

External Assessment 2025

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 exam 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	All criteria assessed using extended ratings of A+ to z
Section B	4	1	60 minutes	
Totals	8	2	120 minutes (2 hours)	

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.

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 stimulus materials 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 Control and Conformity

How the government's surveillance plans could turn Australia into a *Black Mirror* episode

A lot of us have seen the show *Black Mirror* on Netflix. It's a cracker. Each standalone episode tells a different story about how society's over-reliance on technology could have frightening consequences. Think *Twilight Zone* but with smart phones.



Figure 1: Photo of CCTV cameras.

I couldn't help but wonder whether I was smack bang in the middle of an episode of the dystopian drama series as I prepared my *A Current Affair* story this week.

According to some experts, there are as many as two million CCTV cameras across Australia, with a recent analysis finding Sydney has the sixth highest number of CCTV cameras per 1 000 people in the world (not counting Chinese cities).

The Australian Government plans to build a massive facial recognition database – ominously called 'The Capability'. The government says it would help prevent fraud and terror attacks, but artificial intelligence professor Toby Walsh, from the University of New South Wales (UNSW), reckons it will "change the nature of the world we're in" – for the worse.

You may not realise it, but a tsunami of facial recognition software is already in operation across our cities and suburbs.

Major sporting stadiums use it to identify banned patrons. Schools are trialling it to monitor attendance records. Even Bunnings uses the technology to help identify thieves.

The technology is eerily similar to cameras in China, where facial recognition CCTV is the backbone of the country's controversial "social credit" system. That terrifying network that awards or deducts points depending on a citizen's behaviour.

Stimulus 1 continues

Stimulus 1 continued

If a person's rating gets too low, they can be prevented from doing everyday activities like catching the train or flying.

Source: Image and text adapted from <https://www.9news.com.au/national/a-current-affair-reid-butler-australia-camera-surveillance-facial-recognition-technology-opinion/c30b2ade-7d94-4482-87ef-ed6e1ab1386d>

Stimulus 2 – Socialisation and Identity Construction

Cooley's Looking-Glass Self – Perception of others about us



Figure 2: Photo of person looking at themselves in a mirror.

Source: Xenia-Luise/Adobe Stock. Accessed via Communication Theory, <https://www.communicationtheory.org/cooleys-looking-glass-self-perception-of-others-about-us/>

Identity formation

Early childhood is a time of forming an initial sense of self. A **self-concept** or idea of who we are, what we are capable of doing, and how we think and feel is a social process that involves taking into consideration how others view us. So, in order to develop a sense of self, we must have interaction with others. Interactionist theorists, Cooley and Mead, offer two interesting explanations of how a sense of self develops.

Later on, peer groups play a critical role in shaping an individual's identity. As young people strive to establish their independence and sense of self, they often turn to their peers for validation and support. Peer groups can help individuals explore different aspects of their identity, such as their likes, dislikes, values and beliefs. Peer groups play a critical role in socialisation. Positive peer groups can provide many benefits, such as emotional support, a sense of belonging, and opportunities for personal growth. They can also serve as a source of motivation and encouragement, particularly in areas such as academics or athletics.

Source: Adapted from Interactionism and Views of Self – Child and Adolescent Developmental Psychology <https://unf.pressbooks.pub/childandadol/chapter/interactionism-and-views-of-self/>

Stimulus 3 – Alternative Sociological Theories of Deviance

"All options on the table" to tackle youth crime in Tasmania following recent incidents

Tasmanian Premier Jeremy Rockliff says "all options are on the table" for addressing youth crime in the state, including new laws allowing youth offenders found guilty of serious offences to be tried as adults.

In recent weeks, there have been multiple alleged antisocial incidents in Hobart's northern suburbs, with local independent MLC (Member of the Legislative Council) Bec Thomas calling for urgent action.

A meeting between the premier, police minister and police commissioner is being held on Tuesday and is focused on the issue.

Recent incidents include a disturbance at a department store in Glenorchy, which was circulated widely on social media, and allegedly involved a number of youths.

A separate incident in Glenorchy on Sunday afternoon is also being investigated, after a youth was allegedly assaulted.

Tasmania Police said the youth "reportedly received minor injuries following a verbal altercation involving two other youths", with investigations "progressing".

Independent MLC Bec Thomas says youth crime in Glenorchy needs to be addressed as the situation is "out of control".

Source: Adapted from

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-04-28/tasmania-police-meeting-youth-crime-glenorchy/105223716>

Stimulus 4 – Relativity of Deviance

Henna artist shares her talents with Tasmanians at markets



Figure 3: Photo of henna art on person's hand.

Source: Adapted from <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-05-09/henna-artist-overwhelmed-at-tasmanians/103796376>

What is deviance?

The concept of deviance is more difficult to define than crime. Deviance includes both criminal and non-criminal acts, but it is quite difficult to pin down what members of any society or groups actually regard as deviant behaviour. Downes and Rock (2007) suggest that ambiguity is a key feature of rule-breaking, as people are frequently unsure whether a particular episode is truly deviant or what deviance is. Their judgement will depend on the context in which it occurs, who the person is, what they know about them and what their motives might be.

Source: Adapted from Karl Thompson, *What is Deviance?* <https://revisesociology.com/2020/10/28/what-is-deviance/>

Section A – Socialisation: Conformity and Deviance

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

Explain and evaluate the process of socialisation and the mechanisms of social control. Using the stimulus materials from Section A and information from the course, analyse and evaluate alternative sociological theories in relation to the development of social norms.

OR

Question 2 – Socialisation and Identity Construction

Explain and evaluate the role socialisation plays in determining how an individual's identity is constructed. Using the stimulus materials from Section A and information from the course, analyse and evaluate alternative sociological theories in relation to the development of self.

OR

Question 3 – Alternative 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 from Section A and information from the course, analyse and evaluate alternative sociological theories in relation to deviance.

OR

Question 4 – Relativity of Deviance

Explain and evaluate the meaning and relativity of deviance. Using the stimulus materials from Section A and information from the course, analyse and evaluate alternative sociological theories in relation to deviance as a relative concept.

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 stimulus materials provided in Section B.
 - 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**.
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Stimulus 5 – Media

Does the Australian media industry have a class problem?

Australians are increasingly turning away from traditional news sources, according to data released by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) which suggests an "out of touch" media industry is partially to blame.

Walkley award-winning journalist Dr Helen Vatsikopoulos, who is an industry fellow with the University of Technology Sydney, has worked in media for more than 30 years.

Vatsikopoulos says she has noticed a "stark shift" in the demographic of those studying journalism in recent years and is advocating for more socio-economic diversity in Australian newsrooms. "Journalists hold a mirror up to society, and if the values of the journalists are middle class or higher, they don't have the lived experience to really understand and connect to the issues the average Australian faces," Vatsikopoulos says.

"We need more people from culturally diverse backgrounds in the media, but we absolutely need to start factoring in social class backgrounds."

Working as a journalism lecturer at the University of Technology in Sydney, she recalls an "alarming moment" during the 2019 federal election, which was "a bit of a wake-up call" for her.

"I remember getting all of my journalism students to concentrate on their electorates and find out what issues are happening there. And it turned out, around 80 per cent of the students in that class were living in Warringah (an electorate in Sydney's Northern Beaches), the second wealthiest electorate in the country," she says.

"The whole industry has become much more concentrated with middle and upper-class journalists."

Source: Liam Murphy, 'The forgotten aspect of diversity: Does the Australian media industry have a class problem?', SBS News, <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/does-the-australian-media-industry-have-a-class-problem/rpw4mm96y>

Stimulus 5 continues

Stimulus 5 continued

Who uses the new media?

The New Media Generation Divide (2019)	
AGE 16–24s	AGE 75+
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 99% use a mobile phone• 79% watch streamed content• 93% have a social media profile• 1% do not use the internet• 47% play games online	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 81% use a mobile phone• 22% watch streamed content• 20% have a social media profile• 48% do not use the internet• 5% play games online
<i>Source: OFCOM – Media Use and Attitudes Report 2019</i>	

Figure 4: Table comparing the percentage of people in two age groups who use news media.

Source: Adapted from Revise Sociology, *Who uses New Media?*
<https://revisesociology.com/2019/08/21/who-uses-new-media/>

Stimulus 6 – Family

Defining family

Family is a key social institution in all societies, which makes it a cultural universal. Similarly, values and norms surrounding marriage are found all over the world in every culture, so marriage and family are both cultural universals. Statuses (e.g., wife, husband, partner, mum, dad, brother, sister, etc.) are created and sanctioned by societies. While marriage and family have historically been closely linked in Australian culture, with marriages creating new families, their connection is becoming more complex.

Source: Adapted from Lumen, *Introduction to Sociology*,
<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-introductiontosociology/chapter/defining-family/>

Employment patterns and trends for families with children

- Within two-parent households, the proportion with both parents working full-time hours is increasing (31% in 2021, up from 22% in 2009), although it remains more common for one parent to be full-time and the other part-time (36% in 2021, this proportion changing little since 2009).
- Stay-at-home father families are not common, as captured by fathers who are not employed and mothers who are employed. Fathers' employment does not vary with the age of the youngest child, unlike mothers' employment. However, there are some significant differences in employment rates when couple and single fathers are compared, with single fathers more often in part-time work.

Source: Adapted from Jennifer Baxter (Australian Institute of Family Studies), *Employment Patterns and Trends for Families with Children*, May 2023,
<https://aifs.gov.au/research/research-reports/employment-patterns-and-trends-families-children>

Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) 2018

- Stay-at-home fathers tend to have lower levels of education attainment than fathers in dual-working families and those where the mother is at home, but higher education levels than fathers in jobless families.

Source: https://aifs.gov.au/sites/default/files/stay_at_home_dads-media_release_0_0_0.pdf

Stimulus 7 – Education

Apparent retention rate by school affiliation

(i.e. continuation rate of schooling based on type of school attended)

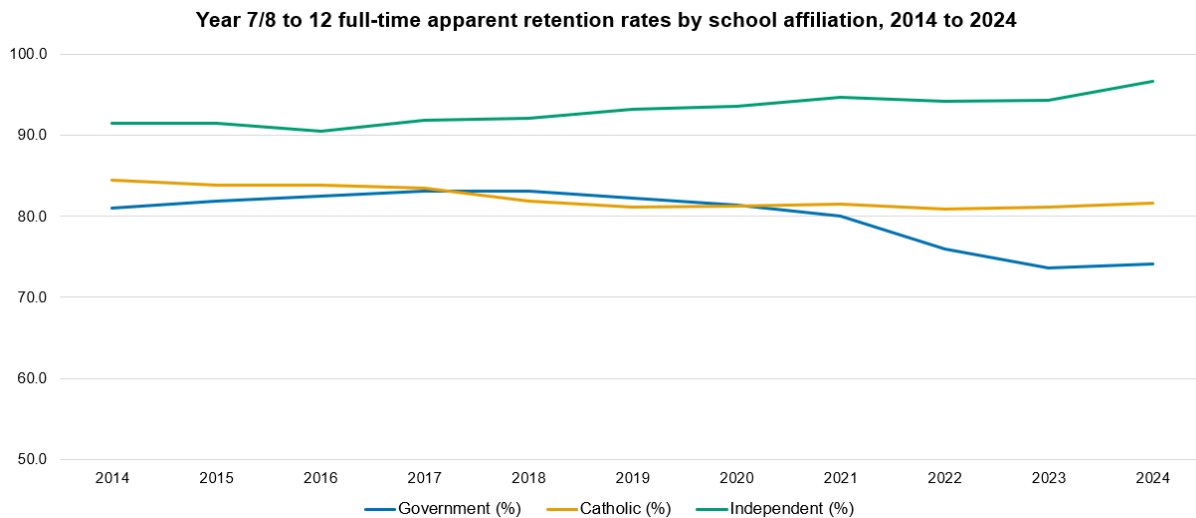


Figure 5: Graph showing years 7–12 school retention rates based on affiliation.

Source: Schools, 2024, Table 64a – Australian Bureau of Statistics, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/latest-release>

Private schools offer choice – but is that better?

Apart from academic performance, a parent can choose to send their child to a private school for many reasons.

Some parents believe private schools give their kids a chance to make the right connections that will help them later in life.

Others may think a private school has better resources and facilities given the amount they pay in fees.

Jane Caro, a board member of the Public Education Foundation, believes that a large non-government education sector increases inequality.

"We take all the middle-class kids out of the public system and we basically create sinks of advantage and disadvantage," she says.

Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-01-20/are-private-schools-better-than-public-schools/101867070>

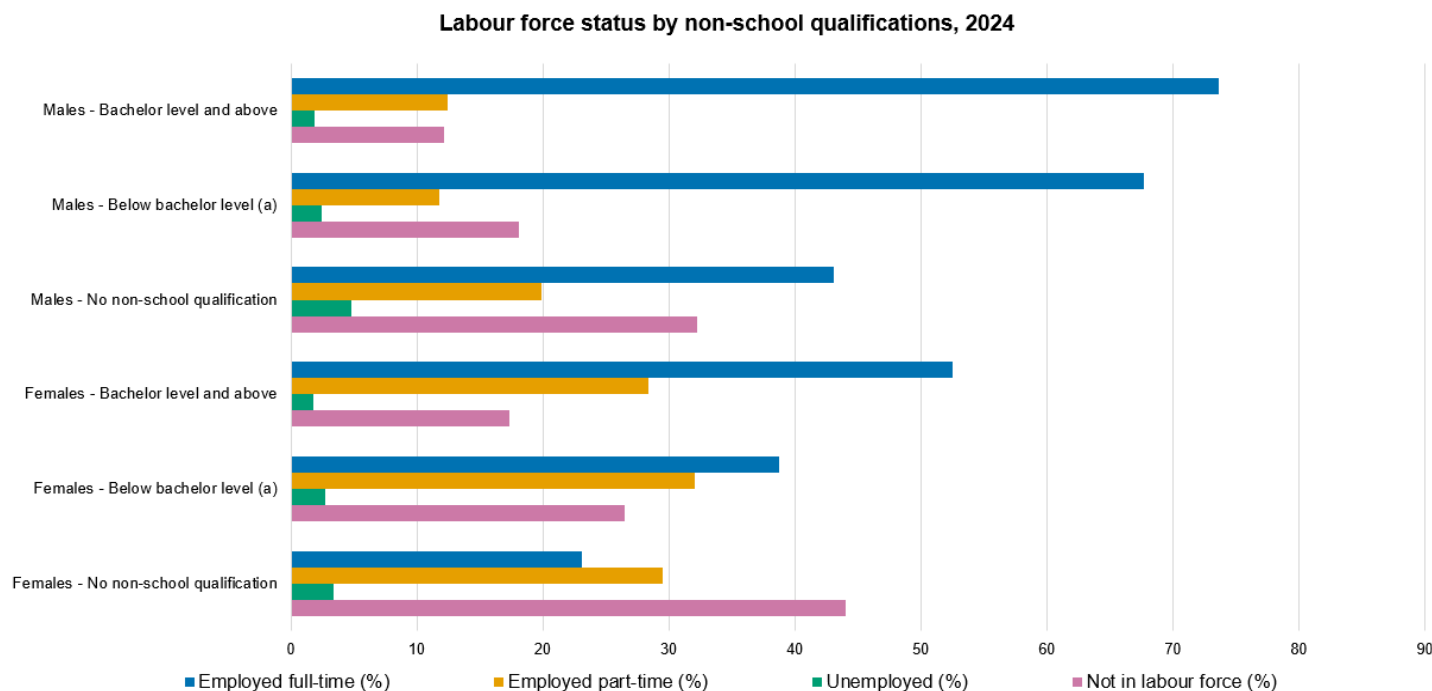
Funding disparity

Public schools in Australia educate 2.4 times the number of students from low socio-educational backgrounds compared to private schools. Yet new data reveals a huge funding disparity that is only growing.

Source: <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/the-funding-gap-between-private-and-public-school-students-revealed/losih77r0>

Stimulus 8 – Work

Labour force status by non-school qualifications



a. Includes Certificates I-IV and not further defined, diplomas, advanced diplomas and associate degrees.

Figure 6: Graph of labour force status by non-school qualifications.

Source: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/gender-indicators>

Micro-credentials

Micro-credentials are small, certificate-style courses that focus on a particular area of study to hone a learner's proficiency over the shortest possible time.

Various research reports reveal the everchanging nature of careers and occupations and the need for workers to reskill and upskill throughout life. It has been predicted that the half-life of a skill has dropped from 30 years to an average of six years (Yuen, 2018). Individuals can no longer expect that traditional modes of formal learning or current post-school education models will provide them with the skills and capabilities for a lifelong career in this dynamic evolving context.

Becoming an effective lifelong learner involves a cumulative process, which starts in infancy and is influenced thereafter by the institutional arrangements that provide opportunities to learn (OECD, 2019). Built on assumptions about the importance of skills in the new economy, lifelong learning requires a cultural shift and the recognition that continuous learning, skilling, upskilling and reskilling will create several professional, social, personal and intrinsic benefits to the individual.

Sources: <https://www.rmit.edu.au/online/blog/what-are-micro-credentials-and-why-are-they-important> and; OECD, Micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability, https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/micro-credentials-for-lifelong-learning-and-employability_9c4b7b68-en.html

Section B – Institutions: Power and Politics

- In essay form, answer **one (1)** question from this section.
 - Use the material in any **one (1)** or more of the stimulus materials 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 (family, education, work, media). Using the stimulus materials from Section B 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, media). Using the stimulus materials from Section B 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, media) interrelate. Using the stimulus materials from Section B 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, media) transform over time. Using the stimulus materials from Section B 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.

End of Exam

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