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SOCIOLOGY

BHS315116

Pages: 16

Questions: 8

Answer Booklets: 2

Preparation time for this exam: 15 minutes

Suggested working time: 2 hours

Instructions:

- There are **two (2) sections** to this paper.
- You must answer **one (1)** question from each section in **essay form**:
 - **Section A** – answer **one (1)** question
 - **Section B** – answer **one (1)** question.
- Write your answers for each section in a **separate answer booklet** and write the question number you are answering on the front cover of each answer booklet.
- The exam is **two (2) hours** in length. The suggested working time for each section is **approximately 60 minutes**.
- All answers must be written in **English**.
- You **must** make sure your answers address the listed criteria.

Guide to Exam Structure

		Questions available	Questions to answer	Suggested working time	Marks available
Section	A	4	1	60 minutes	Extended ratings of A+ to z
Section	B	4	1	60 minutes	
Totals		8	2	120 minutes (2 hours)	A+ to z rating

Criteria

You **must** make sure your answers address:

- Criterion 1 analyse theories about socialisation, identity construction and deviance
- Criterion 2 analyse theories about institutions
- Criterion 7 communicate sociological ideas, information, opinions, arguments and conclusions.

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Section A – Socialisation: Conformity and Deviance

- In essay form, answer **one (1)** question, in response to the material in any **one (1)** or more of the extracts (stimuli) provided in this section.
 - Write your answer in a **separate answer booklet**.
 - The suggested working time for this section is **approximately 60 minutes**.
 - This section assesses **Criteria 1** and **7**.
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Stimulus 1 – Socialisation – Social Norms

In order for people to know how to behave in society, to be able to predict how others will behave, and therefore to live together in an orderly way, some shared values and norms are necessary. Without some measure of agreement on the basic ground rules, social life would soon fall into confusion and disorder.

Social norms are learnt through socialisation and are established by the values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that dominate across a community group. For example, social norms may mean going to school, getting a job, playing sport, respecting elders and others in one's family and community, and maintaining a safe home environment.

It is life experience from early childhood that builds an understanding of what is acceptable behaviour, and what is not. Normative values are essentially learnt from direct, repeated exposure to a child's immediate social environment. They are influenced by the values and the behaviour of parents, peers, immediate community and the wider society. They are shaped by people who are respected and admired and by those who exercise authority.

Positive and negative patterns of behaviours are adopted or copied. Often there are mechanisms of social control that help regulate the behaviour of a group and promote conformity. Social norms differ from community to community and family to family. Some are dysfunctional while some are functional and may be different in the context of the individual's social location.

Source – Adapted from:

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Committees_Exposed/atsia/sentencing/report/chapter3

Stimulus 2 – Identity Construction and Looking-Glass Self

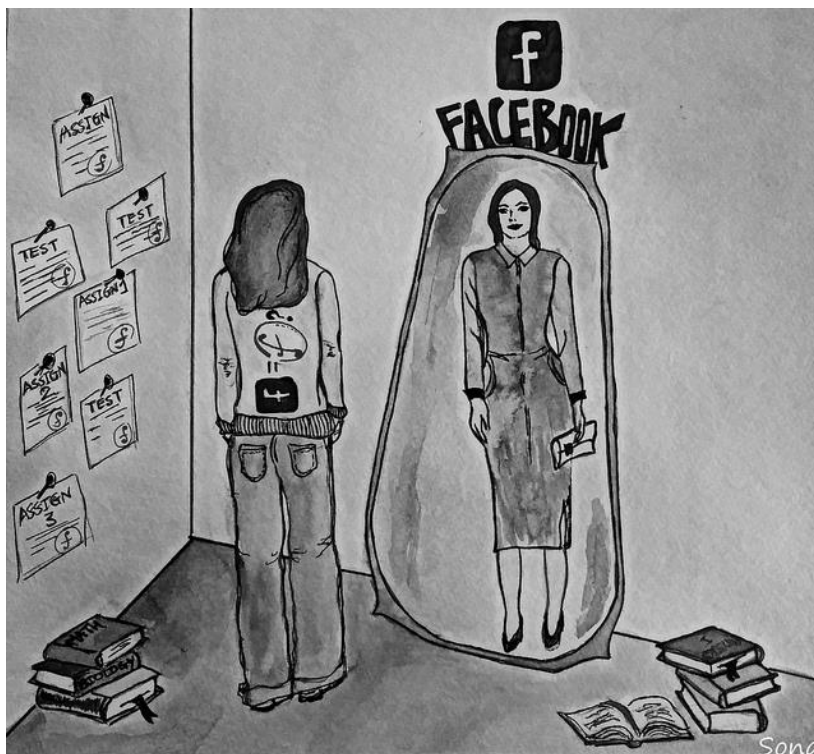


Figure 1: Illustration of a woman next to failed tests. Her mirror labelled 'Facebook' reflects someone else.

Image source – K. Joelle. (2014), "Facebook: Self-constructed digital identity and academic performance"

Cooley coined the term 'looking-glass self' and theorised that other people act as a mirror of sorts to reflect our social identity. Cooley noted that we make judgements about our ideas of others' perception of us, and this, in turn, leads to positive or negative feelings. Therefore, he characterised the looking-glass self not as a reflection of how others see us but of how we imagine others see us. The looking glass is described as a process of reflective self-appraisal. That is, one's self concept is highly influenced by how we perceive what other people think about us.

In contemporary Australian society, consideration of a digital looking glass is emerging as a current use of the Cooley social mirror that was previously anchored in interactions with others in real-world, in-person settings. Social media offers instantaneous feedback ('likes/dislikes') and commentary, often by strangers. It shows the number of friends, or how many blog followers or followers on other venues, one has. Social networking sites have the positive benefit of keeping us connected with others through updates about our lives, such as posting pictures of oneself, holidays, and so forth.

Social media can aggravate or serve to disconnect us from who we are as well as making us vulnerable to distorted reflections. Distorted reflections can impact a person's identity construction.

Source – Adapted from: Sreenivasan, S., and Weinberger, S. (2022) "The digital looking-glass self"

Stimulus 3 – Alternative Sociological Theories of Deviance



Figure 2: Photo of three young people with bicycles and wearing tracksuits, hoods obscuring their faces.

Image source – Cardy, D. (2007) “Young People”

In Australia, the youth justice system manages children and young people who commit or allegedly commit a crime while aged 10 – 17. These children may be under supervision either in the community or in a detention centre. On an average day in 2021 – 2022, 4 536 people aged 10 and over were under youth justice supervision. Among those aged 10 – 17, this was a rate of 13 per 10 000. A total of 8 982 young people were supervised by youth justice at some time during the year (from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022).

For young people aged 10 – 17 on an average day of youth justice supervision in 2021 – 2022:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were about 19 times as likely as non-Indigenous Australians to be under supervision, about 17 times as likely to be under community-based supervision, and about 24 times as likely to be in detention.
- Males were almost four (4) times as likely as females to be under supervision.
- Young people from very remote areas were about seven (7) times as likely as those from major cities to be under supervision.
- Young people from the lowest socioeconomic areas were about five (5) times as likely as those from the highest socioeconomic areas to be under supervision.

Among the states and territories, rates of supervision for young people aged 10 – 17 years ranged from 5.8 per 10 000 on an average day in Victoria to 46 per 10 000 in the Northern Territory.

Source – Adapted from: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/youth-justice>

Stimulus 4 – Relativity of Deviance – Tattoos



Figure 3: Photo of a man's torso. He crosses his heavily tattooed arms, wearing a business shirt and tie with the sleeves rolled up and the shirt poorly tucked in.

Image source - <https://au.res.keymedia.com/files/image/iStock-professional-tattoos-bias-inking-502690861.jpg>

In the past twenty years, tattoos have moved from deviant subcultures to the mainstream, and yet may still be considered to be a mark of nonconformity. The dominant culture continues to regard the bearers of tattoos as social deviants, while at the same time appropriating tattoos for use as fashion statements, beauty enhancements, and more. The appearance of tattoos in mainstream culture has changed the perception of those brandished with this once subversive permanent stamp of self-expression. However, even with tattoos finding a place amongst other middle-class norms, tattoos can still play a role in how those who display such artwork on their bodies are perceived.

Australia is experiencing growth in the proportion of people becoming 'inked'. Studies show that one (1) in four (4) Australians has a tattoo (25%). This is up from 20% in 2018 and 19% in 2016. The proportion of women with a tattoo now exceeds that of men by more than 10% (31% women compared to 19% men). Women are also more likely to have got their first tattoo between the ages of 26 and 45 (31% of women compared to 23% of men).

The increasing proportion of Australians with a tattoo marks a shift away from linking tattoos to youthful rebellion, low class or crime. The fact that social media regularly shows celebrities, movie stars and sports people with tattoos is helping to change consumer attitudes and behaviour towards tattoos and how they are perceived. While 31% of people with a tattoo still feel the need to cover them when attending a job interview or formal occasion, employers today are more accepting of tattoos on display as they become more prevalent in society and everyday life.

Source – Adapted from: <https://mccrindle.com.au/article/tattoos-on-the-rise-among-aussies/>

- In essay form, answer **one (1)** question from this section.
 - Use the material in any **one (1) or more** of the extracts (stimulus material) provided in Section A, as well as information from the course.
 - **Use sociological terms and concepts in your answer.**
-

Question 1 – Socialisation

Explain and evaluate the process of socialisation and mechanisms of social control.

Using the stimulus materials and information from the course, analyse and evaluate alternative views, including theories, in relation to the development of social norms.

OR

Question 2 – Identity Construction

Explain and evaluate the role socialisation plays in determining how an individual's identity is constructed.

Using the stimulus materials and information from the course, analyse and evaluate alternative views, including theories, in relation to the development of the self.

OR

Question 3 – Sociological Theories of Deviance

Explain and evaluate why some people are more likely to be involved in criminal behaviour in contemporary Australian society.

Using the stimulus materials and information from the course, analyse and evaluate alternative views, including theories, in relation to sociological theories of deviance.

OR

Question 4 – Relativity of Deviance

Explain and evaluate the meaning and relativity of deviance.

Using the stimulus materials and information from the course, analyse and evaluate alternative views, including theories, in relation to describing why deviance is a relative concept.

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Section B – Institutions: Power and Politics

- In essay form, answer **one (1)** question, in response to the material in any one (1) or more of the extracts (stimuli) provided in this section.
- Write your answer in a **separate answer booklet**.
- The suggested working time for this section is **approximately 60 minutes**.
- This section assesses **Criteria 2 and 7**.

Stimulus 5 – Education

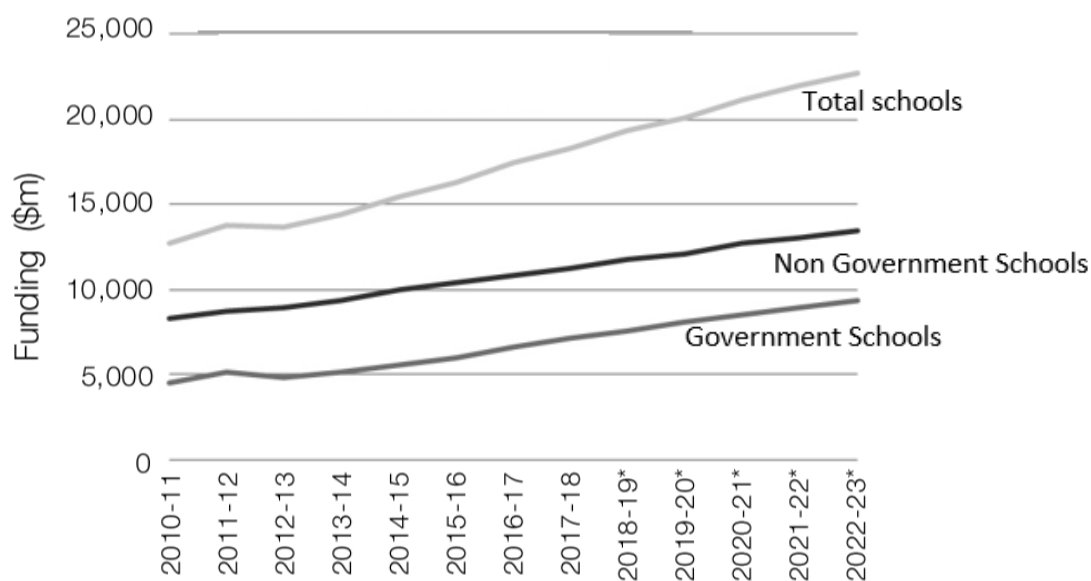


Figure 4: Graph of Commonwealth school funding data (2010 – 2023).

Image source –

https://www.aph.gov.au//media/05_About_Parliament/54_Parliamentary_Depts/544_Parliamentary_Library/BriefingBook46p/SchoolFunding-01.jpg

Early Adulthood	Fully engaged in work, education, or training	Gained or studying post-school qualification
High SES	82.0%	86.3%
Low SES	50.8%	52.9%

Figure 5: Diagram of post-school outcomes in relation to socioeconomic status (SES).

Image source – Lamb et al (2020) "Equal Opportunity in Australia"

Stimulus 5 continues

Stimulus 5 continued

The Australian education system has been based on the provision of free, compulsory and secular school education. Historically, each State has introduced Education Acts outlining legislative responsibilities for public education. State governments continue to do this. However, the Commonwealth government decides eligibility requirements for higher education funding, research, and allocation of student places; in addition, it has assumed increasing responsibility for funding private non-government schools. This funding anomaly has left State governments with greater responsibility for public government schools, which cater disproportionately to disadvantaged students.

Over time, cornerstones of free public education in Australia have been substantially eroded. The issue of funding and its impact on the public and private education sectors give insight into the relationship between education and the institutions of family and work. With increased funding allocation to private schools, there has been a trend of some families making substantial financial sacrifices in order to send their children to private schools.

Source – Adapted from: Matthews, J. (2013) “The educational imagination and the sociology of education in Australia” *Australian Educational Researcher* 40(2) DOI:10.1007/s13384-012-0083-7

Stimulus 6 – Media



Figure 6: Illustration of seven (7) people holding smartphones in the air.

Image source - <https://i0.wp.com/newsliteracymatters.commons.gc.cuny.edu/files/2019/09/rudy.jpg>

Recent technological innovations and societal transformations have placed the media at the centre of societal organisation and everyday experience. There is little doubt that new media technology has made a massive impact on contemporary society. There are very wide debates about the new media and their significance. Some have an optimistic view, seeing the new media as playing a positive role in society, while others are more pessimistic.

One (1) outcome of increased social media in particular is the development of citizen journalism. This is where members of the public, rather than professional journalists and media companies, collect, report and spread news stories and information. Everyone now has access to huge amounts of information from all over the world. Some suggest that new media technology and social media in particular can give more power to ordinary people. More people, not just large media corporations, have the opportunity to communicate with vast numbers of other people. However, this can also include disinformation, which is spread intentionally by people. For example, in the case of COVID-19, there was disinformation spread through social media blaming racial groups, illegal immigrants and even governments for the spread of the virus. Disinformation spread through social media generally receives very little scrutiny when compared to more mainstream media sources.

Source – Adapted from: Ketchell, M. (2023) *Misinformation: Why it may not necessarily lead to bad behaviour* Accessed at: <https://theconversation.com/misinformation-why-it-may-not-necessarily-lead-to-bad-behaviour-199123>

Stimulus 7 – Work



Figure 7: Photo of young people walking towards a Centrelink and Medicare service centre.

Image source – <https://www.southcoastregister.com.au/story/8155499/pandemic-not-the-main-cause-of-youth-underemployment/>

The effects of socioeconomic disadvantage persist in Australian society and are especially evident when looking at changes in the workforce. Changes are occurring in relation to underemployment, which is currently reported at 6.1%. Underemployment is where individuals are working less than they desire by being employed on a part-time or casual basis instead of full time. A long-standing link has been noted between employment and socioeconomic status across all social groups. Further, there remains a strong and persistent connection between a young person's socioeconomic status and employment outcomes, and the data around underemployment is magnified for this social group. Youth underemployment was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic but was not a new crisis for younger Australians. The casualisation and insecure nature of work had been normalised over previous decades with major consequences for the socioeconomically disadvantaged in particular. Young people are more likely to be on casual contracts than older workers.

For example, compared to the national average for the same age group, socioeconomically disadvantaged 18 – 24-year-olds are:

- substantially less likely to be fully engaged in employment, education or training (50.8% compared to 70.3%)
- around twice as likely to be unemployed (9.4% compared to 5.0%).

Underemployment can have profound influences on a person's life chances. For underemployed young people with a background of socioeconomic disadvantage, the opportunity for upward social mobility is limited.

Source – Adapted from: Ward, R. (2023) "Pandemic not the main cause of youth underemployment"

Stimulus 8 – Family



Figure 8: Photo of a family of five (5) eating takeaway food on and near their couch while watching television together.

Image source – Reuters (2016) “Why you should not have a TV dinner”

With many changes to the concept of a family in today’s society, changes in family habits and key events are also starting to be challenged. The traditional family meal is rich with symbolism and nostalgia. Mum and dad and children sitting down to a lovingly prepared meal, unpacking the day and strengthening the bonds of love. With reduction in nuclear families in society, amongst other changes to family structures, the symbolism of a family meal has been used to represent the strength and value of the family unit.

But does the promotion of the ‘family meal’ set unrealistic expectations at a time of increasing diversity in families and family practices?

“We’ve found the traditional sit-down dinner is not the reality we’re seeing in most busy Australian households. Instead, families configure meals in a variety of practical ways to provide nourishment and manage time pressures and relationships,” she says.

Families interviewed by researchers revealed that working long hours, long commutes, conflicting schedules, diverse family arrangements, children’s sports and parents’ commitments all impacted on evening meals, so families responded by eating in a variety of spaces and at different times, sometimes together, sometimes separately.

Source – Adapted from: (2019) *Family Meals: Challenging the importance of eating today*. Accessed at: <https://lens.monash.edu/@politics-society/2019/11/15/1378386/family-meals-challenging-the-importance-of-eating-together>

- In essay form, answer **one (1)** question from this section.
 - Use the material in any **one (1)** or more of the extracts (stimulus material) provided in Section B, as well as information from the course.
 - **Use sociological terms and concepts in your answer.**
-

Question 5 – Stratification

Explain and evaluate how social stratification is created and maintained in social institutions (education, mass media, work, family).

Using the stimulus material and information from the course, discuss the role that **at least two (2)** of these institutions play in stratification within contemporary Australian society. Evaluate alternative theoretical explanations in your answer.

OR

Question 6 – Power and Politics

Explain and evaluate how power is exercised in social institutions (family, education, work, mass media).

Using the stimulus material and information from the course, discuss the role of power and politics in **at least two (2)** of these institutions within contemporary Australian society. Evaluate alternative theoretical explanations in your answer.

OR

Question 7 – Interrelationships of Institutions

Explain and evaluate how social institutions (family, education, work, mass media) interrelate.

Using the stimulus material and information from the course, discuss the interrelationships between **at least two (2)** of these institutions in contemporary Australian society. Evaluate alternative theoretical explanations in your answer.

OR

Question 8 – Changes over Time

Explain and evaluate how social institutions (family, education, work, mass media) transform over time.

Using the stimulus material and information from the course, discuss the transformation of **at least two (2)** of these institutions in contemporary Australian society. Evaluate alternative theoretical explanations in your answer.



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