing industry as Britain imported manufactured goods from the Far East, particularly China. The result of this was that the service sector of the economy expanded and more jobs became available in retail, finance, the fast food industry etc which targeted young people. Standing argues that young people have mainly taken up these service sector jobs and now constitute a precariat – an occupational group who largely earn the minimum wage and are on insecure zero-hour contracts. Phillipson claims that the elderly have become a reserve army of labour. He suggests that this role has grown in recent years as the retail sector has expanded and taken on elderly labour. Polemus argues that 21st-century youth is not a homogenous group – young people today shop in a global supermarket of style and construct their identity from a range of disparate sources. Postmodernists also stress the role of globalisation in bringing about social change; for example, as Britain has become multicultural the experience of being a child or an elderly person has become less predictable as cultural and religious norms and values change.

Functionals, such as Cummings and Henry (1961), suggest that the way society treats the old has positive benefits for society. The ageing process and the social reaction to it is part of a mutual process in which the elderly, either by voluntary choice or legal compulsion, are encouraged to socially disengage from their occupational roles. This process of ‘social disengagement’ functions to allow younger members of society to take the place of the old in the specialised division of labour with minimum disruption to both social order and economic efficiency.
However, critics of functionalism note that there is a strong possibility that social order might be undermined by youth unemployment, low pay, the expensive housing market, the lengthening of education and higher education costs. All these trends are likely to lead to more dependence on the family. These difficulties in the transition to economic independence may be having a knock-on effect in other areas of social life, for example, young women are marrying later and having fewer children. Critics of disengagement theory point out that retirement from work and society is often not voluntary. Moreover, this disengagement also has negative consequences for the self-esteem and social status of the elderly. Disengagement could lead to the neglect of the experience, skills and talents of older members of society which may still be of great benefit to society. Furthermore, disengagement theory ignores the fact that many old people continue to be active participants in society.

**13** Ageism, whether aimed at the young or the elderly, is a reflection of the lack of status experienced by both groups and their poor market position. The elderly may lack the technological skills and the young may lack the experience and training required for the workplace. Retirement too involves a loss of status, although Weberians point out that elderly people from upper-class backgrounds such as the Queen often retain their status as powerful individuals because their status is regarded as more important than their occupational status. Turner claims that both the elderly and the young have low status because they lack the material resources required to attract status and consequently are dependent upon others.

Social action theory has documented several effects of ageism for both young and old. Victor argues that negative labels about ageing and the ageist discrimination that follows can cause negative age-related changes to worsen, as the older person sees their life as a downward spiral – they see themselves as ‘useless’ and ‘in the way’ and therefore take no positive counter action. Labelling theory also suggests that the negative stereotyping of children and youth by teachers, police officers and newspaper reports (moral panics) may lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy and deviancy amplification as young people internalise these labels and act up to them. However, social action theories tend to neglect the view that interaction and interpretation rarely exist independently of structural influences. For example, in a patriarchal society it is likely that interpretations of female behaviour are shaped or coloured by patriarchal institutions, whereas the behaviour of youth is often shaped by social class or institutional racism; for example, working-class youth is more likely to be stopped and searched by the police, as is Black youth.

**Page 164**

1. Globalisation refers to the process by which the world is becoming increasingly interconnected as a result of massively increased trade and cultural exchange.

2. There are several causes of globalisation including migration, imperial conquest and colonialism, the slave trade, the spread of Islam and Christianity across the world, the growth of transnational corporations and international trade, tourism, satellite television. The most important cause in recent years has been the rapid growth in digital technology, especially the internet, smartphones and social media.

3. Some sociologists see globalisation as a positive process that will eventually produce tolerant and responsible world citizens and raise the standard of living of developing societies.

4. Some sociologists see globalisation as a negative phenomenon because it sometimes results in cultural homogenisation – it is argued that the unique local cultures are being replaced by cultural sameness which is regarded as a backwards step.

Castells argues that digital forms of communication have decentralised power and that global digital technology has resulted in more power in the hands of the people. Ordinary people can now politically organise and influence the world of politics via social media, Twitter and blogs. Marxists believe that globalisation has produced social media platforms that can reach out to many more people than conventional media in order to shape people’s ideas. Consequently, digital social media is a potentially powerful way for the ruling class to bring about cultural hegemony. However, Marxists argue that the popularity of global social media such as Facebook, functions to reinforce false class consciousness because global social networks mainly focus on non-critical issues such as identity, entertainment and consumption, and consequently are rarely important vehicles of protest and social change. Those who own or control these new forms of global communication and social networks aim 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.
Another recent negative by-product of global social networks, which may also contribute to false class consciousness, is the dissemination of fake news on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Marxists argue that the internet and other digital forms of communication are another method of surveillance used by the wealthy to control and regulate people on a global scale.

If globalisation was truly happening, people would have a greater awareness of the world as one unified place. However, the nation state mentality is still dominant. For example, many people in the UK see themselves as British rather than as part of a global community as clearly indicated by the 2016 referendum which voted in favour of the UK leaving the EU (Brexit). Some critics of the concept of globalisation claim that the spread of American cultural products – sometimes called the Coca-colonisation or Disneyfication of the world - has been mistaken for globalisation. Critics of globalisation suggest it has resulted in cultural homogenisation whereby western culture dominates all other cultures, so creating one culture that is dominated by capitalist neo-liberal ideology which stresses the free market, individualism and consumerism, patriarchal ideology and secularism. From this viewpoint, westernisation has been mistaken for globalisation.

Marshall McLuhan predicted the emergence of what he called the ‘global village’. He likened communications and media to a giant central nervous system or matrix which ultimately would connect everybody in the world as part of one super-culture. Pountney observes that the technology of the digital global village, for example, social media such as Facebook and Instagram and apps such as WhatsApp and Skype, increase people’s ability to create and maintain social relationships with friends, peers and colleagues they already know and people who live far away, perhaps even on another continent. The global village in the form of the internet makes it easy to construct virtual communities, instantaneous interaction and sharing at any time and from any place. The Marxist sociologist Castells argues that in late-modern capitalist society, the emergence of digital technology and culture and its easy availability has created a networked global society in which 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 power in the hands of the people.

However, not all Marxists are convinced. They argue that those who participate in the new digital culture are not created equal and that the internet and other digital forms of communication are another method of surveillance used by the wealthy to control and regulate people. For example, the whistleblower Edward Snowden revealed that the British government is illegally intercepting smartphone and internet communications and harvesting email and text messages from private citizens, supposedly to prevent terrorist attacks. This illegal activity has led some critics of digital media to suggest that individual freedom, privacy and liberty are under attack and that the human rights of UK citizens are being infringed.

Marxists would argue that digital technology has destabilised democracy and made the actions of the powerful less accountable to the people, despite Castells arguing that digital forms of communication have decentralised power and given ordinary people more power to change society and to make the actions of the powerful more accountable.

Marxists point out that ownership and control of digital technology is actually in the hands of the powerful and argue that the popularity of social media such as Facebook, functions to reinforce false class consciousness because digital social networks mainly focus on non-critical issues such as identity, entertainment and consumption, and consequently are rarely important vehicles of protest and social change. Marxists argue that those who own or control these new forms of communication and social networks aim to shape and manipulate how people think. Social networks may act like ‘imperial powers’, colonising the minds of millions of people worldwide. It has been argued that they create a ‘cult of homogeneity’, diminishing local culture.

However, in criticism of Marxist views, some sociologists would say 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.

Pountney suggests that the relationships people have online may be just as significant as those they enjoy offline. The internet has resulted in the emergence of virtual communities - social networks of like-minded individuals who create online communities. Some virtual communities
Carter researched CyberCity and found it had all the characteristics of a city containing over one million registered users. Over the course of three and a half years she visited the site every day and used participant observation, questionnaires and offline semi-structured interviews in an attempt to find out how users interpreted their interaction with others on the site. Carter concluded that just as much effort is expended on maintaining relationships in cyberspace as on real face-to-face relationships. She also found that people who met online would often meet in real life. In this sense, cyberspace is becoming increasingly embedded in everyday life. Boellstorff spent two years conducting ethnographic research on the residents of the virtual world of Second Life and explored a range of issues including sex, money, gender and race. Virtual communities are a useful tool for the exchange of different forms of social capital.

According to Marxists the digital revolution has benefitted capitalism in several ways. Firstly, it legitimises and justifies the inequalities brought about by capitalism, by encouraging the powerless and the poor to uncritically accept capitalism and by discouraging the questioning of inequalities in income and wealth so bringing about a state of false class consciousness which allows politicians who represent the wealthy and privileged to rule by consent. Secondly, the capitalist transnationals that own and control these digital forms of communication and social networks aim to shape and manipulate how people think about the world in which 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. Thirdly, there is concern that commercial digital companies are amassing economic information on their customers with regard to their spending habits. For example, many companies that sell products and services on the internet engage in consumer surveillance. Technologies such as cookies can monitor and process the data generated by interactive media usage so they can segment and target potential future audiences and thus enhance profits. Marxists argue that the powerful control digital communication and social media, which undermines the concept of a participatory digital culture. They argue that friendship and connectedness have become commoditised. Social media activity is not as voluntary as people believe it to be. Algorithms shepherd people towards making ‘choices’ that benefit capitalist agencies such as advertisers. Social media content may therefore simply reflect capitalist ideology.

The most popular social networking site in the world is Facebook. In the USA, web users spend more time on Facebook than any other website. In January 2017, there were over 1.86 billion people worldwide registered with Facebook. Until the digital revolution, social networks involved people – friends, family or work colleagues meeting physically face to face. Digital networks have dramatically changed the face of social networking. For example, we can follow the activities and current opinions of friends and colleagues by friending them on Facebook or by following them on Twitter. Postmodernists argue that people are no longer content to inherit fixed identities, such as social class or gender identity. Instead, social media networks and virtual communities offer people a plurality of identities from which to choose and consume and so subvert traditional forms of identity. Audiences are immersed in so much information in the digital postmodern age that they find it difficult to distinguish between real life and the digital version of reality which some postmodernists call hyper-reality. However, postmodernists probably exaggerate the impact of the ‘digital information explosion’ on ordinary people’s capacity to bring about change in their social identities and lives.

This is a Marxist point of view. Social networks may act like ‘imperial powers’, colonising the minds of millions of people worldwide. It has been argued that they create a ‘cult of homogeneity’, diminishing local culture. Marxists argue that the powerful control digital communication and social media, which undermines the concept of a participatory digital culture. They argue that friendship and connectedness have become commoditised. Social media activity is not as voluntary as people believe it to be. Algorithms shepherd people towards making ‘choices’ that benefit capitalist agencies such as advertisers. Social media content may therefore simply reflect capitalist ideology.

Digital technologies and networks mainly strengthen the power of existing elites and, in so doing, contribute to the ‘muting’ of those – the politically and economically repressed who have genuine grievances with the way capitalism is organised.

Feminists point out that control of the content of new digital forms of communication is in the hands of transnational corporations which are mainly owned and controlled by men, despite the fact that women use social media platforms...
such as Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram more than men do.

Some feminists are critical of digital forms of communication which they see as patriarchal apparatuses which mainly engage in the symbolic annihilation of women, that is, they tend to show women in a narrow and limited range of social roles and to suggest that their achievements are less important than their looks and bodies. Good examples of this are the popularity of pornography websites on the internet, and the fact that women were in the minority of the top 100 UK-based people followed on Twitter in 2017. Digital technology has also produced new online ways in which both women and children can be exploited. For example, instances of online grooming of children, the exchange of pornographic images of children, revenge porn and sexting have increased dramatically in recent years. There is also evidence that the ‘dark net’ – an encrypted part of the internet used by criminals to buy and sell illegal goods and services – is also used by criminal gangs to exploit women and children by making available extreme forms of pornography not available on conventional sites and by trafficking and selling women and children as sex-slaves.

However, some feminists have noted ways in which digital technology can be utilised for the good of women. Donna Haraway argues that feminists need to participate in technological advances so that men do not monopolise digital information and technology. She argues that women cannot be essentialised, which means there is no such thing as a universal female identity or experience. In contrast, Haraway argues that female identity in the globalised digital world is socially constructed and politicised. For example, it is assumed that females are not interested in technology which allows males to dominate it. Haraway suggests a cyborg metaphor to suggest ways in which females might be empowered by digital technology. A cyborg is a hybridised half-machine and part-human entity. Haraway suggests that feminists need to move away from the limitations of traditional gender identity and patriarchy and adopt cyborg identities which mix male and female attributes so that neither dominates.

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.

Castells believes that a globalised network society can bring about positive social change. In the past, both communications and information were organised vertically which means information was communicated from the capitalist elites that ran society to those below them. However, Castells argues that in late-modern capitalist society 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. Digital forms of communication have decentralised power. Digital technology has resulted in more power in the hands of the people. This means that groups of people previously denied a voice by powerful groups are now able to speak out about their grievances and be heard.

However, other Marxists are critical and point out that ownership and control of digital forms of communication are in the hands of global capitalist corporations who use them to create new markets in order to enable greater profits and to reproduce and justify inequalities in wealth and income, and to colonise people’s minds with capitalist ideas.

Postmodernists claim societies today are underpinned by globalisation – media transnationals have used digital communications technology such as the internet and satellite television to remove the distinction between the global and the local and to increase consumer choice in the range of knowledge and entertainment available for consumption. The diversity of digital forms of communication has undermined meta-narratives that claim absolute truth such as religious and political ideologies. It has resulted in the fragmentation of knowledge and encouraged people to see that there are multiple interpretations or truths, all of which have some relative value; for example, President Trump’s insistence that ‘alternative facts’ are just as legitimate as actual facts.

Postmodernists believe that people are no longer content to inherit fixed identities, such as social class or gender identity. Instead, social media networks and virtual communities offer a plurality of identities from which to choose and consume and so subvert traditional forms of identity. Audiences are therefore immersed in so much information in the digital
postmodern age that they find it difficult to distinguish between real life and the digital version of reality, which some postmodernists call hyper-reality.

However, in criticism of postmodern views, some sociologists would say that they often fail to recognise inequalities in access to digital technology. They also fail to offer any explanation for why some groups experience a digital divide and why some groups are denied a digital voice or platform to express their disaffection at the way they have been treated by the powerful despite the supposed diversity of choice available in digital forms of communication. In conclusion, postmodernists probably exaggerate the impact of the ‘digital information explosion’ on ordinary people’s capacity to bring about change in their social identities and lives.

Page 172

1 Young people, in particular, have taken advantage of digital technology to engage in frequent on-the-run communication with friends. 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. Turkle suggests that 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.

However, there is a ‘dark-side’ to young people’s use of social media. The negative consequences of social media might include the violation of privacy symbolised by sexting and revenge pornography, coming into contact with people who are only interested in spouting hate, for example, trolls, and the sexual exploitation of young people, such as those who ‘groom’ young people. Anonymity makes it easier for some to bully, abuse or threaten others online.

2 Functionalist 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. Young people have greater access to the means of digital communication because parents are now spending more money on their children. Children and young people have more time on their hands to use digital communication because they generally have fewer responsibilities.

However, social media may have dysfunctional effects for young people such as online sexual exploitation known as grooming. Turkle points out that, although digital forms of communication connect users to more people, it has also resulted in greater anxiety. She notes devotion to checking the mobile phone is almost religious. When mobile phones are misplaced, anxiety levels rise. People feel cut off from reality. She argues that this is unhealthy behaviour. Digital technology may also be disruptive because it reduces family time and consequently undermines family relationships and potentially causes conflict between parents and children.

Research carried out by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) which investigated internet use by 540,000 young people in 35 countries in 2017 found that more than one in three British 15-year-olds are ‘extreme internet users’ who spend at least six hours a day online, which is markedly higher than any other country in the study apart from Chile. Gardner and Davis (2014) argue that there are several advantages for young people in social networking and constructing online relationships. For example, accumulating connections or online relationships may be empowering and enriching for some because it can produce social capital – this concept broadly refers to the resources that stem from links with others, which have collective value for all concerned because connections and the opportunities which result from them are shared and reciprocated. For example, membership of an online community may provide opportunities for people with similar interests to find and interact with one another. This type of capital is known as ‘bonding social capital’ because it may throw up opportunities for jobs or mutual aid. For example, belonging to a Facebook community of A-level Sociology students may bring benefits in terms of shared information about how to pass the exam.

Boyd (2014) argues that the constant tracking of social media performance is particularly unhealthy for teenagers because it has weakened their capacity to develop an autonomous sense of self in that they have become too dependent on how other people
react to them online. Research published in 2017 from the anti-bullying charity Ditch the Label found that 40 per cent of its sample reported that ‘they felt bad’ if nobody liked their selfies and 35 per cent said their confidence was directly linked to the number of online followers they had. Boyd’s research (2014) also suggests teenagers feel that their thoughts and feelings are not real until they have been validated by others online. Gardner and Davis (2014) similarly argue that constant self-projection and self-tracking online reduces the time teenagers have for self-contemplation and real-life interaction with others. They observe that the maintenance of virtual identities means that teenagers today are more narcissistic (obsessed with self) compared with previous generations. There is a danger, too, that digital media have had a coarsening effect on some young people in that there is some evidence that digital interaction can make some young people less empathetic and possibly ‘meaner’ online than they are in person. Moreover, online bullying, sexting, grooming and sexual harassment are now recognised as common problems of the digital age.

4 Turkle suggests that 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.

5 Young people, in particular, have taken advantage of digital technology to engage in frequent on-the-run communication with friends. In the UK, a majority 16-to 24-year-olds send at least one text per day, and use social networking sites such as Instagram to send messages to other adolescents and to maintain relationships. Boyle argues that young people are more receptive to learning the new skills demanded by the newer forms of digital technology and communication. The way that digital communication is used by older people contrasts vividly with the way it is used by the young. Nearly four in five households have an internet connection compared with less than two in five households of pensioners. However, a survey conducted by Ofcom in 2015 suggests that older generations (silver surfers) are beginning to use digital forms of communication more frequently, because older people are more affluent today compared with previous generations of the elderly. Digital communication devices also have practical appeal to the elderly, for example, for online shopping. Berry found that older people who did not regularly use digital communication mainly blamed lack of skills and interest or psychological barriers rather than reasons of cost. There are signs that the greater take-up of digital communication by older people may have benefits for their self-esteem and identity. Researchers who carried out a study of elderly people’s use of social media in Britain and Italy found that training older vulnerable people to use social media improves cognitive capacity, increases their sense of self-competence and could have a beneficial overall impact on mental health and physical wellbeing.

6 Digital communication may be less available to the poor because of its expense. It has been argued that digital communications are dominated by middle-class usage because this social class can afford to invest in the most recent digital technology. It is argued that the revolution in digital communication has created a digital underclass because the poor lack the resources to join in with this new media usage. It has been claimed that this digital underclass is characterised by unemployment, lower education levels, a smaller range of digital skills and lack of social capital – networks of people or contacts that can provide essential support, guidance and advantage. Mertens and D’Haenens in their study of digital users in Belgium, found that 94 per cent of the middle-class used digital forms of communication, compared with only 81 per cent of those from working-class backgrounds. Those from working-class backgrounds tend to use digital communication for the purpose of entertainment via game consoles, while middle-class users used it mainly for education and to accumulate information.

7 Ginsburg argues that interactive digital technologies can provide powerful platforms for people with disabilities which enable them to engage in first-person discussion of their worlds and experiences. Disabled people can use digital communication to engage in digital video activism – there are YouTube blogs featuring a range of disabilities encompassing autism to being confined to a wheelchair. This digital activism has created a community in which those who have difficulty in face-to-face conversation and those who may be restricted to a disabled identity can speak directly to a nondisabled audience about their experience of disability. Facebook has been used by people with disabilities to create support networks such as Disability Rights UK, Dancing Giraffe and ABLEize which aim to provide the 50,000 disabled people in the UK with a voice and political influence.
by connecting them to each other online. Many people with disabilities use virtual world sites such as Second Life or Virtual Ability. Boellstorff observes that Second Life enables disabled people to take control of their identity and their interactions with others by adopting virtual identities that are denied to them in real life. For example, people confined to wheelchairs in real life can adopt avatars that walk, run and dance while text chat equalises deaf people’s ability to talk to everyone compared with the real world in which only a minority of non-disabled people are familiar with sign language. ‘Virtual Ability’ has actually been designed by people with disabilities as a virtual community of support. It provides opportunities for disabled people to virtually experience a range of activities that they are excluded from in the real world, such as dancing, mountain climbing, trampolining and skydiving, in order to improve confidence, self-esteem and social skills.

It is argued that the revolution in digital communication has created a digital underclass because the poor lack the resources to join in with this new media usage. It has been claimed that this digital underclass is characterised by unemployment, lower education levels, a smaller range of digital skills and lack of social capital – networks of people or contacts that can provide essential support, guidance and advantage. There is also a digital divide between Western societies and the developing world. In 2015, the UN announced that 4 billion people – 57 per cent of the world’s population – and 90 per cent of those who live in the 48 poorest countries, have no access to the internet. Furthermore, only 7 per cent of Africa’s inhabitants are online. This is because mobile connectivity in Africa is limited. In Africa, digital connectivity is highest in South Africa and Nigeria. Difficulties of access to the internet are also compounded by the fact that most of the language of the World Wide Web is English and the fact that a fairly large proportion of people in African countries are illiterate.

Granovetter observes that digital forms of communication are advantageous because they allow instantaneous communication with others, provide an opportunity to expand the number of social ties, especially with people such as celebrities with whom ordinary individuals would not normally come into, and overcome barriers to communication such as distance, social status, disability and shyness. Granovetter distinguishes between two types of social ties. Strong social ties originate in family and friendship while weak social ties are those people have with work colleagues or acquaintances. Granovetter observes that digital ties via social media are weak ties compared with friendships but these are in many ways more important because they create connections between members of networks that are important in evaluating the identity of oneself and others. For example, people may judge themselves and others on the basis of how many Facebook friends or Twitter followers they have. Shaw and Gant (2002) found that internet use significantly decreased loneliness and depression while perceived social support and self-esteem increased. However, the quality of online relationships or ‘friends’ has been questioned. Turkle 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.

Digital media may be advantageous for society because a global networked society encourages democracy and free speech according to some sociologists and give a powerful voice to groups who are usually not heard because they are suppressed by more powerful groups. For example, digital media and social platforms proved extremely useful in terms of coordinating 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. Kirkpatrick argues that social media provides the oppressed and exploited with a means of being heard and may provide the only means by which protests can be heard, especially if governments are cracking down on free speech.

Bjorklund argues that Facebook allows people to construct an on-going autobiography online. Facebook is essentially a record of how people see their lives. Hart argues that 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 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. Some sociologists argue that accumulating connections or online relationships is empowering and enriching because it produces social capital. However, it is argued by others that social networking has actually weakened rather than strengthened relationships. 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 and marriages. The quality of online relationships or ‘friends’ has been questioned. Turkle 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. Digital technology can diminish the quality of face-to-face interaction if people are always focused on their phone and constantly checking for texts and social network updates. Digital technology is also disruptive because it may reduce family time and closeness.

11 This is a postmodernist idea. They argue that audiences are sometimes so immersed in too much information in the digital postmodern age that they find it difficult to distinguish between real life and the digital version of reality which some postmodernists call hyper-reality. For example, they may be unable to distinguish between real news and fake news. Carter researched CyberCity and found it had all the characteristics of a city containing over one million registered users. Carter concluded that just as much effort is expended on maintaining relationships in cyberspace as on real face-to-face relationships. She also found that people who met online would often meet in real life. In this sense, cyberspace is becoming increasingly embedded in everyday life.

12 Howard’s study ‘Digital Jesus’ found that the internet played a key role in creating an online network or web of Christian fundamentalist groups in the USA. Howard describes this as a ‘virtual church’ which differed from conventional religion in that there was no physical leader or place of worship to attend. There is evidence too that Islamist fundamentalist groups such as the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and ISIS (Daesh) are also using digital forms of communication to recruit jihadists and to disseminate propaganda.

13 Because the developed world has the greatest use of the internet and other digital communication, the majority of communication is in English. This suggests a process of cultural homogenisation is occurring whereby western culture dominates all other cultures, so creating one culture that is dominated by capitalist neo-liberal ideology which stresses the free market, individualism and consumerism, patriarchal ideology and secularism.

However, critics of this idea argue that global digital media is actually used by minority groups as a form of cultural defence. Giddens argues that the global homogenisation argument neglects reverse colonisation where powerful cultures may be infiltrated and influenced by less powerful cultures such as the Mexicanisation of parts of the USA such as California and Arizona. Many societies have been able to defend their cultures against both globalisation and cultural imperialism, a process that has been termed cultural defence. For example, France introduced quotas which limit the distribution of cultural products such as films. French cinemas by law are only allowed to show a particular number of American movies and must also show a certain number of French films. In China, citizens’ access to digital media is controlled by the state. For example, China has blocked all references to the word ‘democracy’ on its most popular search engine and denies its citizens access to websites such as Wikipedia. All internet use is closely monitored by the authorities. This censorship and surveillance is referred to as the ‘great firewall of China’. The Muslim world too has developed internet websites, political blogs and satellite television channels such as Al-Jazeera to provide an alternative interpretation of what is going on in the Arab world, so resisting and opposing the western interpretation of that world. Digital media can be used to defend local tribes, customs and practices from globalisation. For example, indigenous tribes and isolated communities have used digital technology to gain a voice that can help defend their environment and culture from exploitation by corporate interests and other threats.

Glocalisation refers to how local cultural products are combined or fused with globalised cultural products to produce unique cultural forms or hybrids. It can also refer to how local cultures adapt and use global social networks in ways that reflect the cultural priorities and eccentricities of a particular society. Glocalisation has two elements to it. Firstly, western media and cultural producers often adapt their products so that they appeal to local markers and audiences. Secondly, local cultures select and appropriate elements of westernised global culture that please them, which they then modify and adapt to their local culture and needs. In other words, they localise the global to produce a hybridised popular culture. Miller argues that Facebook is a good example
of glocalisation. Facebook in Trinidad is not the same as Facebook in London because two very different cultures – Trinidian and British – use Facebook in very different ways which reflect their cultural priorities.

14 Many societies have been able to defend their cultures against both globalisation and cultural imperialism, a process that has been termed cultural defence. For example, citizens’ access to digital media in China is controlled by the state. The Chinese government has blocked all references to the word ‘democracy’ on its most popular search engine and denies its citizens access to websites such as Wikipedia. All internet use is closely monitored by the authorities. This censorship and surveillance is referred to as the ‘great firewall of China’. Digital media has been used by groups such as the Rohinga tribe in Myanmar who are being polluted by transnationals and other powerful interests. Other tribes have used digital media to alert the world to the fact that their homeland is being exploited and polluted by transnationals and other powerful interests.

15 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 also 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). Digital media and social platforms have 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.
Now test yourself answers at www.hoddereducation.co.uk/myrevisionnotesdownloads

3. The fact that crime and deviance are socially constructed means that what is deviant or criminal largely depends on its situational context. This means that it is only deviant in certain times, in certain places or in particular cultures.

This relativity of crime and deviance can be illustrated in a number of ways. Firstly, definitions of crime and deviance are often relative to historical period. For example, homosexuality was a criminal offence until 1967, as was blasphemy until 2008. In 2017 there is still a significant minority of the population that views homosexuality as deviant or abnormal/unnatural and consequently views it with disapproval. Secondly, definitions of deviance may also be relative to culture. Muslim culture takes blasphemy more seriously than Christian culture. For example, since 1987, in Pakistan, over 60 people have been murdered before their trials after being accused of blasphemy. Muslim culture also views drinking alcohol, consuming pork products and gambling as highly deviant. Thirdly, definitions of normality and deviance may be relative to gender; for example, Saudi Arabia is a deeply conservative society in which it is deviant and illegal for women to be in public without their head being covered. Finally, definitions of deviance may also be relative to locality or context; for example, nudity is fine in private (in the bedroom and bathroom) but is generally regarded as deviant in most public spaces apart from beaches set apart for the purpose of nude sunbathing.

4. Self-reports have a number of strengths. For example, they challenge the validity of the Official Crime Statistics, particularly the idea that working-class males commit most crime. Studies based on self-reports, e.g. Belson on adolescent boys in London and Campbell on teenage girls, indicate that the both females and middle-class males also commit crime but they are less likely to be stopped and arrested by the police. Campbell’s self-report study especially challenged the idea that females commit significantly less crime than males. However, self-reports have a number of methodological weaknesses too. People often under-report the crimes they have committed because they fear the police might be informed. Boys often exaggerate or over-report their offences to create an impression of ‘being tough and masculine’. Some people may not co-operate because they do not like admitting to sensitive and loaded issues such as domestic violence or racist attacks. Attempts that have been made to check the ‘honesty’ of respondents have indicated that about a quarter of respondents are liable to conceal wrong-doings.

5. Society uses a combination of formal and informal agencies of social control to regulate the behaviour of its citizens. Formal agencies of social control include the police, the courts and prisons, and mainly function to make sure that citizens conform to the law. Other social institutions such as schools and workplaces also have formal written rules which pupils and employees are expected to abide by. Informal agents of control also function to make sure people conform to rules which are essential to the smooth running of society or social institutions. For example, teachers ensure pupils behave during lessons and in the playground, parents ensure children are courteous and polite, while line managers ensure workers do their jobs properly. The mass media and religions are also informal agents of social control, because newspapers, magazines, television and religious texts often make clear their disapproval of particular types of behaviour.

These social control agencies use a system of sanctions to reward or punish behaviour. Failure to abide by rules can result in negative sanctions or punishments which can be formal, for example, in some societies this might mean the death penalty. In the UK, formal sanctions imposed by the criminal justice system include imprisonment and fines. Employers can formally suspend or sack workers, while schools can suspend or exclude pupils. Informal sanctions are mainly used by parents; for example, a child
The official criminal statistics are made up of crimes reported to and recorded by the police. They are seen to have a number of strengths. For example, they cover the whole population and go back over many years so can be used to establish trends and patterns in criminal activity with regard to its volume, e.g. how much there is and whether crime rates are rising or falling, and types of crime – whether it is violence against people or whether it is property orientated. They are also collected in a scientific fashion, in that all police forces have to follow standardised counting rules laid down by the government which are used to class offences in the same way wherever they are committed. They are useful because they give criminologists insight into the characteristics most likely to lead to criminality. For example, the statistics suggest that as people get older, they commit less crime, that people from deprived backgrounds are more likely to be in prison than those from wealthy backgrounds and that males commit more than females. They are also very practical because they are up to date, easy and cheap to access.

However, interpretivist sociologists generally object to their use on several grounds. First and most importantly, interpretivists point out that crime statistics are socially constructed and consequently, they may tell us more about the behaviour of those employed by the criminal justice system, such as the institutional racism of the police, than they tell us about crime and criminals. Secondly, they may not provide a complete picture of crime because they may be massaged by the police. In order to meet crime targets linked to funding set by the government some police forces may ‘fiddle’ their figures by not recording every crime reported to them. Moreover, some victims of crime may choose not to report crimes against them. For example, the evidence suggests only a minority of rape victims report the crime to the police because they fear that police officers will make negative judgements about their behaviour. Finally, crime statistics are sometimes distorted by historical crimes. For example, Dr Harold Shipman committed over 200 murders over a 40-year period but these were only uncovered in 2001. These were all were added to the 2002 murder statistics which gave a false impression of trends in murder in the period 2001–03.

The ‘dark figure’ of crime which is sometimes called the hidden iceberg refers to the net sum of all crimes not reported to the police and all those crimes that go unrecorded.

The main way is that it gives insight into the dark figure of unreported and unrecorded crime because people report those crimes against them regardless of whether they were recorded by the police or not. The CSEW has found that over 40 per cent of crimes often go unreported and unrecorded.

Crime is deviant and illegal behaviour that breaks the laws. Deviance is behaviour that attracts social disapproval. Crime is deviance but deviance is not necessarily illegal.

Agents of social control have a number of sanctions at their disposal. Failure to abide by rules can result in negative sanctions or punishments which can be formal, for example, in some societies this might mean the death penalty. In the UK, formal sanctions imposed by the criminal justice system include imprisonment and fines. Employers can formally suspend or sack workers, while schools can suspend or exclude pupils. Informal sanctions are mainly used by parents; for example, a child might be ‘grounded’ or sent to the ‘naughty’ step. Peer groups also use informal sanctions such as bullying, humiliation and rejection to enforce conformity. People who conform may be rewarded with positive sanctions; for example, children may be praised by parents or teachers, while workers may be rewarded with promotion or a pay rise.

Police recorded statistics are reliable in the sense that all police forces in the UK have to use the same counting rules when recording crime. However, interpretivists argue that the crime statistics do not provide a very valid picture of crime because many victims do not report crimes against them to the police, some police forces may manipulate or ‘massage’ the crime figures for political reasons, some police forces crack down on particular crimes whilst others do not. The existence of the dark figure or hidden iceberg of crime means that police recorded statistics give us at best a very partial picture of crime.

Some groups may be reluctant to report crimes against them to the police. For example, young males may be too embarrassed to report violence against them, whereas rape victims may fear that the police, media or society may partly see them as ‘at fault’ for what happened to them. Some victims such as children or the
elderly may not realise they are victims, for example, of abuse or fraud.

Institutional victims of crime such as banks may be reluctant to report employees for white-collar crimes because they fear that the negative publicity will cost them the confidence of their customers and loss of business. People’s memories with regard to traumatic events such as being the victim of crime are often unreliable – there is a danger of subjective exaggeration as well as the telescoping of incidents, i.e. people unconsciously move them forward and backward in time. Marxists point out that the general public may be unaware that they may have been victims of crimes committed by the economically powerful, e.g. corporate crime, green or environmental crime and state crime.

13 Political pressure on the police to meet crime reduction targets may result in the police artificially massaging the OCS using ‘coughing’, ‘cuffing’ or ‘skewing’ techniques. Police officers and forces may stereotype particular social groups, for example, the working-class, young people, members of ethnic minority groups and even certain areas, for example, council estates, as ‘potentially criminal’ and target them for stop, search and arrest. The appearance of these groups in the official crime statistics may tell us more about police prejudices and profiling than it tells us about the criminality of these particular groups.

Page 185

1 They tell us about the volume of crime, that is, how much there is and whether it is rising or falling. Secondly, it gives insight into whether crime is against people or property. Thirdly, it tells us which groups are more likely to commit crime, although interpretivist sociologists argue that statistics tell us more about police prejudices, particularly against young people and Black people.

2 Unfortunately the official crime statistics do not include information about the employment status or social class of offenders. However, sociologists see a strong relationship between crime, social class and deprivation when looking at the social backgrounds of people in prison. Although the Ministry of Justice does not keep records with regard to the social-class backgrounds of prisoners in British jails, there are clues which suggest there is a relationship between criminality and deprivation.

11 per cent of prisoners ran away from home as a child and were either homeless or in care before their conviction. About one in three female and half of male prisoners were excluded from school and a majority have no qualifications compared with 15 per cent of the population. 41 per cent of prisoners witnessed domestic violence as a child and almost a third experienced abuse. Sociologists have pointed out that 74 per cent of the prison population is drawn from the poorest 20 per cent of the population. Most prisoners prior to their conviction were either unemployed or employed in semi-skilled or unskilled manual work.

3 Approximately 88 per cent of offenders found guilty or cautioned for violent crime are male. At least one third of men have been convicted for a criminal offence before the age of 35, compared with only 8 per cent of women. In 2016, only 5 per cent of prisoners in British prisons were female. Around 89–90 per cent of convicted murderers are men. Pountney observes that female offenders were more likely than male offenders to be claiming benefits, which suggests deprivation may shape women’s criminality more than men’s.

4 Official crime statistics show that in England and Wales, people from some minority ethnic groups are more likely to be arrested for and convicted of crime than the White ethnic majority. Black people, especially African-Caribbeans, who make up only 3.1 per cent of the population, are six times more likely to be stopped and searched by the police than any other ethnic group, despite the fact that 90 per cent of such stops do not lead to an arrest. Black people are twice as likely to be convicted of an offence compared with White people and three times more likely to be sent to prison. 13 per cent of male prisoners and one fifth of female prisoners in UK prisons were Black or Black British in 2014. Asian ethnic groups are two times more likely to be stopped and searched than White people but are less likely to be arrested or convicted. About 7.4 per cent of the prison population were British Asian in 2014. Ministry of Justice statistics in 2014 showed that the number of Muslims in the prison population has more than doubled to nearly 12,000 in the last ten years. One in seven prisoners (14 per cent) in England and Wales is a Muslim. Some research suggests around one third of Muslim inmates are from Caribbean or African backgrounds.

5 According to the CSEW, current rates of victimisation are very similar between men and women, but the types of crime that men and women are victims of do differ. Two thirds of homicide victims in the UK are male. Males are more likely to be murdered by strangers; females are more likely to be murdered by a husband or boyfriend. Females are more
likely than males to be victims of sexual and domestic violence. Victim surveys indicate that the elderly have a disproportionate fear of crime but young people are actually more likely to be the victims of crime. According to the CSEW, one in four children aged between 10 and 15 has been a victim of personal crimes, such as robbery, assault and theft. However, the CSEW also found evidence of considerable underreporting among this group. Only one in ten children reported crimes against them to the police. The CSEW concluded that White people were less likely to be victims of crime compared with Black and Asian people. Both African-Caribbean and British Asian ethnic minorities are particularly prone to being the victims of street robbery, and also suffer higher rates of victimisation from racially motivated, hate crime offences compared with White people. The CSEW concluded that poorer households were more likely to be burgled than higher income households. Both the Islington and Merseyside crime surveys concluded that poorer communities were more at risk of being victims of crime than middle-class communities. Both the Islington and Merseyside crime surveys found poor people were often the victims of repeat victimisation – they were mugged or burgled more than once over the course of a year. Moreover, the experience of crime was more traumatic for poorer communities because they could neither afford the insurance required to replace stolen goods nor the investment required to install the locks, alarms and security lights needed to design crime out of their lives. The poor’s experience of being a victim of crime was often made worse by poor or hostile police–community relationships which made them reluctant to report crime because they strongly believed that police officers did not take crime reported by them seriously.

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 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. Victim surveys indicate that the elderly have a disproportionate fear of crime but young people are actually more likely to be the victims of crime. According to the CSEW, one in four children aged between 10 and 15 has been a victim of personal crimes, such as robbery, assault and theft. However, the CSEW also found evidence of considerable underreporting among this group. Only one in ten children reported crimes against them to the police. Young men are the most likely victims of violent crime, especially knife attacks linked to territorial gang violence.

Global crime is a term used to describe illegal activities pursued by organised criminal groups or gangs which cross national borders, such as drugs, people or arms trafficking, money laundering and terrorism. These global gangs exploit increasing global inter-connectedness; for example, global criminal gangs have taken advantage of new developments in communication such as the internet and the 24-hour banking system. However, global crime is a contested category of crime because it is difficult to define its scope. Only a fraction of global crime comes to the attention of law enforcement agencies. It has been estimated that the global criminal economy is worth the equivalent of 10 per cent of the world’s Gross National Production. Castells values it as worth £1 trillion a year. In 2017, Europol reported that at least 5,000 global gangs were operating in Europe. These gangs were particularly involved in people or migrant trafficking, drug smuggling/dealing, supplying forged documents and digital attacks on businesses known as ‘ransomware’.

Green crime often has global effects. Wild animal trafficking is regarded by Interpol as the third largest illegal business in the world after drug and arms trafficking. It is seen as a major threat to biodiversity – the variety of animals and plants in a particular ecosystem which is seen as both important and desirable to the health of those species, including humans that are dependent on that system. Air pollution such as CO₂ emissions from factories, cars and so on in China, USA and Europe may be responsible for the degradation of the air that we breathe and for the ‘global warming’, which some scientists claim is responsible for environmental problems such as flooding caused by glacial melting and rising sea-levels.

Hobbs and Dunningham observe that global criminal networks often serve and feed off established local or domestic criminal networks in western countries. This is known as ‘glocalisation’. For example, local prices and the availability of drugs in any city in the UK depend on how efficiently global drug trade gangs can move drugs such as heroin, cocaine and marijuana around the world while avoiding detection. Local crimes such as burglary, shoplifting and street robbery are often the result of
addicts attempting to raise cash to buy drugs supplied by global gangs.

10 Global crime is difficult to police because international laws are ill defined and international criminal justice agencies do not have the global powers to pursue global criminals. Co-operation between international agencies is limited or hindered by conflict between local and international police agencies and also conflict between governments. However, not all criminologists agree on how to define global crime. For example, 2010 saw the emergence of the website Wikileaks, which released hundreds of thousands of confidential US cables from American embassies around the world on a range of sensitive political issues. The US government views Julian Assange, who founded the site, as a criminal, whereas others see him as a crusader for democracy.

11 Rob White has drawn attention to the fact that the present criminal law is inadequate for dealing with green crime. White argues that green crime should be defined as ‘any action that harms the physical environment and any of the creatures that live within it, even if no law has been technically broken’. However, his focus on harm rather than criminality means that his version of green criminology has been accused of bias and being engaged with subjective interpretation rather than objective scientific analysis. Many capitalist corporations argue that humans have the right to exploit the natural environment and other species for the benefit of humankind. From this perspective, environmental damage is an inevitable and unavoidable consequence of progress. On the other hand, White argues that this irresponsible capitalist ideology is responsible for a great deal of environmental harm. Green crime is extremely difficult to police because there are very few local or international laws aimed at protecting the environment or eco-system.

Page 207

1 Durkheim believed that crime was functional or beneficial for society because it serves a collective purpose in three ways. Firstly, crime re-affirms the boundaries between acceptable and deviant behaviour. Every time a person breaks a law and is taken to court, the trial and the publicity it generates in the media publicly re-affirms the existing consensus as to what is ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ behaviour. Secondly, acts of crime and deviance can provoke positive social change by highlighting aspects of the social structure, collective conscience or the law that are inadequate or outdated. People who commit crime for this reason are often ahead of their time and can be termed ‘functional rebels’ because they help to change the collective conscience and laws based on it for the better. Examples of functional rebels might include groups such as the suffragettes and individuals such as Martin Luther King. Thirdly, Durkheim points out that horrific crimes such as child murders or terrorism create shared outrage, horror, anger, fear or grief which brings together ‘upright consciences’. This was particularly noticeable, for example, in the UK following the July 2005 London Underground bombings and in France following the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015.

2 According to sociologists such as Albert Cohen, Cloward and Ohlin and Walter Miller, subcultures are extremely important in motivating young people to commit crime. Cohen observed that the type of crimes committed by children and teenagers tends to be of a non-utilitarian nature. This means that crimes such as gang violence, joy-riding, hooliganism and vandalism have no obvious economic benefit to the offender. However, Cohen argues that juvenile delinquency is caused by a strain between cultural goals and the institutional means of achieving them. He suggests that the main goal of most young people is status or respect. They wish to feel valued. Middle-class youngsters can normally attain these things from their parents, teachers and peers as they achieve educational success. However, Cohen suggests that working-class boys are denied status at school because their parents have failed to equip them with the skills they need to achieve educational success. Consequently, such boys are allocated to the bottom sets or streams by teachers, and are unable to acquire the knowledge and status enjoyed by students in the higher sets. Such boys may leave school with few or no qualifications and then work in low-paid jobs or they leave school and are unemployed. In this sense, they are denied status by wider society. Cohen argues that these experiences result in low self-esteem. These boys feel alienated and angry at the low status that schools and society allocate them. They experience a form of anomie, which Cohen calls ‘status frustration’. They respond to this frustration by developing gangs or subcultures of like-minded boys who reverse the norms and values of the dominant culture and award one another status on the basis of anti-school and delinquent behaviour.

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, organised criminal subcultures may recruit young people to 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, some young people may be ‘press-ganged’ into the conflict subcultures or territorial street gangs that thrive in deprived inner-cities. 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 toughness and masculinity, 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 subculture which functions to compensate for the boredom of school and factory work.

However, David Matza, an interactionist sociologist, suggests that subcultural theories have the following problems. Only a minority of working-class youth actually get into trouble with the police or join territorial street gangs. Matza argues that generally young people tend to drift in and out of delinquency, but eventually grow out of it when they reach adulthood.

When justifying or explaining their delinquency, Matza observes that young people rarely make reference to status frustration or the strain involved in attempting to achieve material success or even a belief in a set of deviant subcultural values.

The main functionalist theory of crime is that associated with Robert Merton. Merton notes that in most western societies, the consensus is that the main cultural goal should be the attainment of material or monetary success. He notes that capitalist societies are supposed to be meritocratic – they provide the institutional means of achieving success, such as education and jobs. Access to these is based on the idea that hard work, intelligence and talent will be highly rewarded regardless of social background, gender or ethnicity. In the USA this cultural goal is embodied in the ‘American Dream’ – the idea that people regardless of background can be successful if they are talented and are prepared to work hard, for example, Barack Obama is seen as a symbol of the American Dream. However, the social structure of societies such as the USA and UK fails to provide the means by which most people can achieve the cultural goal of material or monetary success: there is a gap or strain between the cultural goals and the cultural means of achieving those goals. Consequently, the experience of some groups is that their opportunities are blocked regardless of how talented they are or how hard they work. They can also see that the playing field is not level and that some groups unfairly enjoy greater advantages and are more likely than them to achieve material success. Consequently, they may experience anomie – frustration and anger with the way society is organised – and this can lead to criminal or deviant responses.

However, Merton argues that despite this strain the majority conform and continue to work towards achieving material success using conventional means. A minority group, however, reject conventional means and innovate – this means they turn to illegitimate or criminal means to achieve material success. A third group – the retreatists reject both the goals and means and drop out of society altogether. Some groups decide to rebel. They reject both the goals and the means of achieving material success and substitute an alternative set of goals and means.

Merton’s theory has proved very influential. Jock Young uses Mertonian ideas when he argues that much crime in modern societies is the result of such societies being ‘bulimic societies’ in which people living in working-class and ethnic minority communities are ‘starved’ of opportunities to ‘get on’ and reject by bingeing on crime in order to achieve status and material success. Sumner too claims that Merton has uncovered the main cause of crime in modern societies – the alienation and disenchantment caused by the impossibility of achieving the goal of material success that dominates capitalist societies.

However, Merton does not explain why some individuals commit crime while others conform, retreat or rebel. Merton’s theory explains crime that results in economic gain, but he does not explain why people commit crimes that do not have an economic benefit such as much violent and sexual crime. He also fails to explain crimes committed by young people in gangs, which on the whole do not seem to be solely motivated by material goals. It has been pointed out that it is
rare that people strive for only one cultural goal because people often tend to set themselves a variety of goals. For example, people might prioritise doing well or constructing a healthy work-leisure balance or making sure that they attain a happy family life, over material success and power. White-collar and corporate crime arises from access to opportunities rather than the blocking of them. Consequently, Merton probably under-estimates the amount of crime committed by both the upper-class and the middle-classes.

4 Merton identifies five possible responses to blocked opportunities, some of which increase the possibility of crime and deviance among the poorer sections of the population. The first response is conformity – most people continue to conform and to obey the law. In other words, they continue to strive for material success using legitimate means. The second response is innovation – innovators are a minority group who, like everyone else, have been successfully socialised into the consensus that is they aim to achieve the goal of material success. However, this minority quickly realises that the legitimate means (education and jobs) are unlikely to produce wealth quickly enough, if at all. Consequently, this group turns to illegitimate criminal means to achieve the goal of material success. Innovators, therefore, constitute the main body of criminals in society. Athletes, such as Lance Armstrong, who cheat and lie their way to medals are good examples of deviant innovators. The third response is ritualism – ritualists are people who realise that material success is never going to come but compensate by gaining satisfaction from their jobs. Often this satisfaction is gained at the expense of others, for example, by insisting that clients or customers follow the rules to the ritualist’s satisfaction. This group is therefore deviant rather than criminal. The fourth response is retreatism – retreatists are a minority group who reject both the goal of material success as well as the legitimate means. They choose to be deviant and even criminal by engaging in socially disapproved activities, such as dependency on welfare benefits, drugs or alcohol. At the extreme, retreatists may drop out of society altogether by becoming vagrants or suicides. The fifth response is rebellion – rebels also reject the cultural goals and the legitimate means of achieving these but do so for political or ideological reasons. Rebels normally subscribe to alternative goals and means which may be seen as too extreme by mainstream society. They may turn to extreme criminal means in order to impose their goals and means on the rest of society, for example, terrorism and suicide bombing.

5 According to the Marxist sociologist David Gordon, criminogenic capitalism encourages crime in a number of ways. Firstly, he argues that that capitalism is characterised by class inequalities in the distribution of, for example, wealth and income. Consequently, poverty, unemployment, low-quality housing or homelessness, debt and food banks are ‘normal’ facts of life for those at the bottom end of a capitalist society. Gordon suggests that crime committed by the poor, the homeless and the unemployed is actually a realistic and rational response to the inequalities and humiliations that they experience on a daily basis. Secondly, he argues that capitalism is based upon competition, selfishness and greed, and this shapes people’s attitudes to crime. He argues that the ideology of capitalism encourages criminal behaviour in all social classes. For example, he argues that capitalism encourages a ‘dog eat dog’ system of ruthless competition. Moreover, capitalist values such as individualism, materialism and consumerism have become more important than community, cooperation and altruism and the media’s emphasis on celebrity, monetary value and material success has encouraged a common culture of greed and naked self-interest. The need to win at all costs or go out of business, as well as the need to make a profit and the desire for self-enrichment, encourage even the already rich and powerful to commit white-collar and corporate crimes such as tax evasion. Thirdly, the capitalist emphasis on wealth may also create a ‘culture of envy’ among the poorer sections of society who may respond to growing inequality with resentful hostility, grievance and violence. Failure and humiliation is also a daily occurrence under capitalism and may fuel non-economic crime such as drug addiction and domestic violence.

Marxists believe that the law (and the criminal justice system – the police and the courts) mainly work on behalf of the bourgeoisie or capitalist ruling class. In this sense, the law is part of the superstructure of society – Althusser describes it as an ‘ideological state apparatus’ which functions to justify or hide the social class inequality which originates in the economic system or infrastructure and to make sure that the working class do not challenge the unjust organisation of the capitalist system. Marxists also argue that the role of the criminal justice system is to criminalise working-class behaviour, therefore justifying the introduction of more repressive laws, the heavier policing
of working-class areas and the imprisonment of working-class people. Marxists such as Stephen Box argue that the law is constructed by the capitalist class so that it reflects their interests. Consequently, offences committed by the wealthy or the capitalist class may not be clearly defined as criminal or these offences may be selectively or weakly enforced by the criminal justice system. A good example of the selective enforcement of the law is the differential treatment of those who defraud the welfare benefit system compared with those who defraud the tax system. Social security fraud (which is largely committed by the poor) inevitably attracts prosecution (and is often punished with a prison sentence), yet tax fraudsters, who are usually wealthy and powerful individuals, rather than ordinary taxpayers, very rarely get taken to court. Instead they are often ‘invited’ to pay back what is owed without fear of acquiring a criminal record or jail sentence. Box argues that the ruling class has the power to prevent laws being passed which are not in their interest. For example, deaths of workers because of infringements of health and safety laws are defined as a civil rather than a criminal offence. Box notes that the powerful often kill, injure, maim and steal from ordinary members of society but these killings, injuries and thefts are often not covered by the criminal law.

White-collar crime is a type of crime such as fraud which is carried out for personal financial gain by people in positions of status and responsibility. These people might be white-collar workers or clerks, professionals such as doctors, solicitors and accountants or managers/directors of companies or Members of Parliament.

Corporate crimes are committed by the people who run companies – owners, top managers, boards of directors, chief executives. The goal of corporate criminals is rarely self-enrichment, rather corporate crime usually aims to benefit the company by boosting its share price or by falsely claiming that the company is making a profit when in reality it is making a loss or to cover up negligence or poor and dangerous working practices. Such negligence may however end up killing or injuring their employees or members of the public.

White-collar crime is very difficult to estimate and investigate because those who commit it are able to use the status and power resulting from their higher social-class standing to cover up their offences and to escape arrest and conviction. This type of crime has no obvious victims because people are often ignorant of the fact that they are victims, because both white-collar and corporate crimes are the consequence of complex and invisible processes involving the manipulation of technical knowledge.

Companies are reluctant to report these types of crime because crime generates bad publicity and may reduce their clients’ confidence in their ability to provide an effective service. Marxists argue that the law is made by the ruling class to criminalise the deviant activities of the working class but rarely labels the deviant activities of the ruling class as crime. As a result, few ‘deviant’ activities carried out by bankers, politicians and employers are labelled as criminal. For example, Goldstraw-White found that those convicted of white-collar crime rarely regarded themselves as criminals.

There are two types of Realist sociology: Right Realism and Left Realism. They generally disagree on the causes of crime and the ways in which crime might be prevented, deterred and reduced. However, they do share some common themes. Firstly, they agree that the OCS are largely correct and realistic in their picture of who commits crime in urban areas. They both therefore aim to explain why some social groups – the young, the working class and poor and members of ethnic minorities – may be more inclined to commit crime. Secondly, both theories suggest that a lack of community and too much individualism can increase crime. Thirdly, both theories offer up practical solutions to crime, unlike functionalism, Marxism and interactionism. However, Right and Left Realism differ in important respects.

Right Realism believes that individuals need to take more responsibility for their actions and that communities need to exert more control over their members, especially their young people. In contrast, Left Realists, like Marxists, blame the inequality and deprivation that some powerless social groups experience on a daily basis because of the way capitalist societies are organised.

Left-Realists argue that it is important to look at street crime from the perspective of the street criminal. They explain crime using three concepts. Firstly, Left Realists argue that ‘relative deprivation’ may motivate some groups to commit crime. Lea and Young argue that some sections of youth feel relatively deprived compared with their middle-class peers because social factors such as poverty, unemployment and racism mean that they experience obstacles in gaining access to educational qualifications, well-paid jobs, material possessions and a secure standard of living.
Moreover, Left Realists argue that such youth feel marginalised or powerless to change their situation. These feelings of deprivation, powerlessness and insecurity create frustration, anger and hostility towards the police and society among young people that may express itself through riots and street crime. Left-Realists argue that some disaffected youth may turn to subcultures. Left Realists see subcultures as a collective solution to a group’s problems. Thus, if a group of individuals share a sense of relative deprivation, they will develop lifestyles which help them to cope with this problem.

These subcultural lifestyles may be positive and offer status through conventional and legitimate means (such as church groups) or deviant and award status for delinquent and criminal behaviour (such as territorial street gangs).

However, Left-Realism has been criticised because they do not explain why the majority of working-class and African-Caribbean youth do not turn to crime. The theory only focuses on subcultural criminal responses and does not explain crimes such as burglary, which is committed by individuals rather than gangs. It also focuses exclusively on street crime and largely ignores white-collar and corporate crime.

In contrast, Right Realists such as Wilson argues that crime rates can be explained by three factors. Firstly, young people commit most crime because they are temperamentally immature and aggressive. They tend to have short-term aspirations and weak social bonds, which means they have little to lose by committing crime. Secondly, when considering crime, potential criminals weigh up the benefits of crime against its costs – the possibility of being caught or being severely punished. Wilson observes that when policing is poor and the law and punishments are weak, crime increases because the benefits of crime clearly outweigh the costs.

Thirdly, Wilson suggests that both family life and community have grown weak in modern society and are unable to exert social control over deviant elements in urban areas. A decline in community spirit may mean that deviance goes unchallenged which allows it to escalate, leading to further urban decay. Wilson and Kelling demonstrated the ‘broken windows’ phenomenon. They observe that if a derelict building has a broken window, others will soon follow because deviants interpret broken windows as a symbol that the community does not care. Wilson and Kelling therefore recommend that communities need to fix visible signs of urban decay and deviance quickly, therefore demonstrating to potential deviants that the community will not tolerate such behaviour.

Early feminist explanations of gender differences in crime focused on differences in the sex-role socialisation of males and females. Smart has suggested that males are socialised into being tough, aggressive and risk-takers. This may mean that they are more likely to commit criminal acts of violence.

Smart argues that girls are socialised into a form of hegemonic femininity which stresses consideration and caring for others. Other feminine values and norms include showing sensitivity, emotion, empathy and tenderness towards others. Smart argues that these feminine values and norms may actually prevent most girls from engaging in deviant actions which are harmful to others. Heidensohn argues that females are generally more conformist than males and this is because patriarchal society imposes greater control over their behaviour.

Sue Lees observes that females are less likely to engage in deviant behaviour because they fear acquiring a ‘bad’ reputation. They may fear that boys and other girls may use verbalised sexual labels to describe their behaviour.

James Messerschmidt has attempted to identify the characteristics that ‘real men’ are supposed to have according to the hegemonic or normative value system that defines how boys and men are supposed to behave in UK society. He notes that this masculine value system means that boys are socialised into seeking status and respect from other men, often through violent confrontation with other men or authority. Hegemonic masculinity also means acting tough, being aggressive and emotionally ‘hard’, exercising control over others, especially women, living on the edge and seeking thrills and excitement. Living up to these masculine ideals is likely to mean that boys and men are more likely to come in contact with the police and the courts.

Interactionists like Howard Becker believe that it is impossible to define what counts as ‘normal’ or ‘deviant’ behaviour because these are relative concepts. This means that what is normal for one person may be regarded as deviant (too different to be acceptable or just plain wrong) by another person. Becker argues that the norms or rules of deviance are imposed on society by powerful groups or elites; for example, the rich make rules/laws to control the poorer sections of society which tend to outnumber the wealthy. Marxists, of course, would agree with this. Becker argues that definitions of deviance (and crime) are socially constructed by the actions of powerful groups and imposed on the
Hirschi’s theory is quite useful in explaining why younger people may turn to crime because it is only as people start to get older that they start to acquire the sorts of controls described above. He notes that younger people have got less to lose in terms of attachment and commitment etc. For young people, respect and reputation may actually be enhanced by criminality.

The OCS suggests that young African-Carribbean commit more crime than their White peers and that Asian crime rates are increasing. However, some sociologists claim that this is a result of the institutional racism that is thought to exist within the criminal justice system. Interactionist sociologists claim that labelling or racist profiling can explain the high levels of arrest and conviction for young Black males. Anderson’s study of policing in a Black neighbourhood in Philadelphia found that police officers assumed White people were trustworthy, but profiled young Black males as lower class criminals. This racial profiling underpinned the decisions of police officers to stop and search young Black people despite the fact that most had done nothing to deserve such harassment. In the UK, the McPherson Report, which conducted 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’. McPherson broke the concept of institutional racism down into four observable factors. First, unwitting prejudice – officers were not aware that their behaviour was prejudiced and discriminatory. Second, ignorance – police officers knew little about ethnic minority cultures which fuels stereotyping and racism. Third, thoughtlessness – officers were insensitive about the needs of ethnic minority people and fourthly, racial stereotyping – a significant minority of officers assumed that all ethnic minorities were welfare scroungers, muggers, drug users or runners, or illegal immigrants. 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. This 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.

Lemert focuses on the consequences of being labelled in a negative way. He points out that there are two types of deviance. He argues that primary deviance, which is made up of very
minor acts of wrongdoing that are committed by most people, often has no negative consequences because it goes largely unnoticed and unpunished. No label therefore is attached to the activity or social group.

However, Lemert argues that there also exists secondary deviance. This is deviance or crime that is spotted by others who usually have more power or authority – there is a social or societal reaction which normally ends up with a negative label or punishment being applied. Interactionists like Lemert argue that society makes it very difficult, if not impossible, for criminals to re-integrate into society because society stigmatises deviants and criminals and often shuns them. Consequently they may fall back on the company of those who treat them normally – other criminals and deviants. They feel resentful and hostile towards society because of this treatment and consequently, they re-offend and get sent back to prison. A self-fulfilling prophecy therefore occurs. Another possible consequence is that sometimes the label is turned by the criminal or deviant into a badge of honour which they use to gain status from their peers. The deviance or crime is consequently made worse by the societal reaction. This is known as ‘deviancy amplification’ – the volume of deviance increases as the person labelled as a criminal reacts in a hostile or rebellious fashion to the way society treats them and/or attempts to prove themselves worthy of the status and respect of their deviant peers.

Charles Murray and David Marsland argue that most crime is committed by members of a highly deviant, immoral subculture of long-term unemployed people known as the ‘underclass’. This group is allegedly made up of ‘problem families’ living on inner-city council estates who socialise the next generation into crime as well as dependency on state benefits. Murray claims that in the USA this underclass is mainly Black. These families are often headed by single mothers. It is argued that the children of the underclass often lack a stable father figure in their lives and are consequently influenced by negative role models, such as older boys who lead territorial street gangs that are involved in drug dealing, violence and inner-city riots. The New Right argues that the main reason that the underclass has grown in the last thirty years is the welfare state. Marsland argues that state benefits undermine work and encourage idleness and welfare dependency, especially among the young.

However, Rex and Tomlinson point out that survey evidence suggests that the poor subscribe to the same sorts of values as everybody else and that their poverty is often caused by factors beyond their control, such as economic recession, globalisation and government policies. There is also no convincing empirical evidence that a criminal underclass as a distinct subculture with distinctive criminal values and behaviour actually exists. Murray is criticised by labelling theorists for scapegoating or labelling the poor and long-term unemployed and encouraging the state to engage in the negative surveillance and treatment of this social group.

15 Early feminist explanations of gender differences in crime focused on differences in the sex-role socialisation of males and females. Smart has suggested that males are socialised into being tough, aggressive and risk-takers. This may mean that they are more likely to commit criminal acts of violence. Smart argues that girls are socialised into a form of hegemonic femininity which stresses consideration and caring for others. Other feminine values and norms include showing sensitivity, emotion, empathy and tenderness towards others. Smart argues that these feminine values and norms may actually prevent most girls from engaging in deviant actions which are harmful to others. Heidensohn argues that females are generally more conformist than males and this is because patriarchal society imposes greater control over their behaviour. For example, Sue Lees observes that females are less likely to engage in deviant behaviour because they fear acquiring a ‘bad’ reputation. They may fear that boys and other girls may use verbalised sexual labels to describe their behaviour.

1 Left Realists make three recommendations aimed at reducing crime. Firstly, they argue that politicians need to remove the economic and social conditions that motivate groups such as the poor to commit crime in the first place. It is not enough to remove the opportunities for crime. Instead, the government needs to improve social conditions so that people are no longer motivated to look for criminal opportunities. Secondly, they recommend that government social policy should reduce inequalities in wealth and income; tackle educational underachievement, unemployment, low pay, discrimination and poverty; improve housing and the environment of inner cities and council estates and economically invest in poorer communities to create jobs. Thirdly, they argue that the police need to attempt to regain the trust of local communities, especially ethnic minority communities who believe the
police to be biased against them. Lea and Young argue that in areas with high numbers of ethnic minorities, policing resembles a military occupation. Left Realists therefore recommend that the police need to work hard to reform and improve police-community relations by eradicating institutionally racist police practices such as stop and search and racial profiling in order to establish trust, co-operation and more consensual forms of policing based on mutual understanding.

2 Braithwaite (1989) suggests there are two types of shaming available to the criminal justice system: disintegrative and re-integrative shaming. The most common type is ‘disintegrative shaming’. This involves the offender being negatively labelled in such a way that he or she is effectively excluded from society. Interactionists argue that this stigmatisation means that other members of society such as employers are reluctant to trust people who have been criminal offenders. Their reputation disintegrates and consequently they face obstacles in their desire to stay on the straight and narrow. They may end up socialising with people of a similar ex-criminal status and consequently the temptation to re-offend may be high. Braithwaite recommends that disintegrative shaming should be replaced by a form of restorative justice known as ‘re-integrative shaming’ which avoids stigmatising or negatively labelling the offender as ‘evil’ or ‘bad’, while at the same time making them aware of the negative impact of their actions upon their victims and the community so that they face up to the consequences of their actions. This approach allegedly makes it easier for the victim and community to separate the offender from the offence, to forgive them and to re-admit the offender into mainstream society. At the same time, it avoids pushing wrongdoers into more deviance. For example, the Red Hook Community Justice Court in New York has reduced some crimes by up to 75 per cent through the use of community mediation sessions in which local teenage offenders meet their victims and compensate by doing work for them in their homes, gardens or community.

3 The Right Realists Clarke, Hirschi and others have championed an anti-crime social policy known as ‘situational crime prevention’ (SCP). This refers to measures aimed at reducing the routine opportunities for crime. SCP social policies therefore focus on increasing the costs or risks of crime so that the opportunities for crime and its benefits are significantly reduced. SCP includes an approach known as ‘designing out crime’ or ‘target hardening’. SCP reflects New Right ideas that individuals should take more responsibility for their own safety and welfare. New Right sociologists like Marsland argue that people need to make themselves harder targets for criminals by investing in more sophisticated security systems, such as locks, alarms, security lights and surveillance cameras for their homes, cars and businesses. In their view, women should carry rape alarms and avoid particular neighbourhoods. Some have even controversially suggested women should avoid certain types of behaviour such as drunkenness so they do not make themselves vulnerable to rape. Right Realists believe that target hardening will increase the effort a burglar or thief needs to make to commit a crime and increase their risk of being caught and punished. Right Realists are very keen on CCTV and consequently the UK has the highest number of CCTV cameras in the western world – an estimated 4.2 million, which is one for every 14 people. New Right sociologists argue that such surveillance deters crime because it raises the potential cost of crime through increasing the chance of being caught. However, SCP has been criticised in the following ways. Firstly, it over-focuses on opportunistic petty street crime and burglary, and ignores white-collar, corporate and state crimes, which are potentially more costly and harmful. Secondly, it fails to consider that violent crimes are often motivated by alcohol and drug addiction rather than rational thinking about the costs and benefits of crime. Thirdly, Left Realists argue that it ignores the root causes of crime such as poverty and inequality. Finally, some criminologists argue that SCP strategies displace crime rather than reduce it. Criminals simply move to where the targets are softer. There are various forms of displacement: spatial (the crime is committed elsewhere); temporal (the crime is committed at another time of day) and functional (a different, less risky type of crime is committed instead). Burglars who are deterred by the security that characterises middle-class homes will burglar the homes of people who cannot afford security.

4 Situation crime prevention SCP includes an approach known as ‘designing out crime’ or ‘target hardening’. This reflects the New Right idea that individuals should take more responsibility for their own safety and welfare. New Right sociologists like Marsland argue that people need to make themselves harder targets for criminals by investing in more sophisticated security systems, such as locks, alarms, security lights and surveillance cameras for their homes, cars and businesses.

5 The Right Realists Wilson and Kelling recommend a crime prevention approach known
as ‘environmental crime prevention’ (ECP). This community-based approach argues that high levels of crime occur in neighbourhoods where there has previously been a loss of formal and informal social control over minor acts of antisocial behaviour. Wilson and Kelling claim that if low-level antisocial behaviour [such as littering, noise or youths blocking the pavements] can be prevented, then the escalation to more serious criminal acts can be stopped. They use the analogy of an abandoned building to illustrate their theory. They point out that once one window gets broken then all the windows soon get smashed. So, by preventing the breaking of the first window, or by repairing it straightaway, all the rest of the windows and therefore the building are more likely to be saved. In a similar way, if the minor crimes are prevented, the major ones are much less likely to happen.

A similar idea underpins Oscar Newman’s concept of defensible space. He argues that by changing the design of streets and housing estates, it is possible to make them safer. Newman argues that if people have space that they regard as their own private space they defend it more, thus making it riskier for criminals to cross it to commit crimes such as burglary, vandalism or mugging. Newman’s ideas led to the demolition of many high-rise blocks of flats with shared public entrances, stairways, corridors and lifts, because these public spaces were thought to attract deviant elements. These were often replaced with low-rise housing with private gardens. Communities living on these estates were encouraged to sit on committees that would take responsibility for the upkeep of the neighbourhood so that undesirable elements would not be tempted in.

Another variation on ECP is routine activities theory which states that crime tends to occur when a likely offender and a likely target come together at a particular time and in a place where there is no ‘capable guardian’ to stop or discourage offending. Capable guardians can include anybody who might intervene or report crime, including police officers, community support officers, watchful neighbours or the parents of local teenagers (so both informal and formal social control are important in this approach). A variation on this strategy is zero-tolerance policing in which police officers flood the streets and target relatively minor acts of criminality. This strategy aims to rid a neighbourhood of all its deviant elements, therefore encouraging the law-abiding majority to re-claim their neighbourhoods. The idea is that local people eventually become confident to self-police their potentially troublesome young people.

However, ECP has been criticised in the following ways: Left Realists and other critical criminologists such as Marxists argue that both SCP and ECP are doomed to failure because they are treating the symptoms rather than the cause of the social disease of crime. They argue that politicians need to address the economic and social conditions – poverty, unemployment, poor housing, poor education, low pay and racial discrimination – that bring about the risk conditions for crime. There is limited evidence to support the broken windows theory and some sociologists see investment in localities, providing better leisure facilities or more economic opportunities, as much more effective than zero-tolerance policing in cutting crime. There are simply not enough police to patrol areas at risk of deterioration to make a direct impact and it is too costly and impractical to employ many more police to enforce all minor laws.

6 This is a Right Realist idea that suggests more locks, alarms and CCTV will increase the risk of criminals being caught and therefore deter them. It also implies that victims are not doing enough to protect themselves from criminals. However, critics point out that criminals simply move to where the targets are softer. Crime is merely displaced. It may be committed elsewhere or at another time of day, and those who cannot afford to deter criminals by investing in expensive security often become the victims instead.

7 This is a Right Realist idea which argues that crime tends to occur when a likely offender and a likely target come together at a particular time and in a place where there is no ‘capable guardian’ to stop or discourage offending. This is because there is no discernible community pulling together for the common good. This loss or decline in community means that there are no capable guardians who are willing to take responsibility for preventing crime in the neighbourhood. Both formal and informal controls especially over young people tend to be weak.

8 Retribution means ‘pay back’ and is based on the idea that there should be a proportionate punishment for the offence committed; for example, ‘an eye for an eye’. It is often found in traditional societies in which punishments are deliberately severe because the offender is seen to have transgressed against society rather than just another individual. The offender has broken the social rules which bond individuals together as a society. Retributive justice is
deliberately severe because it has to convey the message that society is more important than the individual.

In the UK, retributive justice usually involves being sent to prison. The New Right are particularly keen on this form of punishment because they believe it acts as a deterrent and it removes known criminals from the streets. Many US states practise the ‘three strikes rule’ which means that if an offender is found guilty of a third offence they automatically receive a life sentence whatever the offence. However, not all sociologists are convinced that prison works because the high rates of recidivism (repeat offending) suggest that prison does not deter. Two thirds of released prisoners re-offend, as do 71 per cent of juvenile offenders, within two years of release. The overall evidence suggests that prison is not radically changing the behaviour of repeat offenders.

9 The high rates of recidivism (repeat offending) suggest that prison does not deter. Two thirds of released prisoners re-offend, as do 71 per cent of juvenile offenders, within two years of release. The overall evidence suggests that prison is not radically changing the behaviour of repeat offenders.

10 Newman argues that if people have space that they regard as their own private space they defend it more, thus making it riskier for criminals to cross it to commit crimes such as burglary, vandalism or mugging. He recommended the replacement of high-rise blocks of flats which have too many public spaces with low level public housing with private gardens. Communities living on these estates were encouraged to sit on committees that would take responsibility for the upkeep of the neighbourhood so that undesirable elements would not be tempted in.

11 Wilson and Kelling claim that if low-level antisocial behaviour (such as littering, noise or youths blocking the pavements) can be prevented, then the escalation to more serious criminal acts can be stopped. They use the analogy of an abandoned building to illustrate their theory. They point out that once one window gets broken then all the windows soon get smashed. So, by preventing the breaking of the first window, or by repairing it straightaway, all the rest of the windows and therefore the building are more likely to be saved. In a similar way, if the minor crimes are prevented, the major ones are much less likely to happen.

12 This is a Right Realist idea. Right Realists believe that the best way to reduce crime is not to change the criminal but to take practical measures to reduce the opportunity for crime and to make the potential crime more difficult for the criminal, i.e. to make sure that the costs of crime clearly outweigh the benefits. A number of solutions have been suggested. Wilson stresses the certainty of capture which he believes will result in the risks of being caught outweighing the benefits of crime. He particularly recommends ‘zero tolerance’ policing, i.e. the police should keep the streets clear of all deviant elements especially those crimes which threaten to undermine or threaten the sense of community in neighbourhoods such as prostitution, begging, drug-dealing and drunkenness. He believes that the streets should be flooded with police in order to both deter crime and so that law-abiding citizens can feel safe. This policy proved to be very successful in New York in the 1990s.

Page 220

1 Functionalists argue that education plays a crucial role in bringing about social order in modern societies because it is an important agency of secondary socialisation which functions to socialise children into shared beliefs and values that promote a sense of social solidarity or social belonging to society. Durkheim saw education as playing a vital role in instilling a shared culture and identity in children in societies characterised by diversity. Durkheim saw the teaching of history as particularly useful because it encourages young people to take pride in their country and its culture and achievements. Some Conservative politicians, most notably Michael Gove, have suggested that history teaching should promote pride in Britain’s imperial past. Other subjects such as English language and literature and religious studies perform a similar function, according to functionalists. Parsons saw education as acting as a bridge between the particularistic world of the family in which children are awarded status because their parents love them and the universalistic world of wider society in which people are awarded status on the basis of talent, skill, hard work and achievement. Schools therefore help children to adapt to the notion of universalistic standards which is how they will be judged in the workplace. Parsons believed education should socialise young people into a consensus or agreement on key values such as the importance of hard work, educational achievement and qualifications – values which are essential to prepare young people for the world of work.
In the 1990s, the British government attempted to promote the notion of a unified and shared national culture through the introduction of a new compulsory subject – citizenship – for 11-to 16-year-olds. This aimed to promote student understanding of the rights and responsibilities of British citizens. Some schools in the USA and Mexico have patriotic assemblies in which the national flag is paraded and/or whole classes pledge allegiance to their country. In 2017, about 50 per cent of US states required the pledge to be recited. Taylor points out that functionalist ideas about schools promoting consensus and unity still have relevance in the 21st century, as illustrated by the controversy regarding some Islamic schools in Birmingham and Derby which segregated pupils by gender, expected teachers to wear Islamic dress and taught a conservative curriculum which was critical of gender equality, the theory of evolution, homosexuality and tolerance of other religions. These schools were criticised because they did not teach British value or promote national unity.

Marxists question the view that education transmits values that are agreed upon and shared by the majority of society. Marxists argue that these values actually constitute ruling-class or capitalist values which are intended to turn children into obedient and conformist workers and citizens, so benefitting employers who constitute members of the capitalist ruling class. Moreover, globalisation and migration have undermined the idea that a common or shared national culture exists. Functionalists often fail to acknowledge that in multicultural societies, it can be difficult for education to pass on one single shared set of beliefs.

Davis and Moore argued that an important function of education was the sifting and sorting of pupils by exams and qualification so that employers could allocate the most able to jobs which best suited their abilities. This ‘role allocation’ aimed to make the economy more effective.

However, it is argued by critics that the relationship between school and work is not as strong as functionalists claim. New Right sociologists have argued that there is too much emphasis on academic subjects and not enough vocational education, aimed at teaching pupils the practical and social skills needed in the workplace. Globalisation has also transformed the British economy and education has been criticised for not keeping pace with the speed of that change. Education may not be producing the sorts of skills required to prepare young people to live and work in culturally diverse societies which are in global competition with one another. Critics argue that the relationship between the educational system and the economy is not working very effectively in the UK because Britain lags behind other countries in training workers. For example, research by PISA ranked the UK 26th out of 65 countries in terms of the maths ability of 15-year-olds, and 20th for science. Paul Taylor observes that globalisation also means that British young people are now competing for jobs in a global society. Unfortunately, the evidence suggests that the jobs which are available to young British people are mainly those which are made up of ‘transferable’ basic skills, which do not require a great deal of educational investment or qualifications and which are precarious, low-paid and on zero-hour contracts. Marxists such as Dan Finn and Phil Cohen argue that the real function of education therefore is to prepare young people to accept a likely future of low-paid and unskilled work.

The Marxist thinker Louis Althusser takes issue with the functionalist view that the main function of education is the transmission of common shared values. Rather Althusser argues that the role of education is to transmit ruling class ideology. It functions to persuade young people to accept their place in the capitalist system. Althusser refers to the education system as an ‘ideological state apparatus’ which transmits ruling-class ideas or ideology in two ways: Firstly, it teaches young people that capitalism is normal and natural despite its inherent inequalities. Secondly, schools legitimise and justify inequality through the use of examinations and qualifications. As a result, people are seen to fail exams because of their own personal shortcomings. The fact that some social groups have educational advantages because of their superior wealth or income, or fail because they face structural disadvantages such as poverty, can, therefore, be conveniently ignored. The organisation of capitalist society is rarely blamed for educational failure. Marxist sociologists have also highlighted the role of the hidden curriculum in socialising children into conformist and obedient attitudes. Marxists define the hidden curriculum as the messages and ideas that schools do not directly teach, but which children learn, and which are part and parcel of the normal routines and procedures of the way the school is organised. Althusser argues that this hidden curriculum stresses the need to compete with others, to pursue individualistic goals and most importantly to accept without question that education is meritocratic and therefore educational success and failure should be accepted without question as fair and deserved because they are the result of talent, ability and hard work or the lack of it.
The New Right refers to a collection of right-wing ideas that advocates a neoliberal approach to economics, particularly the idea that education is a consumer service that is best delivered by competition between schools in a free market. This is known as marketisation. In the 1980s, the New Right argued that there was too much state interference in and control over schools and that consequently a lot of government expenditure was wasteful and/or ineffective. As a result of New Right ideas, the provision of educational services, especially subsidiary services such as the careers service, catering and cleaning, were put out to private tender. The New Right were very influential over government educational policy in the 1980s which led to more power being given to parents to choose schools for their children, more power over spending being given to individual schools and a reduction in the power of local authorities. New Right sociologists believe that competition between schools in the education market will drive up the overall standard of education and reduce costs as well as improving the choices available to parent-consumers. New Right educationalists believe that some British governments have emphasised academic education at the expense of vocational education. They have argued that schools have failed to educate students with the right skills and attitudes required for the workplace and have recommended that schools and colleges should work more closely with businesses to provide education that involves work placements and on-the-job training provided by employers. However, critics of marketisation suggest educational markets are unfair because highly educated parents are more likely to have greater knowledge of the choices available (cultural capital). They are also more likely to know the ‘right’ people from whom they can seek relevant advice and guidance (social capital). They also have the money to buy private elite forms of education or to buy houses in the catchment area of a high achieving state school (economic capital). In contrast, working-class parents are less able to make informed choices because they lack these three forms of capital.

Ball has criticised 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. How much choice parents have often depends on the region in which they live; for example, there may be more choice in urban areas.

The hidden curriculum of schools socialises children into work discipline. It deliberately encourages and rewards punctuality, hard work and obedience in order to produce an industrious and docile workforce that does not challenge the decisions of employers and management. The hidden curriculum strongly encourages children to be motivated by extrinsic rewards such as good grades and qualifications rather than any intrinsic love of learning. Consequently when they become adult workers, they are mainly motivated by external rewards such as wages, rather than job satisfaction or control over the work process. They never experience this in the school environment so they do not look for it in the adult workplace. The hidden curriculum encourages pupils to accept hierarchal controls and authority so preparing them for workplace hierarchy and taking orders without question from their supervisors, managers and employers.

However, Marxists have been criticised for exaggerating the importance of the hidden curriculum. For example, some sociologists point out that the modern workplace requires flexible teamwork rather than blind obedience and that subjects that are critical of capitalism such as politics, economics and sociology are very popular in British schools and universities. Some neo-Marxists, such as Paul Willis, claim that the existence of anti-school subcultures and truancy suggest that the hidden curriculum is often resisted by working-class pupils and that they do not passively accept everything they are taught.

The Marxist sociologists Bowles and Gintis argue that education is controlled by the bourgeoisie and generally serves their interests. They conducted a study on high school children in the USA and concluded that ‘schooling stands in the long shadow of work’ – meaning what goes on in education mirrors what goes on in the capitalist workplace. They argue that there exists a ‘correspondence’ between schooling and work which has been deliberately constructed by the capitalist class and which prepares children, especially working-class children, for the world of work in three main ways. Firstly, the hidden curriculum of schools socialises children into
work discipline. It deliberately encourages and rewards punctuality, hard work and obedience in order to produce an industrious and docile workforce that does not challenge the decisions of employers and management. Secondly, it strongly encourages children to be motivated by extrinsic rewards such as good grades and qualifications rather than job satisfaction or control over the work process. They never experience this in the school environment so they do not look for it in the adult workplace. Thirdly, the hidden curriculum encourages pupils to accept hierarchal controls and authority so preparing them for workplace hierarchy and taking orders without question from their supervisors, managers and employers.

Bowles and Gintis’s correspondence theory strongly suggests that control of education is in the hands of the capitalist ruling class and responds to their needs. However, in the UK, the organisation of schools has until fairly recently been largely under the control of local authorities, while the content of education has largely been controlled by central government and the exam boards. This suggests that in the UK the education system is not shaped by the needs of capitalism and that the correspondence between school and work is actually fairly loose.

8 Ivan Illich argues that we should de-school society by getting rid of schools and formal education. He advocates the setting up of informal learning webs whereby people who want to learn something are put into contact with people who want to teach something, so they can then learn together in an informal way. Illich argues that what is taught should not be dictated to us by others but we should only learn what we find to be useful. In 1921, A.S. Neill set up a private fee-paying school called Summerhill which was run as a democracy and in which the pupils decided what should be taught and only took exams when they felt ready for them. However, Illich’s learning web concept has been criticised for being both impractical and utopian because there is no guarantee that everybody would get the sort of education they needed to fulfil their role as adults in the modern industrial societies we live in. Critics of Summerhill argued that it failed to adequately prepare pupils for formal qualifications such as GCSE and A Level and that it poorly prepared its pupils for the reality of adulthood in which most adults actually have little choice in what they do for a living.

9 The Marxist argument that the educational system is a site of class struggle is based on their idea that one of the main functions of education is to reproduce the social-class inequalities found in capitalist societies by training pupils from working-class backgrounds to do working-class jobs, while providing elite education for the children of the wealthy, so preparing them to take up the most lucrative and powerful jobs in society. In contrast, functionalist sociologists believe that education is meritocratic and based on equality of opportunity. Children are encouraged to see that their talent, skill and effort is rewarded regardless of social class, gender and ethnicity. However, the evidence tends to support the Marxist point of view that education is a site of class struggle and that the working-class have lost the class war. The idea that British education is meritocratic and underpinned by equality of opportunity is challenged by the fact that there exist distinct inequalities in educational achievement caused by social class, gender and ethnic disadvantages. The children of the upper-classes, who make up seven per cent of all pupils, experience massive advantages in terms of attaining qualifications and gaining access to the top universities and jobs compared with the children of the working-class, who through no fault of their own lag way behind. Moreover, the existence of anti-school subcultures made up of working-class boys and girls suggests that the class struggle continues in the classroom.

10 The notion of meritocracy is associated with functionalist and social democrat approaches to education. The functionalist sociologists Parsons believed that schools should be meritocratic and based on equality of opportunity. This means that children should be encouraged to see that their talent, skill and effort would be rewarded regardless of social class, gender and ethnicity. Davis and Moore too argued that an important function of education was the sifting and sorting of pupils by exams and qualification so that employers could allocate the most able to jobs which best suited their abilities. This ‘role allocation’ aimed to make the economy more effective.

Social democrats strongly believe that education should be freely available to all – equality of opportunity is a key social democratic ideal as is the idea of meritocracy, that is, people should be rewarded solely on the basis of merit – hard work, talent and intelligence rather than social class. Social democratic sociologists such as Halsey argue that educational opportunity should be freely available to all social classes and that it is wrong that the children of the wealthy should be advantaged. They argue that social-class disadvantages in the British
However, there are three criticisms of the social democratic approach to education. Firstly, Marxists have criticised the social democratic approach to education, saying that it fails to recognise that educational inequalities are the product of the organisation of capitalism. Marxists believe that the piecemeal reforms of the education system recommended by social democrats will not be successful unless capitalism is replaced by a fairer economic system. Secondly, New Right thinkers are critical of the social democratic focus on equal opportunities for all. New Right thinkers believe that educational inequality is a natural outcome of competition and that government policies should focus on raising standards of teaching and learning for all children. Thirdly, Wolf questions the social democratic assumption that spending more money on education will lead to economic growth. She argues that education is merely a device for employers to screen and select people but there is little evidence that greater spending on education in the UK has led to greater economic growth. She argues that the UK education system over-educates and is producing too many undergraduates. However, despite these criticisms, the social democratic approach continues to have contemporary relevance especially in the context of the privatisation and marketisation of education encouraged by the New Right. Social democratic critics of the New Right have pointed out that only middle-class families will be able to make the most of an educational system based on parental choice.

The social democratic approach is influenced by ‘human capital’ theory which claims that investment in humans through education and training acts very much like investment in new machinery. Just as new machines may be able to produce a higher quantity of better quality products, so better educated and more highly skilled people supposedly create more wealth through their work. Social democrats believe that education should be a basic and universal human right and that it has the potential to turn individuals into well-rounded and tolerant human beings. Social democrats strongly believe that education should be freely available to all – equality of opportunity is a key social democratic ideal. As is the idea of meritocracy, that is, people should be rewarded solely on the basis of merit – hard work, talent and intelligence rather than social class. Social democratic sociologists such as Halsey argue that educational opportunity should be freely available to all social classes and that it is wrong that the children of the wealthy should be advantaged. They argue that social-class disadvantages in the British education system result in a massive wastage of working-class talent. Social democrats have influenced a good deal of educational policy in the UK, especially the introduction of comprehensive schools in the 1960s and the expansion of higher education in the 2000s.

However, the idea that British education is meritocratic and underpinned by equality of opportunity is challenged by the fact that there exist distinct inequalities in educational achievement caused by social class, gender and ethnic disadvantages. For example, the evidence clearly shows that the academic success of the seven per cent of pupils who are privately educated undermines the social democratic concept of equality of opportunity. Marxists argue that education reproduces the social-class inequalities found in capitalist societies by training pupils from working-class backgrounds to do working-class jobs, while providing elite education for the children of the wealthy, so preparing them to take up the most lucrative and powerful jobs in society.
teaching and resources for sex bias in order to ensure more girl-friendly schooling. Feminists have focused on how the hidden curriculum functions as part of the process of gender role socialisation to reinforce gender inequalities. Feminists argue that despite the fact that girls today achieve better sets of qualifications than males at all levels of the education system, there are still gender inequalities in schools that mean that boys have greater opportunities for upward social mobility in terms of obtaining management jobs, promotion and pay. For example, in 2016, women on average earned 18 per cent less than men. Feminists argue that these disparities are rooted in gendered subject choices, especially at A Level and degree level. Recent feminist studies have focused on the degree of sexual bullying, harassment and abuse by UK university staff and male students.

Functionalists argue that there is a strong relationship between education, the economy and work, as do New Right sociologists. Parsons, for example, believed education should socialise young people into a consensus or agreement on key values such as the importance of hard work, educational achievement and qualifications – values which are essential to prepare young people for the world of work. He also believed that schools should be meritocratic and based on equality of opportunity. Children should be encouraged to see that their talent, skill and effort would be rewarded regardless of social class, gender and ethnicity. Davis and Moore argued that an important function of education was the sifting and separating of pupils by exams and qualification so that employers could allocate the most able to jobs which best suited their abilities. This ‘role allocation’ aimed to make the economy more effective. New Right thinkers have been very critical of state education for not investing enough money into education designed specifically for the workplace – vocational education. They have argued that some British governments have emphasised academic education at the expense of vocational education. They have argued that schools have failed to educate students with the right skills and attitudes required for the workplace and have recommended that schools and colleges should work more closely with businesses to provide education that involves work placements and on-the-job training provided by employers.

However, Marxist sociologists argue too that there is a strong relationship between education, the economy and the workplace albeit for the wrong reasons. Bowles and Gintis (1976) argue that education is controlled by the bourgeoisie and generally serves their interests. They conducted a study on high school children in the USA and concluded that ‘schooling stands in the long shadow of work’ – meaning that there is a strong ‘correspondence’ between schooling and work which has been deliberately constructed by the capitalist class and which prepares children, especially working-class children, for the world of work because schools encourage and reward punctuality, hard work, obedience and acceptance of authority and hierarchy. Children are therefore being trained by schools to be passive and obedient when they grow up to be adult workers.

Page 234

1 A number of empirical studies have suggested that material deprivation caused by low incomes and poverty may be a key cause of the lower educational attainment of poorer children, especially those receiving Free School Meals (FSM). Smith and Noble argue that lack of funds to pay for school uniform, books, computers and extra tuition can lead to children being bullied or falling behind their middle-class peers. Smith and Noble point out that low income can lead to poor nutrition, poor health and absenteeism from schools. Poorer families may live in poorer quality and over-crowded housing and children may lack the private space in which they can do their homework. The marketisation of schools may also mean that children who live in deprived areas may have no choice but to attend unpopular and failing schools. Research by Blanden and Gregg confirms a direct relationship between low income and educational underachievement. The increase in tuition fees and the replacement of student grants with loans have discouraged poorer students from going to university. Callender and Jackson found that fear of debt discouraged working-class students from applying to university.

2 The Marxist sociologist Pierre Bourdieu rejects the idea of cultural deprivation and argues in contrast that the main role of the education system is cultural reproduction – ensuring that the culture of the dominant class is passed on to the next generation. Bourdieu rejects the idea that the culture of the dominant class is superior to that of the working-class but he observes that the education system defines it as superior. Consequently, knowledge of the dominant culture which he calls ‘cultural capital’ confers advantage because the educational system is a bourgeois construction in which the organisation of teaching and learning values bourgeois culture more than it does working-class culture. Middle-class cultural assets are seen as worthy of investment and reward and
hence middle-class children enjoy an educational advantage over working-class children, because teachers value their cultural capital – their knowledge, use of language, manners, tastes and style. In contrast, teachers view and reject the cultural experiences, knowledge and language of working-class children as a ‘cultural deficit’. Bourdieu describes this as a type of ‘symbolic violence’ against the working class. Bourdieu suggests that family background leads to middle-class children experiencing a home life or habitus in which cultural capital is passed down by parents to their children. Middle-class success in education therefore depends on the possession of such cultural capital.

Sullivan’s research operationalised cultural capital by asking pupils about what books they read, what TV programmes they watched, whether they played a musical instrument and whether their parents took them to museums, art galleries, theatres and concerts. She found that middle-class children had the most cultural capital and were more successful in terms of their GCSE results. Reay’s research found that middle-class mothers were able to use their social capital – their knowledge about how the education system worked – and their cultural capital to benefit their children’s education.

Reay, David and Ball found that the concept of habitus is important because it leads to middle-class students seeing university as an entitlement while working-class students see the top universities as ‘not for the likes of them’.

Feinstein, using data from two longitudinal surveys, found that class differences in achievement were mainly the result of class differences in parental interest and support. His study suggested that working-class parents placed less value on the importance of education compared with middle-class parents and consequently have lower aspirations for their children. These attitudes were passed onto to their children during their socialisation. Consequently, working-class children lacked adequate preparation for their education. However, Feinstein’s study does have its critics. Parental interest was measured using teacher perceptions of parents. Such teachers may have stereotyped working-class parents and may have been biased in favour of middle-class parents who resembled themselves. Gill Evans’ study of a working-class council estate in South London found that working-class parents had very positive attitudes towards education. Evans rejects the idea of cultural deprivation and argues instead in favour of ‘social variation’ – working-class methods of bringing up children are not inferior or deficient but simply different.

Another study which supports the idea that working-class parents might be to blame for the educational failure of their children is the linguistic deprivation theory of Bernstein. He argued that middle-class parents socialise their children into elaborated codes of speech which involve the detailed and complex use of language similar to that employed by textbooks, examinations and teachers in the classroom. However, working-class parents fail to transmit such language skills to their children who come to school equipped with an inferior restricted code of speech which fails to fully convey detail and meaning. Working-class children are therefore at a disadvantage in the classroom. It is argued that their alleged linguistic deprivation means that they find it difficult to understand teacher instructions or exposition as well as the language used in textbooks and exam papers because these are expressed or written in the elaborated code.

However, Bernstein offered little evidence for his view that different social classes use different language codes and that this is the prime cause of the educational underachievement of working-class children. Bernstein was criticised by Gaine and George who argue that he oversimplifies the difference between middle- and working-class speech patterns. Labov’s research in the USA also challenges Bernstein’s ideas about language. Labov’s social experiments with language concluded that middle-class use of language was over-rated. Labov claimed that the working-class ‘street language’ of young Black people in New York is capable of transmitting ideas as complex as any of those transmitted by middle-class speech patterns. Nell Keddie argues that cultural deprivation theory is ethnocentric: it sees the world through middle-class eyes and fails to recognise the richness and strength of working-class culture. She also argues that neither culture is superior or inferior – instead, they are merely different. Keddie argues that cultural deprivation theory distracts attention away from the real causes of educational failure – material deprivation and the deficiencies of schools themselves.

Interactionist approaches have focused on the processes of surveillance and evaluation adopted by teachers when they interact with working-class and middle-class children. Interactionists argue that individual pupils develop a self-concept or view of themselves based on how powerful others, such as teachers, react to them. Interactionists argue that the labels that teachers attach to pupils are often not based on objective criteria such as intelligence or ability. Rather, they tend to be
based on common-sense assumptions about what constitutes an ‘ideal pupil’. This ‘ideal pupil’ is often constructed using stereotypes, for example, teachers may subscribe to erroneous ideas that children from working-class families, council estates and broken homes are more ‘troublesome’ or ‘less bright’ than children from ‘respectable’ middle-class families. Becker’s research suggests that teachers see middle-class pupils as closest to the ‘ideal pupil’ in terms of performance, conduct, attitude and appearance, while working-class pupils are seen as furthest from it. Hargreaves, Hester and Mellor interviewed teachers and observed classroom interaction in two secondary schools and concluded that teachers go through four stages when labelling pupils: speculation, working hypothesis, elaboration and stabilisation. They noted that once a teacher had labelled a pupil a ‘deviant’ it was difficult for the teacher to see that pupil’s behaviour in a positive light. 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 and entered for foundation level GCSE exams where they were unable to achieve high grades. Dunne and Gazeley collected both quantitative and qualitative data from 22 teachers across nine state secondary schools and concluded that teachers judged working-class students and parents according to class stereotypes. For example, working-class parents were generally judged as hostile towards schools and education. Interactionists argue that teacher labelling often results in a self-fulfilling prophecy - the pupil internalises the label and conforms to the teacher prediction. The notion of a self-fulfilling prophecy was tested in a social experiment carried out by Rosenthal and Jacobson who concluded that teachers convey their positive and negative expectations about pupils to them during interaction in the classroom.

However, Willis’s study of an anti-school subculture suggests that it may not necessarily be a response to teacher labelling. 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.

Setting involves placing pupils in different ability groups for different subjects. In contrast, some educationalists prefer mixed ability sets because setting by ability can sometimes become too rigid and pupils can find it difficult to move up even if they demonstrate improvements in ability. Gillborn and Youdell argue that bright working-class pupils are often placed in lower ability sets because teachers subscribe to negative stereotypes about the attitudes and behaviour of working-class pupils.

Once placed in these groups, these bright working-class pupils live up to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Ireson, Hallam and Hurley carried out a large-scale study comparing 45 comprehensive schools’ use of setting and found that it had little effect on GCSE results. However, a study of setting in maths carried out by William and Bartholomew found that those in the bottom sets were disadvantaged. 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.

Marxists argue that education performs two main functions in capitalist society. It reproduces the social–class inequalities found in capitalist societies by training pupils from working-class backgrounds to do working-class jobs, while providing elite education for the children of the wealthy, so preparing them to take up the most lucrative and powerful jobs in society. Education serves to justify or legitimate class inequalities by persuading those who generally ‘lose’ the meritocratic race – the children of the working-class – that their outcomes reflect their ability and are therefore deserved.

The Marxist thinker Louis Althusser argues that education functions to persuade young people to accept their place in the capitalist system. Althusser refers to the education system as an ‘ideological state apparatus’ which sets out to deliberately fail working-class children. However, it legitimates this failure by using the hidden curriculum to convince working-class children that inequality is normal and natural.
and they 'deserve' to fail. As a result, people are seen to fail exams because of their own personal shortcomings. The fact that some social groups have educational advantages because of their superior wealth or income, or fail because they face structural disadvantages such as poverty, can therefore be conveniently ignored. The organisation of capitalist society is rarely blamed for educational failure despite the fact that this is the main reason working-class kids are doomed to fail at school.

Bourdieu's ideas on cultural capital also support the Marxist case. Bourdieu rejects the idea that the culture of the dominant class is superior to that of the working-class but he observes that the education system defines it as superior. Consequently, knowledge of the dominant culture which he calls 'cultural capital' confers advantage because the educational system is a bourgeois construction in which the organisation of teaching and learning values bourgeois culture more than it does working-class culture. Middle-class cultural assets are seen as worthy of investment and reward and hence middle-class children enjoy an educational advantage over working-class children, because teachers value their cultural capital – their knowledge, use of language, manners, tastes and style. In contrast, teachers view and reject the cultural experiences, knowledge and language of working-class children as a 'cultural deficit'. Bourdieu describes this as a type of 'symbolic violence' against the working-class. Bourdieu suggests that family background leads to middle-class children experiencing a home life or habitus in which cultural capital is passed down by parents to their children. Middle-class success in education therefore depends on the possession of such cultural capital. Working-class pupils fail in the educational system because they lack cultural capital. Marxists like Bourdieu argue that working-class kids fail at school because the system is rigged against them.

However, Marxist theories are criticised by cultural deprivationists who blame working-class educational failure on working-class culture and parents. Interactionists criticise Marxists for neglecting the role of teachers and labelling as an explanation for working-class underachievement.

Interactionists argue that teacher labelling often results in a self-fulfilling prophecy - the pupil internalises the label and conforms to the teacher prediction. The notion of a self-fulfilling prophecy was tested in a social experiment carried out by Rosenthal and Jacobson who concluded that teachers convey their positive and negative expectations about pupils to them during interaction in the classroom. Educational institutions may also communicate negative labels to pupils through processes such as selection, testing and setting. With regard to setting, there is evidence that teachers expect less of those in bottom streams and this undermines the quality of their teaching. Sociologists have found that higher ability pupils are generally trusted to work with the minimum of supervision while teachers generally believe that lower ability groups were in need of constant social control. Some educational sociologists, notably Hargreaves, argue that negative teacher labels can cause pupils to become frustrated, feel low self-esteem and to form anti-school subcultures that disrupt school and classroom.

However, in criticism of these ideas Willis claims that working-class boys rarely take any notice of the way teachers label them, whilst Woods claims there are several different ways in which children respond to teacher labelling. He observed 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 always involve themselves in oppositional deviant subcultures.

Archer and Francis carried out a small-scale study of Chinese parents and pupils and found that Chinese parents invested considerable time, energy and money into the education of their children. Such parents, whether well-off or poor, had high aspirations for their children. Strand's longitudinal survey of over 1,500 young people also found that many ethnic minority parents, especially those from Asian backgrounds, constantly encouraged their children to achieve because they saw education as a way out of poverty.

Vincent et al. argue that social class and ethnicity need to be studied together to understand ethnic minority underachievement. They studied Black middle-class parents who had high aspirations for their children and who used their cultural capital to benefit their children. Vincent et al. concluded that the main obstacle to their children's success was teachers who assumed that Black parents were less interested than middle-class White parents in their children's education.

Three broad ideas dominate the debate about the underachievement of boys. Firstly, it is argued that working-class boys are experiencing a crisis of masculinity. A number of studies suggest that working-class boys may...
be experiencing a crisis of masculinity because globalisation has resulted in a decline of male jobs in the manufacturing sector. Mac an Ghaill has suggested that boys no longer see the point of qualifications because masculine roles such as breadwinner and head of household are less important. Boys can see that the workforce is increasingly feminised and consequently they see the pursuit of qualifications as a feminine activity and as a waste of their time. Another aspect of this crisis in masculinity is that some boys may feel anxious, vulnerable and insecure. They may feel that they have to ‘act up’ in the classroom to compensate by obtaining status from their peers. A second explanation of boys’ underachievement focuses on ‘lad culture’. Many studies have identified oppositional or anti-school subcultures which are overwhelmingly working-class and male. The evidence suggests that these male subcultures regard schoolwork as ‘feminine’ and ‘unmanly’ and 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 bright, diligent boys are often subjected to homophobic abuse. A third possible explanation for boys’ educational underachievement is focused on boys’ attitudes towards education. Some studies have suggested that boys are often over-confident about their own abilities, do not see the need to work hard and subscribe to lower academic aspirations than girls. Surveys also indicate that girls have more realistic career aspirations compared with boys. Surveys of boys’ attitudes towards reading suggest that they do not enjoy or value this type of learning and that they associate it with femininity.

However, Coffey views society’s concern about boys’ underachievement as a moral panic – an over-reaction to a social problem that has been exaggerated by the media. Other feminists point out that subtle gender inequalities continue to exist in British education which continue to discriminate against females, such as those apparent in subject choice at degree level. Focusing on gender differences alone ignores important differences within each gender, for example, those based on social class and ethnicity. Also, recent exam results suggest that the gap between male and female achievement is narrowing.

10 Tony Sewell suggests that African-Caribbean street culture often exerts a negative influence over the lives of Black boys because it often equates academic success with femininity and homosexuality. This very masculine subculture redeems success in terms of aggressive masculinity and hyper-sexuality. As a result, some boys may be attracted to territorial street gangs because these potentially can provide material success and status through violence and sexual accomplishment. However, Sewell also partly blames cultural factors for the underachievement of African-Caribbean boys. Sewell observes that a high number of Black boys are raised by single mothers. He claims that most of these mothers put a lot of effort into their boys’ education but that the boys are disadvantaged by the lack of positive adult male role models in their lives. Moreover they lack the discipline that might be provided by a father figure. Some researchers have suggested that pupils from different ethnic minorities are disadvantaged by institutional racism within the education system which treats pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds less favourably than pupils from White British backgrounds. For example, Gilborn and Youdell blame subtle and unconscious forms of teacher racism, such as not entering Black pupils for higher grade GCSEs or not giving Black pupils extra support to help them obtain higher grades. Gilborn and Youdell conclude that teachers generally have low expectations of Black pupils and that these shaped interaction between teachers and pupils and resulted in a self-fulfilling prophecy as some of these pupils lost faith in their own ability.

11 An aspect of institutional racism is the unwitting and often unconscious prejudice and stereotyping of ethnic minority pupils practised by some teachers while interacting in the classroom with ethnic minority pupils. Gilborn and Youdell’s ethnographic research of two London comprehensive schools claimed teachers subscribed to racialised expectations of different groups. They acknowledge that most teachers avoid being openly racist because they subscribe to high standards of professionalism and overt racism is a dismissible offence. However, Gilborn and Youdell observed more subtle and unconscious forms of racism, such as not entering Black pupils for higher grade GCSEs or not giving Black pupils extra support to help them obtain higher grades. Gilborn and Youdell conclude that teachers generally have low expectations of Black pupils and that these shaped interaction between teachers and pupils and resulted in a self-fulfilling prophecy as some of these pupils lost faith in their own ability. Gillborn and Mirza (2000) also claim that Black students are more likely to be harshly disciplined compared with White or Asian children. 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. This negative labelling of Black children by White teachers may lead to the emergence of deviant or anti-school subcultures which are racially exclusive, thus contributing further to the racial tensions that might exist between ethnic minority culture and White teachers. 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.

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.

However, Mac an Ghaill’s research suggests that ethnic minority pupils use a variety of survival strategies to resist racialised teacher expectations. Oppositional anti-school subcultures are, on the whole, a minority response. Other pupils preferred to use what Mac an Ghaill calls resistance within accommodation – they would band together to help each other get good marks but resisted conformity in terms of uniform and appearance.

Foster, Gomm and Hammersley claim that the research of Gillborn and Youdell has failed to provide evidence of racial discrimination against ethnic minority pupils. 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 influence. 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. Interactionism tends to focus exclusively on classroom processes and rarely examines structural or political influences which Marxist and functionalist theorists see as more influential. 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.

12 A number of empirical studies have suggested that material deprivation caused by low incomes and poverty may be a key cause of the lower educational attainment of poorer children, especially those receiving free school meals. Smith and Noble argue that lack of funds to pay for school uniform, books, computers and extra tuition can lead to children being bullied or falling behind their middle-class peers. They also point out that low income can lead to poor nutrition, poor health and absenteeism from schools. Poorer families may live in poorer quality and over-crowded housing and children may lack the private space in which they can do their homework. Research by Blanden and Gregg confirms a direct relationship between low-income and educational underachievement. The increase in tuition fees and the replacement of student grants with loans have discouraged poorer students from going to university.

Callender and Jackson found that fear of debt discouraged working-class students from poorer families from applying to university. According to Platt, ethnic minorities, especially those from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African backgrounds, have much higher levels of unemployment and poverty and much lower levels of income than White people, which means that they are unable to afford to invest in educational support for their children.

In evaluation, it is difficult to disentangle material factors from cultural factors, such as levels of parental support and encouragement, although Taylor suggests that material factors have more impact on some social groups more than others. If parents have high expectations there is evidence that material disadvantages can be overcome. For example, Modood claims that many ethnic minority parents, particularly those from India, compensate for their poverty by passing on cultural capital, especially high aspirations, to their children. This is because when their well-educated parents migrated to the UK they often took on jobs for which they were over-qualified.

14 Some researchers have suggested that pupils from different ethnic minorities are disadvantaged by institutional racism within the education system which treats pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds less favourably than pupils from White British backgrounds. Such racism occurs not because of the attitudes of individuals, but because of the systems, cultures, policies and/or structures of the organisations themselves. This results in schools failing to provide the same quality of service and opportunity to all ethnic groups. For example, a school may fail to deal effectively with complaints of racist bullying, or it may
provide an ethnocentric curriculum, one that focuses 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. Such a curriculum may fail 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. There have been attempts to compensate for this ethnocentric curriculum. For example, there has been more emphasis on multicultural education in recent years which has stressed equality of status and the value of other cultures and religions.

Another aspect of institutional racism is the unwitting and often unconscious prejudice and stereotyping of ethnic minority pupils practised by some teachers while interacting in the classroom. Gillborn and Youdell’s ethnographic research of two London comprehensive schools claimed teachers subscribed to racialised expectations of different groups. They acknowledge that most teachers avoid being openly racist because they subscribe to high standards of professionalism and overt racism is a dismissible offence. However, Gillborn and Youdell observed more subtle and unconscious forms of racism, such as not entering Black pupils for higher grade GCSEs or not giving Black pupils extra support to help them obtain higher grades. Gillborn and Youdell conclude that teachers generally have low expectations of Black pupils and that these shaped interaction between teachers and pupils and resulted in a self-fulfilling prophecy as some of these pupils lost faith in their own ability.

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. Mac an Ghaill’s research suggests that ethnic minority pupils use a variety of survival strategies to resist racialised teacher expectations. Oppositional anti-school subcultures are, on the whole, a minority response. Other pupils preferred to use what Mac an Ghaill calls resistance within accommodation – they would band together to help each other get good marks but resisted conformity in terms of uniform and appearance.

Six groups of explanations have been suggested to explain why females overtook males in terms of academic achievement in the 1980s. Firstly, Sue Sharpe claims that the attitudes and priorities of females changed dramatically between the 1970s and 1990s. Sharpe surveyed teenage girls in the 1970s and found that their main priorities were ‘love, marriage, husband, children’ in that order. However, her survey of teenage girls in the 1990s found that they were more concerned with education and careers, which they saw as a route to economic independence. Secondly, there were major changes in the British economy in the 1970s which led to a decline in male-dominated jobs in manufacturing and an expansion in service sector jobs, for example, in the state, financial, personal services and retail sectors, which resulted in dramatic changes in the economy which have resulted in many more career opportunities for females. Daughters today are also more likely to have working career mums as role models compared with previous generations, which has encouraged higher aspirations in terms of paid work and qualifications. Thirdly, feminist campaigns for equality in the job market and in wider society have led many females taking for granted that they should have the same rights as men. Feminists have also highlighted the existence of sexist practices in schools which led to the promotion of equal opportunities policies in schools. Fourthly, Beck claims that societies have undergone a process of individualisation which means that people are now more concerned about their own personal needs. Beck claims that females are putting their own need for independence before marriage or dependence upon a husband. Fifthly, research suggests that the socialisation of boys and girls has changed dramatically over the past fifty years. It used to be the case that girls were prepared for a future domestic or maternal role. However, nowadays parents encourage girls to have higher aspirations. Hannan’s research found that the socialisation of girls emphasises girls’ language skills which are essential for success in education. Burns and Bracey found that girls mature faster than boys and this results in them working harder and being more motivated at school. They consequently put more effort into homework and coursework.

Finally, changes within the education system, especially the introduction of coursework in the 1980s, benefitted females. However, the recent shift back to exams at both GCSE and A Level does not seem to have greatly benefitted boys. For example, in 2016, the achievement gap at GCSE between boys and girls was at its widest since 2002. 71.3 per cent of female entries were awarded at least a grade C compared with only 62.4 per cent of their male counterparts. There has also been a feminisation of the education system in that there are now more female teachers than male teachers in both primary
However, the notion that the Act increased parental choice via open enrolment and introduced the notion of a parentocracy. Prior to 1988, parents had little choice but to send their children to the school attached to a particular catchment area. The 1988 Act introduced open enrolment, which meant that parents were given the right to choose their child’s school. School budgets became dependent on how many pupils they could attract. The Act effectively created a parentocracy – power was transferred from local authorities to parents, who were given a degree of control over which school they sent their children to. 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. However, the notion that the Act increased parental power has been criticised because the popular schools quickly filled up thus restricting parental choice. Consequently, it is doubtful whether standards were raised because 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. Gewirtz studied 14 London schools and found that parentocracy is a myth because parental power is 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. Ball 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. 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.

The New Right refers to a collection of right-wing ideas that advocates a neoliberal approach to economics, particularly the idea that education is a consumer service that is best delivered by competition between schools in a free market. This is known as marketisation. In the 1980s, the New Right argued that there was too much state interference in and control over schools and that consequently a lot of government expenditure was wasteful and/or ineffective. As a result of New Right ideas, the provision of educational services, especially subsidising services such as the careers service, catering and cleaning, were put out to private tender. The New Right were very influential over government educational policy in the 1980s which led to more power being given to parents to choose schools for their children, more power over spending being given to individual schools and a reduction in the power of local authorities. New Right sociologists believe that competition between schools in the education market will drive up the overall standard of education and reduce costs as well as improving the choices available to parent-consumers. However, critics of marketisation suggest educational markets are unfair because highly educated parents are more likely to have cultural capital or greater knowledge of the choices available. They are also more likely to have social capital, that is, to know the ‘right’ people from whom they can seek relevant advice and guidance. They also have the money or economic capital to buy private elite forms of education or to buy houses in the catchment area of a high achieving state school. In contrast, working-class parents are less able to make informed choices because they lack these...
Now test yourself answers

4

three forms of capital. High achieving schools were often over-subscribed. Ball argues that parental choice was actually an illusion because popular schools quickly filled up thus restricting parental choice.

New Right educationalists believe that some British governments have emphasised academic education at the expense of vocational education. They have argued that schools have failed to educate students with the right skills and attitudes required for the workplace and have recommended that schools and colleges should work more closely with businesses to provide education that involves work placements and on-the-job training provided by employers. The Conservative government’s solution was to introduce the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) in which employers were paid to train school leavers for one year. In addition, youths received vocational training in colleges and training centres. Another vocational initiative was the introduction of the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) which were designed to offer pupils a set of qualifications related to skills in specific types of work such as engineering, retail, hairdressing, leisure and nursery care. They were designed in such a way that trainees had to demonstrate their skills in the workplace.

Critics of vocationalism have argued that it is another aspect of educational inequality because the qualifications are rarely taken up by middle-class children and tend to be taken up by working-class students. In this sense, middle-class students are educated in academic skills to prepare them for university while working-class students are trained for manual work.

The 1988 Education Reform Act 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. It extended parental choice via open enrolment and introduced the notion of a parentocracy. It created diversity in secondary education provision. It introduced a national curriculum. It attempted to create free market competition between schools by introducing league tables and Ofsted inspections.

Prior to 1988, parents had little choice but to send their children to the school attached to a particular catchment area. The 1988 Act introduced open enrolment, which meant that parents were given the right to choose their child’s school. School budgets became dependent on how many pupils they could attract. The Act effectively created a parentocracy – power was transferred from local authorities to parents, who were given a degree of control over which school they sent their children to. New types of schools were introduced by the 1988 Act, particularly grant maintained schools – the precursors to today’s academies, which were allowed to opt out of local government control and given the freedom to manage their own budgets; and city technology colleges. The 1988 Act imposed a standard national curriculum which dictated to teachers what they needed to teach at four key stages of schooling with testing at the end of each of the stages [standard assessment tests or SATs]. It included core subjects (maths, English and science) plus foundation subjects (for example, history). Taylor observes that the national curriculum was vocational in that it stressed the importance of those subjects seen as necessary to work. It marginalised arts and humanities subjects because these were seen as less relevant to the needs of work.

The 1988 Act 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 1988 Act led to the government setting up the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in 1993 in order to rigorously inspect schools and colleges. These resulted in inspection reports which could be used to help parents choose the best schools for their children. 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 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, the national curriculum was criticised by teachers as overly prescriptive in terms of what should be taught, for example, in history lessons, and for putting children under too much pressure with constant testing [some of these tests were eventually dropped]. Popular schools quickly filled up thus restricting parental choice. Consequently, it is doubtful whether standards were raised because 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. Gewirtz studied 14 London schools and found that parentocracy is a myth because parental power is 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. Finally, some schools spent large sums on marketing rather than the education of pupils.

New Labour’s educational policies were influenced by the social democratic approach in the sense that they aimed to reduce inequality by improving equality of opportunity. They attempted to tackle exclusion and poverty by injecting cash into initiatives such as Sure Start – a scheme which provided children and mothers from poor families with extra supports aimed at improving their early years in education. The scheme was eventually discontinued as part of the austerity cuts post-2010. The Labour government also set up Education Action Zones to raise the motivation and attainment of pupils living in deprived inner-city areas. These were eventually replaced by the Excellence in Cities programme which gave extra funds to local authorities in the most deprived neighbourhoods to help gifted students from poor backgrounds. New Labour also introduced educational maintenance allowances (EMAs) to help students from poorer families to study A Levels and expanded access to higher education in an attempt to get more students from working-class backgrounds into universities. To fund these extra places, it introduced tuition fees and student loans that had to be repaid.

However, the evidence suggests that Labour’s policies only had a modest effect in helping those from poorer backgrounds to achieve in education. The introduction of higher education tuition fees may have had a negative effect on the number of working-class students entering university. To fund these extra places, it introduced tuition fees and student loans that had to be repaid.

However, the evidence suggests that Labour’s policies only had a modest effect in helping those from poorer backgrounds to achieve in education. The introduction of higher education tuition fees may have had a negative effect on the number of working-class students entering university. To fund these extra places, it introduced tuition fees and student loans that had to be repaid.

Coalition policies were influenced by the New Right and aimed to improve competition, diversity and choice, and to raise educational standards. The coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats brought in the 2010 Academies Act which allowed all existing faith and state comprehensive schools which had achieved an ‘outstanding’ grade in Ofsted inspections to become academies. The Act also authorised the creation of free schools (a type of state-funded school not controlled by a local authority but run by parents, educational charities and religious groups). By 2014, 331 free schools had been opened or approved. The 2010 Act also encouraged further privatisation of the education system because it positively encouraged businesses to invest in and run academies. Both academies and free schools are able to set out their admission policies and are therefore able to practise some selection. The coalition government also scrapped stand-alone AS-levels in 2016 and introduced a more rigorous two-year A Level which it was argued would test students more thoroughly so they would attain a ‘gold standard’ level of knowledge and skills. The coalition government also downgraded the value of vocational qualifications so that schools could no longer use them to boost their league table position. Educational maintenance allowances were scrapped. Between 2010 and 2012, over 500 Sure Start centres which aimed to support the early learning and wellbeing of children from poor families were scrapped. However, the Liberal Democrats did manage to introduce the pupil premium – schools with high numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals were given extra educational resources to be spent on extra support for disadvantaged children.

However, Paul Taylor identifies three problems with the coalition government’s educational policies. Firstly, they seem more concerned with ideology rather than education; for example, the rationale for the changes in education has put the free market before the needs of pupils. Secondly, control of education has increasingly been taken away from democratically elected local governments and given to unaccountable bodies such as businesses, religious groups and parents. Thirdly, the movement to more academies and free schools has mainly benefitted middle-class pupils whose parents have the money as well as the cultural and social capital to best play the system in favour of their children.

British schools have become more diverse since 1988 as various governments have tinkered with the educational system especially at the secondary level and introduced new types of schools. Stephen Ball has concluded that the organisation of English schooling in particular is at best haphazard. The 1988 Act introduced grant maintained schools, although most of these had converted to academies by 2017, and city technology colleges. New Labour, 1997-2010 introduced introduced specialist schools and academies to replace failing inner-city comprehensives. The Coalition government of 2010-2015 expanded the academy programme by passing the 2010 Academies Act. The Act allowed all existing faith and state comprehensive schools which had achieved
The 1988 Education Reform Act attempted to create free market competition between schools by introducing league tables and Ofsted inspections. The Act 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.

However, educational sociologists remain doubtful about whether league tables have raised educational standards. They argue that competition between schools led to problems. For example, popular schools quickly filled up thus restricting parental choice. Consequently, it is doubtful whether standards were raised because the best schools tended to 'cream off' the most academic pupils. This 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. Gewirtz studied 14 London schools and found that league table did not lead to more parental power. She found that parental power was not equally distributed across all parents because middle-class parents were able to use their economic capital as well as their cultural and social capital to ensure that their children entered the 'best' schools as identified by the league tables. Critical sociologists have suggested that league tables were of limited use because they were unable to reflect the hidden structural problems that often existed in areas in which low-achieving schools were located.

The New Right argued that the education system in 1979 was failing to produce young people with the skills required by British industry. Comprehensive schools were criticised for being too academic and were blamed for rising youth unemployment. The Conservative government’s solution was to introduce the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) in which employers were paid to train school leavers for one year. In addition, youths received vocational training in colleges and training centres. Another vocational initiative was the introduction of the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) which were designed to offer pupils a set of qualifications related to skills in specific types of work such as engineering, retail, hairdressing, leisure and nursery care. They were designed in such a way that trainees had to demonstrate their skills in the workplace. The General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) were introduced as qualifications that could be studied in schools and colleges rather than in the workplace. Students were assessed on a mix of academic and vocational knowledge and skills. These were later replaced by vocational A Levels.

The 1988 Education Reform Act also had a vocational element to it. Taylor observes that the national curriculum was vocational in that it stressed the importance of those subjects seen as necessary to work. It marginalised arts and humanities subjects because these were seen as less relevant to the needs of work.

The Labour government of 1997-2010. In 1998, Labour introduced the New Deal for Young People, for those aged 18–24 who had been out of work for six months. They were provided with personal advisors who guided them through different educational and training options that might assist them in finding work. Labour also extended the range of NVQ qualifications to include a level 5 which was the equivalent of a university degree.

However, critics of vocationalism have argued that it is another aspect of educational inequality because the qualifications are rarely taken up by middle-class children and tend to be taken up by working-class students. In this sense, middle-class students are educated in academic skills to prepare them for university while working-class students are trained for manual work. Finn argued that the real function of YTS was to depress the wage levels of young workers and to keep young people off the streets. The new vocationalism transferred the blame for unemployment from the government to young people. The coalition government of 2010-2015 downgraded the value of vocational qualifications so that schools could no longer use them to boost their league table position.

The 1988 Education Reform Act imposed a standard national curriculum which dictated to teachers what they needed to teach at four key stages of schooling with testing at the end of each of the stages (standard assessment tests or SATs). It included core subjects (maths, English and science) plus foundation subjects (for example, history). Taylor observes that the national curriculum was vocational in that it stressed the importance of those subjects seen
as necessary to work. It marginalised arts and humanities subjects because these were seen as less relevant to the needs of work.

However, the national curriculum was criticised by teachers as overly prescriptive in terms of what should be taught, for example, in history lessons, and for putting children under too much pressure with constant testing (some of these tests were eventually dropped). The coalition government of 2010-2015 scrapped stand-alone AS-levels in 2016 and introduced a more rigorous two-year A Level which it was argued would test students more thoroughly so they would attain a ‘gold standard’ level of knowledge and skills. The coalition government also downgraded the value of vocational qualifications so that schools could no longer use them to boost their league table position.