

Chapter 1

Key concepts and processes of cultural transmission

Secondary agents of socialisation

Education

Knowledge

As children get older, other secondary agents of socialisation become important in their lives.

The education system plays an important role in socialising children and young people. Children learn many things at school. They will be taught subjects formally in lessons, such as mathematics, English, science and sociology. Schools will also socialise pupils into appropriate norms, values and attitudes, such as how to behave in lessons and how to treat other people. As with other agencies of socialisation, schools socialise children in more than one way.

Formal curriculum

Example

Schools teach children the **formal curriculum**. This includes the set subjects students are taught and what they learn in those subjects. When the National Curriculum was brought in, in 1988, children across the country followed broadly the same curriculum, but this differs considerably from what is taught in private schools and in other countries (and is changing with the growth in academies and free schools).

Hidden curriculum

Comparison

Pupils also learn through the **hidden curriculum**. This refers to the messages, norms and values that are passed on to children throughout the day without them realising it. For example, if, in a primary school, most teachers are female, but the head teacher is male, young children might see men as superior. Through the hidden curriculum indicating ways to behave, the child will also learn how to get through the school day.

Sanctions

Knowledge

Another way in which schools socialise children is by the use of sanctions. Both **formal** and **informal sanctions** are used in schools. Schools have written rules, and formal sanctions will be used when these are broken, such as giving detention. Informal sanctions are unwritten and are likely to vary between teachers. Negative sanctions might include a 'telling off' by a teacher or a disapproving look while positive sanctions might include praise or a certificate for good work.

WHAT AM I GOING TO LEARN?

To understand how other agents of secondary socialisation transmit culture.

What do you think?

Do schools treat boys and girls in exactly the same way? Make a list of any differences in the way girls and boys are socialised in schools, such as in sports.

A pupil receiving a negative sanction from a teacher.



Media

Knowledge

The media is an important agent of socialisation. The media is taken to include television, newspapers, magazines, websites including social media sites and messaging platforms, radio and anything else which sends messages to a mass audience. The media socialises individuals by a variety of methods.

Children, particularly, might be influenced through role models followed in the media, and might copy their behaviour. Young boys might try to be like their favourite sporting personalities, for example.

In 2019, educational charity the Female Lead set up a scheme called 'Disrupting the Feed'. Its aim was to link girls to positive female role models in their social media feeds and make their social media experience healthy and encouraging. The role models included Greta Thunberg, Michelle Obama, Jameela Jamil and Serena Williams. The girls who took part are said to have benefitted from the scheme, which shows the power of strong female role models in socialisation.

The media might influence the way people think about certain groups by the way they present and label them. Generally, for example, refugees have been labelled negatively by much of the media, as have many youth **subcultures**.

It has been argued that violence on television or in films and video games might lead impressionable children or young people to copy the violence in real life.



Michelle Obama, a positive role model, is active in the arts, business and welfare.

Religion

Knowledge

Religion is another agent of socialisation. It teaches individuals what to believe and how to live their lives. Religions have written rules and moral codes that their members are expected to follow. Different religions will have different norms and values. For example, some followers of the Muslim religion expect females to 'cover up' their bodies. As with other agents of socialisation, religion uses sanctions to reinforce socialisation.

Negative sanctions for disobeying the rules of a religion might be extreme in some cases, and people might be banned from the place of worship. A positive sanction for obeying the rules of the religion might be the promise of future happiness in the 'next life'.

The workplace

Knowledge

Many students have part-time jobs and have to learn the norms and rules of the workplace. When they leave education and start full-time work, they might have to learn another set of norms and practices. Workplaces often have induction schemes for new workers. For example, a newly qualified teacher (NQT) will have a more experienced teacher to be their mentor and look after and supervise them. As with all agents of socialisation, workplaces use both negative sanctions, such as written warnings for a serious offence, and positive sanctions, such as an 'employee of the month' recognition or bonus, to keep social control.

CHECK IT

Draw a spider diagram showing the methods used by education and the media to socialise their members.

PLENARY

Identify the sanctions used by the six main agents of socialisation:

- ▶ family
- ▶ peer group
- ▶ media
- ▶ education
- ▶ religion
- ▶ work.

SUMMARY

The process of socialisation continues throughout life. Schools, the media, religion and the workplace are all important agents of socialisation.

Chapter 2

Families

WHAT AM I GOING TO LEARN?

To understand that there is a variety of family types in contemporary Britain.

Starter ...

Make a list of all the family types in a television soap opera or drama that you watch. How does the programme represent these families?

Different types of family in Britain today

As we have seen, the nuclear family has traditionally been regarded as the 'normal' family type in Britain. Several new family types, however, have developed in Britain over the last 50 years or so. There is no longer one main family type which the majority of people live in, and fewer people follow set patterns of family life.

A person living on their own or with friends or flatmates is considered to be living in a **household**, rather than a family.

Lone-parent families

Knowledge

A lone-parent family is a family arrangement of one parent (mother or father) with their dependent children. According to the charity Gingerbread, the number of families with single parents has been around a quarter for at least a decade. Ninety per cent of these families consist of a mother and her dependent child or children, and this make-up has not changed very much. Historically, however, there has been a significant increase. The *Daily Express* estimated there were just eight per cent of families headed by single parents in 1971.

In the past, more lone-parent families would have been formed by the death of one parent than by separation (which would most likely have been frowned upon). There are more lone-parent families today that are either the result of divorce or the end of a relationship, or of women choosing to have children on their own.

Other family types

Knowledge

Another family type, the **reconstituted**, blended or step-family, is made up of one or both partners with children from a previous marriage or relationship living with them. The new partners might go on to have their own children together. According to statistics, reconstituted families are the fastest growing type of family in the UK and currently there are more reconstituted families than nuclear families.

The number of same-sex couples choosing to live together has increased – by 50 per cent between 2015 and 2018. About a quarter of these couples were married. Social norms may have changed as a result of the law changing.

A cohabiting family is one where the couple are living together in a close relationship as partners, but are unmarried. **Cohabitation** is increasing in modern society and fewer people are marrying, even when they have children.

Extended families

Comparison

By contrast, some people in the UK live in extended families, an arrangement that is common in many other countries, such as in India and in African tribal communities.

The **extended family** consists of relatives in addition to the immediate family. There are several types of extended family:

- ▷ A *vertically extended* family has three or more generations living together or very nearby; children, parents and grandparents.

CHECK IT

Using stick figures, draw a diagram to illustrate the structure of each of the different family types in modern Britain.



A vertically extended family of children, parents and grandparents.

- ▷ A family that has been *horizontally extended* has two generations with relatives other than the immediate family living together or nearby, such as cousins, aunts or uncles.
- ▷ **Beanpole families** are a particular type of vertically extended family with up to four generations living together or nearby, but with few children, making them appear long and thin in structure.
- ▷ The *modified extended* family is an extended family whose members do not live together or even very close by, but who keep in regular contact through visits, or phone calls, video calls, text messages and emails, showing the importance of close extended family ties.

Examples

The lives and activities of celebrities cannot be taken as typical of the population. However, the family lives of some celebrities do reflect the variety of families in the UK, and similar countries such as the USA.

- ▷ Khloe Kardashian raises her daughter True as a lone parent since her relationship with Tristan Thompson ended in 2019.
- ▷ Elton John married his partner of over 30 years David Furnish in 2015 and lives in a same-sex couple with their children.
- ▷ Frank Lampard and his wife Christine have their own child and also Frank's daughters from his former marriage.
- ▷ Jennifer Saunders lived in a nuclear family with her long-term husband Adrian Edmondson and their children until they left home. Jennifer and Adrian are now grandparents.
- ▷ Ricky Gervais has cohabited with his partner Jane Fallon for well over 30 years.

These arrangements might have changed by the time you read this book!

SUMMARY

People in Britain today live in a variety of family forms. There is no one dominant family form.

What do you think?

Can you think of more famous families? What do you think of their domestic arrangements? Are they conventional? Do they seem to work?

PLENARY

Make a list of all the family types you have lived in and the family types you think you might live in later in life.

Chapter 2

Families

WHAT AM I GOING TO LEARN?

To examine in more detail why feminists are critical of the family.

Starter ...

In pairs, see if you can recall the ways in which feminists argue that families benefit men.

- ▶ Why do functionalists criticise this view?
- ▶ Why do Marxists criticise this view?

Feminists suggest that young girls are guided towards a role as a housewife and mother from an early age, partly through the toys they are given to play with.

CHECK IT

Draw a spider diagram showing how, according to feminists, girls and women are controlled in the family. Refer to socialisation, social control and domestic abuse.

The feminist view of the family (2)

As we have seen, feminists see the family as a patriarchal institution that benefits and serves the interests of men more than women.

They argue that the family exercises **social control** over the lives of young girls and women at every stage of family life, forcing them into a mould of 'femininity' formed by men.

Social control of females

Knowledge

We have already seen how the family socialises children into **gender roles**. Ann Oakley argues that young girls are from birth steered towards a mother/housewife role and encouraged to be caring by the toys they are given and the activities they take part in.



This control takes a different form for older girls. Feminists argue that parents are stricter with girls than boys, monitoring their movements more, expecting them to be back home earlier and generally curtailing their freedom more than boys.

This is reinforced by what is known as 'a **double standard** of morality' where girls' sexuality is controlled. Young women who have several sexual partners are branded and gossiped about whereas young men with several sexual partners might be encouraged to regard it as an achievement.

Theory

Feminists including Christine Delphy and Diana Leonard argue that, in adulthood, the social control of women passes to their boyfriends and husbands. Relationships in the family are patriarchal, where men have control and are dominant and have more power and control of money and decisions in their position as head of the household.

Chapter 3

Education

WHAT AM I GOING TO LEARN?

To explore why middle-class pupils tend to do better at school than working-class pupils.

Starter ...

Discuss the factors that are likely to help children do well at school, such as proper equipment and good language skills. Then put them in order of importance, with an explanation for your ranking.

Some homes have lots of books and the parents read with their children regularly. Does this make a difference to the children's achievement?

Differences in attainment between social classes

Social class has always been an important factor in determining how children achieve at school. The Conservative government has spoken about 'closing the gap' and recognises that disadvantaged students are not achieving as well as their peers. It measures disadvantage by whether a child has claimed free school meals in the five years before their GCSEs. This group is largely made up of working-class children, but includes different ethnic groups. There has been particular concern about underachievement of the white working class in recent years.

Social class used to be measured mainly by the occupation of the head of the **household**, which was usually the father.

How class is measured

Knowledge

Generally, under the old measure of class, families with fathers who had manual jobs were in the working class and non-manual workers were in the middle class. Manual refers to jobs which are physical, such as miners, carpenters, bricklayers and labourers, whereas non-manual jobs are those which are seen to involve the use of the mind more than the use of hands or physical strength, such as bank clerk, doctor or teacher. Research consistently points to differences in attainment levels between working- and middle-class pupils in their reading scores, examination results and so on.

A new measurement of class by the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) was introduced in 2001 to take into account some of the changes in the **status** and conditions of jobs. According to this, there are now eight different groups of class in the UK. Higher professional and managerial jobs are at or near the top and the working classes are usually taken as the bottom two or three groups.

Comparison

Ofqual (the body that regulates qualifications and examinations in England) regularly collects information on the attainment levels of disadvantaged pupils. One of the measures they use is the group of pupils eligible for free school meals. (In 2020–21, almost 20 per cent of pupils were claiming free school meals.) This is now often used, particularly by the **media**, as a measure for working-class children (although it by no means includes *all* working-class children). During the Covid-19 pandemic, footballer Marcus Rashford challenged the prime minister over the need to continue school meal provision during the holidays.



Comparison

For 2019–20, 23.2 per cent of the white children eligible for free school meals in England achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths, compared with 54 per cent of all other children.

Pisa (the Programme for International Student Assessment), which you might have heard of on the news, compares educational attainment across different countries. Its report for 2018 concluded that the impact of class background on educational attainment was similar in England to other countries in the report. However, social class background had a significant effect on reading ability.

Reasons for inequality

Knowledge

It is important to discover the *reasons* for this pattern. If the government wants to improve the chances of disadvantaged groups, it has to know the reasons why they are underachieving to try to put it right. Ministers can then advise educational professionals on what extra resources are needed and how they are best used.

Comparison

Sociologists tend to draw a distinction between *cultural* factors and *material* factors as possible reasons for the underachievement of certain groups.

Cultural factors refer to influences such as language codes, **values**, attitudes, encouragement from family and friends, expectations and so on. Material factors refer to money and what money can buy, such as books, additional tuition, even the type of housing pupils live in.

Knowledge

Sociologists also look at the school in terms of the type of school, the **culture** of the school, what goes on in the classroom, if there is banding or setting and so on.

Of course, these factors cannot always be separated as they influence each other.

Example

If working-class pupils have a different culture from middle-class pupils, then how the school deals with this will be important. If middle-class pupils have the same culture as the school, this might put them at an advantage.

In the following sections, we will be looking at these factors.

Differences in attainment between social classes



Does the type of housing children live in affect how they do at school?

Taking it further

The government gives schools extra money for children who are eligible for free school meals. In 2016/17, this was over £900 per pupil for students in Years 7 to 11. Draw up a plan advising head teachers on the most effective way to spend this money.

SUMMARY

White working-class pupils or pupils receiving free school meals leave school with the lowest qualifications of any social group. There are many different reasons put forward to explain this, including cultural reasons, material reasons and what goes on inside the school.

Chapter 3

Education

WHAT AM I GOING TO LEARN?

To explore material factors that might affect achievement in education.

Starter ...

How free is education? Make a list of all the things you have to pay for at school and the things you need at home to make the most out of education. Make an attempt to cost everything.

SPOTLIGHT: METHODS

Carry out a short interview with two of your friends to find out their views on school uniform. Would they like it abolished? Prepare five different issues to do with uniform to talk about.

The importance of material factors and material deprivation

Material factors refer to money and what money can buy, such as good-quality housing, healthy food, good living conditions, equipment, clothing and so on. **Material deprivation** refers to the lack of some basic needs such as housing, heating, adequate food and clothing caused by lack of money. Some sociologists argue that material deprivation and poverty are the main causes of educational underachievement.

The effects of income on attainment

Knowledge

A high **income** can provide many educational advantages, such as money for additional tuition, equipment, computers and internet access; good, spacious, warm housing; and transport to and from out-of-school classes and groups. Wealthy parents are more able to afford to move home into the catchment areas for the 'best' schools and be able to support their children to stay on at school after GCSEs.

Comparison

Lower-income families might not be able to afford proper, or more than one set of, school uniform, field trips, equipment and books. They might live in uncomfortable, cramped accommodation and might not be able to provide a healthy diet. Children from low-income homes are more likely to leave school at the first opportunity, or, if they stay on, they might decide not to go on to university because they will get into debt.

A.H. Halsey and his colleagues in a study in 1980 found that material factors were more important than cultural factors in a child's decision of whether to stay on at school or not.

Knowledge

The Children's Commission on Poverty reported in 2021 that, even before the Covid pandemic, over 4 million children lived with food insecurity, poor housing, and a lack of money for essentials such as shoes and clothes. The pandemic made things worse and created a digital divide between those with and without laptops and internet access. There was also a sharp uptake in free school meals applications.

Oxford University found that half of the low-income students in their study reported being hungry during the school day. The Child Action Poverty Group also reported in 2019 that children were going hungry and some low-income families do not qualify for school meals.

Such lack of funds might affect educational attainment in many ways.

Example

If children are without a computer or internet access, they might be unable to do their homework and so, apart from missing out on the learning, get into trouble at school and are labelled by teachers as lazy or uninterested.

Children living in damp, overcrowded conditions that make them tired or unhealthy, or children who are hungry, are likely to find it difficult to concentrate at school and are more likely to miss school through illness, therefore getting behind with their work.

Knowledge

A low income might mean that children cannot participate fully in school. Research shows schooling is far from free in Britain today.

Free schooling?

Example

The Children's Society found that the average annual cost of secondary school uniform in 2020 was £337. There are other costs too, including transport, lunches, shoes, sports kit and textbooks. There might be extras such as music lessons, sports clubs and school trips. The Child Poverty Action Group has begun a campaign to raise awareness, called 'The Cost of the School Day'.

Knowledge

The *Independent* reported in 2019 that children in poverty were missing school because of fears of bullying and lack of equipment.

Examples

Children from families on low incomes who might not be able to afford school trips could stand out from their classmates, as well as missing out. They could face bullying for hand-me-down or ill-fitting school uniform. Non-uniform days might present a problem with finding the £1 that might be asked for and, more significantly, fashionable clothes to wear.

Choice of school?

Knowledge

Low-income families will have less choice of schools. Schools vary in quality and those with good examination results and Ofsted reports are very popular with parents. This usually leads to a rise in house prices in these areas that poorer families can't afford.

Comparison

Middle-class parents might move to an area just to get their children into the school, creating what has become known as 'selection by mortgage'. Families with low incomes will have to attend the nearest school. Stephen Ball argues that there is, therefore, far more parental choice of schools if you have money.

Knowledge

Extra funding called Pupil Premium was introduced in 2011 to help schools close the gap between disadvantaged students and their peers. In 2021, the amount for each pupil was £955 for secondary and £1345 for primary. Schools are judged on how effectively they use the money. The aim is to overcome material deprivation. The government also announced £1.4 billion to help students affected by the pandemic catch up on lost learning.

The importance of material factors and material deprivation



The government responded to the high cost of school uniform in 2021 by passing a law to keep uniform prices down in an attempt to overcome barriers to education.

SUMMARY

Material deprivation might be a cause of lower achievement in school suffered by families on low incomes. Those with high incomes have many educational advantages.

Social differentiation and stratification

WHAT AM I GOING TO LEARN?

To understand what authority means, including Max Weber's ideas about where authority and power comes from.

What is authority?

The word **authority** means having the power or the right to give orders or make decisions. There are huge differences in the level of authority that people have in the UK. This is usually closely linked to social differences.

Authority from age and gender

Examples

Age, for instance, is very closely linked to authority. In many situations, an older person is expected to be in charge and make decisions. However, in the UK, people at a certain age seem to be expected to let go of their authority as a younger person takes over.

In ancient societies, such as those of Rome, Egypt and Greece, older people were seen as wiser and so retained their power and authority. This is still the case in some societies, for example in some tribal communities. Since the late 1950s, too, the average age of the Pope, the leader of the Catholic church, has been around 70.

Gender is also closely linked to the idea of authority. In Victorian Britain, men were expected to be the head of the family, rich or poor. Men were also MPs and very much in charge. Up until 2015, a female would only become queen if she had no brothers. The first male child would have become king, even if his sister was older. Until 1922, the eldest male heir always inherited his parents' property in both the UK and the USA.

SPOTLIGHT: METHODS

Design a questionnaire to investigate which type of authority people prefer to follow.



Queen Elizabeth, Pope Francis, ...

Weber and traditional authority

Theory

Max Weber is one of the founding fathers of sociology and his ideas have been very important. He argued that there were three main ways that people gain authority. By this he meant that there were three reasons why most people *accept* authority.

The first of these is **traditional authority**. This is based on a long-established custom. The most obvious example is the British royal family. There is a royal bloodline which can be traced back hundreds of years. Kings and queens up until Charles I believed strongly in the 'divine right' of kings, which is the idea that God meant them to rule. After the civil war and the execution of Charles I in 1649, the power of the monarchy was reduced. However, the custom of having a king and queen was restored a few years after the civil war and has continued to this day. The rules about who becomes king or queen have been changed at times, but basically it is based on birth right.

Comparison

The USA, as a republic, has an elected president as head of state, rather than a monarch. In theory, any US citizen born in the country could become president based on votes.

Charismatic and rational-legal authority

Theory

The second type of authority which Weber identified was **charismatic authority**. Charismatic leaders owe much of their authority to the power of their personalities. Leaders of this type tend to gain high levels of popular support and have very loyal followers. Examples of such leaders are Martin Luther King, Gandhi and Jesus.

Finally, Weber believed that **rational-legal authority** was the most common in modern societies. Here, leaders are followed because they have been chosen according to a system which has clear and logical rules for choosing the best qualified and most capable leader. The prime minister in the UK becomes this type of leader following the process of a general election.



... Nelson Mandela and Vladimir Putin. Which sorts of authority do (or did) these leaders have?

Think Theory

Can we justify having a monarchy in the UK? If Weber is right that rational-legal authority is the most modern, would the UK be better having a US-style president. Organise a class debate on this issue.

CHECK IT

Find three examples for each of Weber's types of authority. See if you can also find an example of someone who demonstrates all three types of authority.

SUMMARY

Weber thought that, in reality, all three types of authority were likely to occur. In the UK, we have aspects of all three working together. The queen has traditional authority, but we have an election system to choose our government and prime minister. However, personality (charisma) might play an important part in who we choose.

Chapter 4

Social differentiation and stratification

Are inequalities of social class still important in the UK?

Sociologists have long been interested in the effects of social class on several areas of social life.

Life-chances and social class

Knowledge

First, there is an education success gap between the working class and members of the middle and upper classes. Working-class children are less likely than others to gain five good passes at GCSE or go to university.

Second, working-class people are more likely to be victims of crime and more likely to be convicted of crime.

It is important to consider how such outcomes are linked and form part of peoples' life-chances.

In the world of work, there is considerable evidence to show that working-class children do not have as good life-chances as those from higher social classes.

Examples

The Sutton Trust is a think tank charity which suggests ways to improve chances for the working class. It wants to make sure that very talented people can be successful, whatever social class they are. Their report 'Elitist Britain 2019' showed that 65 per cent of senior judges, 44 per cent of newspaper columnists, 59 per cent of top civil servants and 29 per cent of MPs had been to independent schools. This does show some change since their 2016 report, but is still surprising, as fewer than seven per cent of people in the UK attend independent schools.

A report in the *Financial Times* in 2020 showed how inequalities in income and wealth affect inequalities in health, both mental and physical, and that the effects of Covid-19 have been worse for the poor than the rich. A person's job and income affect their diet, housing, weight, mental health, chances of becoming ill and their life expectancy. These are all examples of social inequality.

The report claimed that inequality is bad for the rich too. In countries like Japan, that has greater equality than the USA and UK, wealthy people enjoy better mental health. The report suggests that this is because problems caused by inequality including crime, low pay and unemployment, affect the whole of society.

Marxism and the equality gap

Theory

Differences in success at work are likely to affect the earnings of working class families. Marxist sociologists have argued that the inequality gap between the classes is becoming greater as Marx predicted it would.

WHAT AM I GOING TO LEARN?

To consider different evidence and examples about social class inequality in the UK today.

Taking it further

If you were in the government, how could you create greater equality? How do the problems faced by the poor affect the rest of society?

One of the promises from Boris Johnson's Conservative government was about 'levelling up'. By this he meant improving some areas of the UK that have been left behind and face poverty. Find out how the government has tried to do this and how successful it has been.

Inequality of wealth and income

Knowledge

Two other measures of inequality are wealth and income. Income refers to the money that people receive every week or month, in the form of wages, benefits, pensions, investment interest or even rent from a house they own. Working-class people are likely to receive less income than middle-class people.

Wealth means things of value that you own but you do not need to live on. Examples include savings, shares, property, jewellery, antiques and paintings. Working-class people generally would be expected to have less wealth. Wealthy people might inherit a large amount of their wealth from their families.

Example

Most reports in the 1980s and 1990s indicated that the wealth inequality gap in the UK was becoming wider. The Credit Suisse Team is a group based in Switzerland which produces a yearly report on global wealth. In 2021, it found that wealth inequality in the UK declined between 2000 and 2007, but has grown again since then. The level of inequality in the UK was still higher than in 2000.

The Resolution Foundation charity found that the wealth gap in the UK had increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, with the richest ten per cent gaining £50,000 on average. The poorest third of the population gained very little wealth in comparison.

The New Right and inequality

Theory

New Right sociologists would not see this rise in inequality as a problem. They believe that everybody benefits by increases in wealth. The richest people in the world create jobs and wealth for poorer people. They deserve their success and contribute to society. Working-class people need to take the opportunities they have and work their way up the system.

A condemned housing terrace in a working-class area in the north of England.



SUMMARY

Most evidence shows that social class inequality in the UK is increasing. Sociologists disagree about whether this is something to worry about. The New Right hopes that increased wealth will make everyone better off, but Marxists believe that inequalities are becoming greater, especially for the working class.

Are inequalities of social class still important in the UK?

SPOTLIGHT: METHODS

The population is divided into ten groups based on wealth in each household. This table, using data from the Equality Trust and Office for National Statistics in 2016, shows how wealth is divided by percentage. The Equality Trust measures wealth based on all the property, savings and shares that a household has.

Bottom 10th	0%
9th	0%
8th	1%
7th	3%
6th	4%
5th	6%
4th	9%
3rd	13%
2nd	19%
Top 10th	45%

Describe what the table shows about wealth distribution in the UK. How useful do you think the table is? What else would you like to know?

PLENARY

Create a chart with two columns as a summary:

- Reasons social class is still important
- Reasons social class is less important.

Social differentiation and stratification

WHAT AM I GOING TO LEARN?

To examine the ways that the media shows different age groups.

Starter ...

Draw a spider diagram to show stereotypes of either old age or youth.

Taking it further

Find out what the Equality Act 2010 says about ageism.

How does the media present different age groups?

Ageism

Knowledge

Young and old suffer from the way that they are presented in the media. People in middle and old age are sometimes mocked. Humour is often based on stereotypes, and, although this can be amusing, there is always a danger that stereotypes are used to make unfair judgements about people. This can result in **ageism**.

Ageism, like racism and sexism, involves prejudice and discrimination. As we have already seen, the way that different ages are seen changes over time and the media plays an important role in shaping this, though entertainment, news and advertising.

Ageism in an ageing population

Example

Factually, the UK has an ageing population. Parliament's website has predicted a 12 per cent increase in the number of people aged over 65 between 2015 and 2020. There are also likely increases in the numbers of people over 85 and 100 years old. Increased life expectancy has been a great achievement in the UK, but it brings problems. People might now live long lives, but it means that there might be a longer period in which people depend on society for help.

Age UK, a charity and pressure group, says that ageism is now a big issue and will become as big an issue as sexism and racism. For instance, the growth in the numbers of older people will be seen as a threat by some. Old people might be seen as a burden on society, stretching our health and public services to the limit.

Media representations of older people

Knowledge

In addition to the view of elderly people as a burden, the media is guilty of promoting stereotypes in which older people are seen as forgetful, feeble, stubborn, helpless and even bigoted. Characters such as Grandpa Simpson and Professor Farnsworth (from *Futurama*) are seen as bad tempered, rude, depressing and 'killjoys'. In *Coronation Street*, shopkeeper Norris Cole continued the 'Corrie' tradition of grumpy old men going back to Albert Tatlock in the 1960s. Norris's character left in 2020, but it will be interesting to see if the 'grumpy old man' is replaced.

Older women are likely to experience ageism and sexism linked together. Female newsreaders including Anna Ford have expressed concern about the lack of older women appearing on television. The media encourages a view that female presenters are only valuable if they are young and attractive.

Elderly people are also stereotyped as old fashioned and unable and unwilling to understand and use new technology. Sites such as boredpanda poke fun at older people adding 'please' and 'thank you' to Google searches or their misuse of emojis. This type of stereotyping can lead to prejudice and discrimination. Technology websites, however, suggest that older people's use of technology is increasing, especially during the pandemic.

Comparison

In his later films, the actor and director Clint Eastwood plays a series of bad-tempered older characters. However, some do break stereotypes and in *The Mule* he plays a drug dealers' mule.

The Centre for Ageing Better has launched a picture library of positive and realistic images of the over 50s. In addition, there are some positive stereotypes in the media showing elderly people as wise, generous, friendly, moral, experienced and loyal.

Young people and stereotyping

Knowledge

Young adults also suffer from media stereotyping. They are often stereotyped as a threat to society and likely to be criminal, binge drinkers, reckless and 'yobs'. The Children's Society reported in 2021 that young people were being stereotyped as moody 'sleepyheads' and 'mobile gazers'. An international study by the University of Huddersfield reported that young people felt let down by negative media stereotypes during the pandemic. This included presenting young people as 'victims of lost education' or 'villains breaking lockdown rules'.



A stereotypical image of youths in hoodies. Stereotypes are powerful and influence the way people see social life.



A fit, active, fun-loving older man challenging ageist stereotypes.

PLENARY

Design a poster to educate people about ageism and encourage more understanding points of view.

SUMMARY

All of this stereotyping has harmful effects on both young and old people. It might affect their confidence, wellbeing and opportunities. It could also harm society in terms of wasting talent and creating unrest. In Chapter 5, we will see how such negative stereotyping by the media can create moral panics about youth and crime.

Chapter 5

Crime and deviance

WHAT AM I GOING TO LEARN?

To look for patterns of crime and deviance based on conviction rates.

SPOTLIGHT: METHODS

Design a set of questions for a structured interview to find out whether people think that crime in the UK is increasing. Complete a pilot study and revise your questions before carrying out your interview. Feed back to the class.

Taking it further

Research your local area using crime-statistics.co.uk. This website allows you to put your school or home postcode in to see how much crime there has been in the area in the last year.

The main patterns of crime in the UK

There is a tendency in society to believe that somehow things were better in the past. As far as crime is concerned, there is often a belief that a golden age existed some time in the past where fewer crimes were committed or crimes were less serious, and that the situation now is much worse than it has ever been. If this is true, then **conviction rates** will be higher today than they have been in the past.

The New Right view on changes in crime

Theory

The **New Right** view on crime is that crime is worse than in the past. It blames the collapse of the family, weak law enforcement and a failing education system. The New Right tends to focus on certain types of crime, including **street crime** and youth crime. Most of this crime is committed by members of the working class.

Patterns of crime in crime statistics

Knowledge

The public tends to base its views on the reporting of the media. The media often bases its reports on official statistics collected by the Home Office. Sociologists have serious concerns about this data, which will be considered in depth later in this chapter. In addition, the media might have a tendency to sensationalise crime figures. Nonetheless, the patterns revealed by official crime statistics are very interesting.

Example

During the 20th century, government statistics showed crime to be increasing slowly, with a sharper rise from the 1950s onwards. An influence of this might be that the police were becoming more effective and arresting more criminals. Since the late 1990s, the total amount of **recorded crime** has come down. This is very positive, but there has been a general increase in the conviction rate for sexual offences since 1997. The police would argue that this shows that women are more likely these days to report these crimes and also that the police are more successful in prosecuting offenders. There are differences between offences from year to year, but the patterns of crime generally show a reduction.

Knowledge

Within this overall trend, there are some glaring statistics. Crime in cities is more common than in rural areas. Prison surveys reveal that prisoners are more likely to come from the working class.

In 2020, there were just over 80,000 people in prisons, which is a fall of 5,000 from 2016. Of this figure, only 3,400 were female. Conviction rates for men are vastly higher than for women. Female crime is increasing (see pages 222–227), but the difference between men and women is significant.

Ethnic minorities are also heavily over-represented in conviction rates. Figures from the House of Commons Library in July 2016 show that 12 per cent of the UK population are from ethnic minorities, yet just over 25 per cent of the UK prison population are from ethnic-minority groups. This difference varies between different groups.

Comparison

Of the UK population in 2020, 13 per cent identified as from an ethnic minority. Within the prison population, 27 per cent identified as from an ethnic minority. This shows that conviction rates are much higher for ethnic minority groups, showing worse **life-chances**. This raises interesting questions about **ethnicity** and crime.

New forms of crime

Knowledge

Crime rates also change over time as new laws and new crimes emerge. One in ten people in the UK were victims of **cybercrime** in the 12 months up to July 2016, according to the *Guardian*. An interesting finding from the Office for National Statistics for March 2021 was that the overall crime rate stayed the same during the pandemic. Individual crimes, such as burglary and theft, decreased, while fraud and computer-misuse offences increased by 36 per cent. Cybercrime became more common as people were forced to stay at home. There was less violence in public spaces. Crime rates will change as society changes and new technologies create more crimes as well as better chances of convictions.



Shoplifting is stereotypically a crime more likely to be committed by females.

PLENARY

Create a newspaper front page which informs the public of the main patterns in crime in the UK. Use the Office for National Statistics website to add detail.

SUMMARY

Figures for recorded crime have been coming down since the late 1990s, but there are some exceptions to this. Conviction rates for men (young men in particular), ethnic minorities and the working class are higher than for other groups. The New Right would argue that crime is worse than in the past, but it is not clear, drawing on official statistics, if this is actually the case.

Macey

Qualitative data is usually higher in validity as it contains more detailed description. It is often gained through unstructured interviews or participant observation.

A strong answer that captures the features of qualitative data well and uses sociological terminology showing knowledge and understanding (AO1).

This answer shows a basic knowledge and understanding of what unstructured interviews. They also apply a study but with limited detail, but with some idea of why the method was useful. They could have written about the idea of rapport to build on this. Evaluation is limited.

A much stronger answer. Opening sentence has some element of judgement which is good.

This answer applies lots of relevant concepts and a study to explain the usefulness of unstructured interviews gaining both Assessment Objective AO1 and AO2 marks.'

2. Discuss the usefulness of unstructured interviews in research.

(12 marks)

You should explore at least two strengths and weaknesses in your response.

Bobby

Unstructured are when sociologists make up the questions as they go along. They do not know what they are going to say but can make questions up on the spot. A woman sociologist got to interview women who were having babies and found out a lot about what they thought. They are good because you do not have to stick to certain questions.

Sanjay

Unstructured interviews are more like a conversation than structured interviews and are very useful in research. They allow sociologists to gather qualitative data which is rich in detail. Other benefits are the fact that the researcher can change direction during the interviews and may think of new questions when the person answering gives an unusual answer.

The researcher may get more honest answers when they build up trust and rapport with the person. This increases the validity of the research and makes it closer to the truth. Dobash and Dobash were able to find out about domestic violence with unstructured interviews which is not an easy topic. People wouldn't answer questionnaires.

The problem with unstructured interviews is they take up a lot of time. they are hard to repeat and are a bit of a one off. This makes them low in reliability. They might also be influenced by the researcher's point of view. Another weakness is a small sample which may not be representative.

On the whole, they are a good method, though because they can reach hard to reach groups, have lots of detail and validity and can find out about people we don't know much about. They can also be followed up with questionnaires to add more reliability.

The last paragraph is a useful summary, and adds new ideas to evaluate and continues the line of reasoning. Under timed conditions, a very useful answer.

Component 2

Look at the following information and answer the questions that follow.

Percentage of people aged 18 and over in the UK who smoke by gender

	Men	Women
2014	20	17
2015	19.3	15.3
2016	17.7	14.1
2017	17	13.3
2018	16.5	13
2019	15.9	12.5

Adapted from the Office of National Statistics

1. Identify the percentage of women who smoke in 2017.

[1 mark]

Mia

13.3%

(1/1)

No explanation needed, but care needs to be taken to select the correct figure.

2. Identify the year when the highest percentage of people smoked.

[1 mark]

Grace

2014

(1/1)

This is the year with the highest percentage of both men and women smoking.

3. Describe two patterns or trends shown in the table, supporting your answer with reference to the statistics in the table.

[4 marks]

Kemal

There are less people smoking than before. It has gone down.

(1/4)

The answer identifies one trend, but does not provide evidence for this.

Abigail

The percentage of people smoking in the UK is going down year by year. The figures drop by 4.1% for men over 5 years. Women by 4.5%.

(2/4)

The answer provides one trend and backs this up with figures. In this case, the student has done a calculation to show the change. This was not essential and they could have used the statistics themselves.

Haron

There are two main trends in the data. First, the percentage of people smoking is going down. There were 20% of men in 2014 and only 15.9% in 2019. Women fell from 17% to 12.5%.

The second trend is that the percentage of men who smoke is higher. The figures for men are always at least 3% higher.

(4/4)

This answer identifies two trends and backs both up with statistics from the table. Notice that the student does not try to apply sociological ideas to interpret the statistics. It is about applying knowledge and understanding of different types of evidence. Good summary of the main pattern of the statistics. The answer is quite short, but has gained all four marks.