A LEVEL SOCIOLOGY



UNIT ONE – CONSOLIDATION BOOKLET

SOCIAL GROUPS/PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR

Your Sociology teacher will introduce you to the following concepts

* INDIVIDUAL
* SOCIAL GROUP
* INSTITUTION
* SOCIETY

You will need to be able to distinguish between these and also to understand the relationships between them.

For example:

* How does membership of a particular social group influence the behaviour of an individual?
* Are some social groups more important than others in society?

Let’s start by considering the groups to which you belong. In the box below list all of the groups to which you belong – you can include large formal groups here (e.g. school, church) or small informal groups (e.g. friendship group)

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INDIVIDUAL/GROUP/SOCIETY

How much of your behaviour is really individual, and is the result of free choice? How much of your behaviour is influenced or constrained in some way by the groups or society to which we belong, such as your family, school or workplace?

Often, we think our behaviour is original and individual when in fact if we look more closely it isn’t.

Make two lists of all the things about you and things you have done in your life that are a result of free choice, and all those things which you are forced/made to do by other people or groups to which you belong. Think about the friendship and other groups you belong to inside and outside of school that you have been part of throughout your life (e.g. pre-school, sports teams, scouts, brownies, cadets, music / drama groups etc).

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|   FREE CHOICE |  HAVE TO DO |
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Look at the free choice list – are they really free choices or are they influenced in any way, where did you get your ideas for these ‘free choices from?

Do you want to transfer any?

For the ‘Have to Do’ list identify who/what forces you to behave in this way.

Considering the amount of choice individuals have in their lives gives rise to different perspectives in Sociology. Some of the major perspectives are outlined in the next section of this booklet.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO SOCIOLOGY

What is the relationship between Individuals and Society?

SOCIOLOGY is the study of human social behaviour i.e. how people living in groups/societies behave.

Sociologists are interested in PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR.

In studying sociology, you will discover a variety of patterns behaviour, for example:

* Within the family the woman does most of the housework and childcare.
* Within education girls do better than boys at GCSE
* Women are safer drivers than men

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| What other patterns of behaviour have you found out so far (give 3 examples):To help…….Try to think about which other social groups are more likely to commits crime?Which ethnic groups do well in education?Which social groups are more likely to be in poverty? |

ALL Sociologists try to EXPLAIN patterns of behaviour, but they may have different explanations depending on what kind of Sociologist they are.

There are two main types of Sociologist:

STRUCTURALISTS - who are interested in explaining the behaviour of people in **SOCIETY.**

INTERACTIONISTS – who are interested in explaining the behaviour of **PEOPLE** in society.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

You will notice that both types of Sociologist appear to be interested in the same thing – but there is a different in EMPHASIS.

Structuralists see the way in which SOCIETY (how it is organised – large scale patterns) influences people as being the most important aspect of sociological explanation. Society is seen as making people do things or behave in certain ways.

Interactionists see the way in which PEOPLE influence society/behaviour as being the most important aspect of sociological explanation. Individuals are seen as influencing society because they CHOOSE to behave in certain ways or they react to the ways in which others choose to behave.

For example: Working class children underachieve in schools.

- STRUCTURALISTS (MACRO -big) explain this in terms of the relationship between the economy and education – the workforce needs FAILURES to do the low paid jobs so school produce failures. Society causes patterns in behaviour rather than individuals

- INTERACTIONISTS (MICRO -small) explain working class failure in terms of how teachers LABEL and treat working class students and how they react.

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| Let’s think of other patterns of behaviour. Two patters are:1. People from a working-class background are less likely to go to university than those from a middle-class background
2. People from minority ethnic groups are more likely to appear on official crime statistics than white people in the UK

How would structuralist explain why this is the case?How would an interactionist explain why this is the case? |

Not all structuralists agree with each other.

There are 2 main types of Structuralists who believe that society in more important than the individual.

Functionalists – tend to support the way in which society or social institutions are run.

Marxists – tend to criticise the way in which society or social institutions are run. They see society as being unfair to some groups e.g. working class, blacks.

PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR – SOCIAL CLASS

In the following exercises/activities we will consider how social class helps us to understand different patterns of social life.

Activity 1

Look carefully at this list of characteristics:

Plays bingo Attends the Church of England regularly

Sends children to public school Reads the Times newspaper

Takes holidays in Blackpool Lives in rented accommodation

Gambles Plays polo

Watches BBC2 regularly Drives a Ford Fiesta

Votes Labour Owns a detached house in the suburbs

Is likely to have a police record Watches football

Reads the Daily Mirror Takes holidays in the South of France

Owns two or more houses Has been educated at university

Watches rugby union Drives a Rolls-Royce

Drinks wine Drinks a pint of bitter

1) Which of them do you think are most typical of upper class people today?

2) Which are most typical of middle class people today?

3) Which are most typical of working class people today?

4) Which could be equally true of any class?

Try to fill in the attached chart on the next page

**Work for September – Do not do now!**

Form a group with 2 or 3 other students and compare charts.

Discuss which characteristics you agreed on and those you disagreed on.

Get a blank SOCIAL CLASS CHARACTERISTICS chart and make an agreed list for each category.

If there are some characteristics your group can not agree on list them in the space provided at the bottom of the sheet and explain why you disagree.

CAN YOU ADD ANY MORE CHARACTERISTICS TO THE LISTS?

When the chart is completed you are ready to report back to the rest of the class – make sure you have elected a SPOKESPERSON.

SOCIAL CLASS CHARATERISTICS - GROUP CHART

 1. Fill in the chart with the characteristics of each group that you all agree on.

 2. In the space below list the characteristics you disagreed about.

 3. Give reasons for your areas of agreement and disagreement.

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| UPPER CLASS | MIDDLE CLASS | WORKING CLASS | ALL |
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Areas of disagreement:

Reasons:

SOCIALISATION

Socialisation is very important concept within Sociology. It refers to the process by which we learn the culture of our society, including its norms, roles and values. Through socialisation we learn all that we need to know to be a ‘person’ in our particular culture.

Where and from whom do you think we learn our culture?

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BECOMING SOCIAL

In ordinary conversation ‘socialising’ means meeting people and getting to know them. In sociology its meaning is different. What do sociologists mean by ‘socialisation’?

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They mean a process of ‘becoming social’, or of ‘social learning’.

We usually think of socialisation in two ways:

* Primary socialisation
* Secondary socialisation

 Primary socialisation occurs very early in our lives when we first ‘become social’.

 It is through our primary socialisation that we learn what is right and what is wrong, how our

 society is organised and how we should behave. Primary socialisation takes place mainly

 within the family group.

Socialisation does not end when we are no longer children. It continues throughout our lives as secondary socialisation. We experience secondary socialisation every time we move from one social group to another.

The following are all examples of socialisation. From what you have read so far, sort them into ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’.

1) A baby soon learns that it is wrong to hit people.

2) Starting a new job you learn that you are expected to address the foreman as

 ‘Mr Jones’.

3) As she grows up a girl may learn that it is not thought right for her to be as rough and

 noisy as her brothers

4) As a child you were encouraged to be independent and as a result you have always

 been able to look after yourself.

5) One of the first things you learned when you went to secondary school was to make sure

 that you were on time for lessons.

6) Working in the factory you soon learn that it is important to stand by your mates.

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| Primary | Secondary |
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Examples 1, 3 and 4 are all aspects of primary socialisation. They tell us about the way infants become people. Examples 2, 5 and 6 are secondary socialisation. They are

concerned with moving into new situations and with acquiring new roles.

In part 2 you will look at these two aspects of socialisation in more detail.

Part 2: Primary Socialisation

What is it that makes a person?

Make a list of all of the things which you think are part of ‘being a person’.

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There are many ways that you can approach this problem. Being a person means

‘having a personality’, being recognised as an individual with your own ideas and ways of doing things. It means knowing your own mind and being sure of yourself. Being a person involves knowing where you stand in relation to those around you, understanding social roles and relationships. It also involves knowing how the social world fits together – and how you fit into it. These are all part of the process of primary socialisation which goes on throughout childhood.

**Socialisation (1)** Read the extract SOCIALISATION (1)

Socialisation (1)

In view of the importance of values, norms, statuses and roles, it is while he was crawling and learning to talk. But one day they gave him such

essential for the wellbeing of society that culture is effectively a biting and scratching that the infant was frightened and would never

learned by its members. The process by which people learn the approach the wolf-children again. Amala and Kamala liked the

culture of their society is known as socialisation. Socialisation company of Mrs Singh, and Kamala, the surviving one of the pair, is

begins at birth and continues throughout a person’s life. During its much attached to her. The eyes of the children possessed a peculiar

early years, the child learns many of the basic behaviour patterns glare, such as that observed in the eyes of dogs or cats in the dark.

of its society. This is the period of primary socialisation, the first Up to the present time Kamala sees better at night than during the

and probably the most important part of the socialisation process. daytime and seldom sleeps after midnight. The children used to cry

In practically every society the family bears the main responsibility or howl in a peculiar voice neither animal nor human. Kamala still

for primary socialisation. As the child moves into the wider society, makes these noises at times. She is averse to all cleanliness, and

secondary socialisation begins. During this process the child learns serves the call of nature anywhere, wherever she may happen to be

from a wider range of people and institutions. Thus in modern at the time. Used to tear her clothes off. Hence a loin cloth was

industrial societies, schools play an important part in secondary stitched to her in such a fashion that she could not open or tear it.

socialisation. Kamala used to eat and drink like a dog, lowering her mouth down

 to the plate, and never used her hands for the purpose of eating or

Something of the importance of the socialisation process may be drinking. She would gnaw a big bone on the ground and would rub it

seen from the following extract. It describes the behaviour of two at times in order to separate the meat from the bone. At the present

girls who, for a large part of their short lives, had been isolated time she uses her hands for eating and walks straight on two legs

from human beings. but cannot run at all.

**(letter quoted in Human Societies edited by Geoffrey Hurd, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1973 pp 95-96)**

In 1920 two girls were reportedly discovered in a wolf den in

Bengal, India. Aged about two and eight year they were

taken to an orphanage where they were looked after by the 1. The children had apparently spent much of their lives isolated

Reverend J.A.L. Singh and his wife. The younger child, Amala from other human beings. Why did this prevent them from

died soon after she arrived at the orphanage, the elder girl, behaving in ways which would be considered normal in the

Kamala, remained in the orphanage until 1929 when she too society into which they were born?

died. Despite the fact that Amala and Kamala were called 2. List four items of Kamala’s behaviour which suggest that she

‘wolf-children’ and found in a wolf’s den, there is no evidence was beginning to act in ways considered normal in human

That they were actually raised by wolves. The Reverend Singh society.

wrote the following description of their behaviour in 1926. 3. a Briefly compare what Kamala had learned by the age of

 fourteen after six years in the orphanage with what most

At the present time Kamala can utter about forty words. She is able to form children have learned by the age of five.

a few sentences, each sentence containing two or at the most three words. b Why does this suggest that primary socialisation is vital to

She never talks unless spoken to and when spoken to she may or may not effectively learn the culture of society?

reply. She is obedient to Mrs Singh and myself only. Kamala is possessed 4. a Give two possible reactions by people in the wider society to

of very acute hearing and evidences an exceedingly acute animal-like sense Kamala’s behaviour which would make it difficult for her to

of smell. She can smell meat at a great distance. Never weeps or smiles but cope outside the orphanage.

has a ‘smiling appearance’. Shed a single tear when Amala died and would b Suggest why people would respond to her in these ways

not leave the place where she lay dead. She is learning very slowly to imitate.

Does not now play at all and does not mingle with other children. Once both

Amala and Kamala somewhat liked the company of an infant by the name of Benjamin **Write you answers on the ‘notes’ page.**

SECONDARY SOCIALISATION

Socialisation does not end with childhood. If it did, we would stay the same for ever.

We would never change.

Jack Pomlet describes the time when he was apprenticed to a toolmaker in an engineering works:

My first task was to assist the toolmaker I worked with, and in return he instructed me in the use of all complex and often delicate measuring instruments. For the best part of three years I worked under his influence. As time went by I matured from assisting him to producing complete tools of a simpler nature by myself. And at the same time my personality underwent a change which reflected the satisfaction of creating something.

From Jack Pomlet ‘The Toolmaker’ in Work 2: Twenty Personal Accounts, edited by R Fraser, Penguin/New Left Review.

In what ways did Jack Pomlet change during the three years he worked under the influence of the toolmaker?

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He mentions two changes.

First, he developed the skills needed to make machine tools. Secondly, his personality changed. In other words, he became a different sort of person. He acquired a new identity.

Secondary socialisation leads to changes in identity and in ‘the sort of person you are’. Often the changes are very slight and because they happen over a period of time, may not be noticed. There are some occasions, for example in religious conversation, when the changes are very great and very sudden.

These changes affect all of us. Can you recognise any changes in yourself? Think back over your life. Are there times when you feel that you have changed as a person, become more mature, or more independent? What led to the changes? Who were the people who had an influence on you?

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| **Socialisation (2)**Read the extract SOCIALISATION (2) – it describes how the children within theMbuti pygmy society learn their culture.Answer the questions in as much detail as you can  |

**Socialisation (2)**

The socialisation of young people can be seen as a series of lessons Like children in all societies, pygmy children like to imitate

which prepare them for their adult roles. During childhood people older people. Their parents encourage them to do this.

learn many of the basic skills they will require in adult life. This is Fathers make tiny bows for their sons with blunt arrows

clearly seen from the following description of children’s games and made of softwood. They may also give their sons a strip of

activities in the society of the Mbuti pygmies. hunting net. Mothers weave tiny carrying baskets for their

 daughters much to the enjoyment of all concerned. Boys and

The Mbuti pygmies live in the tropical rain forest in the north- girls often ‘play house’, building a miniature house from

east corner of Zaire in central Africa. They are hunters and sticks and leaves. The boys shoot their arrows at plantains

gatherers, the men being mainly responsible for hunting and and ears of corn and proudly carry them back to the play

women for gathering edible fruit, berries and roots. Nets house. They are then cooked and eaten in a serious and

are often used for hunting. They are stretched into a long arc solemn manner.

and women and children drive game such as antelope into the Hunting is a favourite childhood game. Boys stretch out

nets where they are killed by the men with spears and bows their pieces of hunting net while girls beat the ground with

and arrows. Arrows, usually tipped with poison, are also used bunches of leaves driving an old frog towards the net. If a frog

to kill birds and monkeys. The pygmies favourite food is cannot be found, a grandparent will be asked to imitate an

honey. For two months of the year they spend considerable antelope. He is chased round the camp and finally driven into

time and effort breaking into hives in the trees to extract the net. The children then jump on the unfortunate grand-

honey. They are almost as much at home in the trees as they parent and playfully pound him with their fists.

are on the ground. They take to the trees to avoid dangerous

animals such as the forest buffalo and to chase game. (adapted from The Forest People by Colin M. Turnbull, Jonathan Cape,

 Women are mainly responsible for cooking. They roast London 1961)

plantains – a banana-like fruit – in hot ashes and make stews

of meat, mushrooms and chopped leaves. They gather wood 1. What evidence does the extract contain to indicate the role of

for the fire and carry water to the camp site. Women make parents in the socialisation process?

the huts from a framework of saplings – young trees - 2. How do the games of pygmy boys help to prepare them for their

thatched with broad leaves. They also make the carrying adult roles?

baskets which are used for transporting food and equipment. 3. How do the games of pygmy girls help to prepare them for their

 Pygmy children enjoy their early years. They love climbing adult roles?

trees and swinging on vines. Some children actually begin 4. Select one children’s game from your own society and suggest

climbing trees before they can walk. One of their favourite how it might prepare young people for adult life.

games involves half a dozen climbing to the top of a young

tree and bending it over until the top touches the ground. **Write you answers on the ‘notes’ page.**

Then they all jump off together. If anyone is too slow, he goes

flying upwards as the tree springs back. His friends are highly

amused and laugh and jeer as he swings in the air.

 CULTURE

 Sociologist use the term culture to refer to the whole way of life of a social group.

 Culture is passed on from one generation to the next through a process of learning and they

 vary greatly from one society to another.

 Have you ever noticed the different ways in which people greet each other on

television? What happens when world leaders step from their aeroplanes? Do they

shake hands politely, kiss each other on the cheek, throw their arms around each

other or kneel down and kiss the tarmac? How do people say goodbye? Is it ‘have

a nice day’, ‘see you soon’ or ‘cheerio’?

Each community has its own ways of saying ‘hello’ and ‘farewell’. These are often

described as ‘customs’. We can often recognise different social groups by their

customs. If we put together all of the customs, beliefs, attitudes and ways of

behaving that make any group unique we would have defined the ‘culture’ of that

social group.

As young children we grow up within a particular culture. It is everything that we

know. It seems completely natural and any other way of doing things seems

strange, even wrong. Becoming a member of any social group means learning a

culture. Although we grow up in the belief that the way of life of our society or

social group is the ‘right way’ to do things, it is really only one way. The cultures

of other groups are different. Their ways of doing things seem just as right to them.

We can think of our culture as a way of seeing the world which we share with those

around us. Culture can be described as ‘shared meanings’. Differences of culture

can arise between different parts of the world and between different social groups

living in the same area. People living in the same street may not always share the

same meanings.

C D Frake describes the problems of asking for a drink amongst the Sunanun

tribesmen of Mindanao:

It is not enough to know how to construct a grammatical sentence in Subanun which can be

translated into English as a request for a drink. This might elicit praise for one’s fluency in

Subanun but it probably would not get you a drink.

C D Frake: ‘How to ask for a drink in Subanun’, American Anthropologist, Vol.66, No.6,

1964, Part 2, pp. 127-32

To get a drink of the local beer involves a knowledge of the exact ritual for the

specific occasion as well as an understanding of the importance of the different

feasts and the skills of drinking. Without such knowledge the stranger is likely to

remain thirsty.

Anne Garvey makes the same point about women in pubs in England:

There’s something tricky about being a woman alone in a pub, even if you do stick to the

lounge part and have a bitter lemon. You are in foreign territory

The bare tables and the beer mats exist to enshrine that central symbol, the pint. Beer has

developed as a man’s drink. It takes some getting through and long practice.

Anne Garvey: ‘Women in Pubs’, New Society, 21 February 1974

CASE STUDY – CULTURE

Colin Turnbull studied a tribe in the North of Uganda in the 1950’s. The Ik tribe had

traditionally been hunters. The Ugandan government, however, decided that their

hunting lands should become a game reserve and resettled them in a mountainous

region, where there were few animals to hunt and inadequate rainfall to grow crops.

In effect they had been sentenced to death. The Ik gradually developed a culture to

cope with their new and horrifying circumstances.

The quality of life that we hold as necessary for survival, love, the Ik also dismiss as

idiotic and highly dangerous…. So we should not be surprised when the mother throws her

child out at three years old. She has breast-fed it, with some ill humour and cared for it in

some manner for three whole years, and now it is ready to make its own way. I imagine the

child must be rather relieved to be thrown out, for in the process of being cared for he or she

is carried about in a hide sling wherever the mother goes, and since the mother is not strong

herself this is done grudgingly. Whenever the mother finds a spot in which to gather, or if she

is at a water hole or in the fields she loosens the sling and lets the baby to the ground none

too slowly and of course laughs if it is hurt.... Then she goes about her business, leaving the

child there, almost hoping that some predator will come along and carry it off. This happened

once while I was there – once that I know of, anyway – and the mother was delighted. She

was rid of the child and no longer had to carry it about and feed it, and still further this meant

that a leopard was in the vicinity and would be sleeping the child off and thus be an easy kill.

The men set off and found the leopard, which had consumed all of the child except part of the

skull; they killed the leopard and cooked it and ate it, child and all….

Hunger was indeed more severe than I knew, and the children were the next to go. It was all

quite impersonal – even to me, in most cases, since I had been immunized by the Ik themselves

against sorrow on their behalf. But Adupa was an exception. Her stomach grew more and more

distended and her legs and arms spindlier. Her madness was such that she did not know

just how vicious humans could be, particularly her playmates. She was older than they and

more tolerant. That too was a madness in an Icien world. Even worse, she thought that parents

were for loving, for giving as well as receiving. Her parents were not given to fantasies and they

had two other children, a boy and a girl who were perfectly normal, so they ignored Adupa,

except when she brought them food that she had scrounged from somewhere. They snatched

that quickly enough. But when she came for shelter they drove her out.

Finally, they took her in and Adupa was happy and stopped crying. She stopped crying forever

because her parents went away and closed the asak (compound) tight behind them, so tight

that weak little Adupa could never have moved it if she had tried. But I doubt that she even

thought of trying. She waited for them to come back with the food they promised her. When

they came back she was still waiting for them. It was a week or ten days later and her body was

already almost too far gone to bury. In an Ik village who would notice the smell? And if she had

cried, who would have noticed that? Her parents took what was left of her and threw it out, as

one does the riper garbage, a good distance away.

1. What are the main values of the Ik?
2. Why did these values develop in your opinion?
3. Why was Adupa different?

4. Do you think the women in the Ik tribe have a maternal instinct? If not why not?

5. Sociologists argue that no behaviour is natural to mankind; goodness, evil, love are all

 products of society. Having read the extract what is your opinion?

NOTES

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|  **Socialisation (1) ‘Wolf children’****Q1****Q2****Q3****Q4****Socialisation (2) Gender Socialisation - the** **Mbuti pygmies.****Q1****Q2****Q3****Q4**Read the extract SOCIALISATION (2) |

WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY? ACTIVITIES

What makes a good Sociologist? One of the things you might have said could be:

‘A good Sociologist is someone who takes an interest in what is going on in the world’.

One way of finding out what is going on in the world is to watch T.V. news and read

Newspaper/news websites etc. If you have not done this yet, now is the time to start!

Pick one of the following research activities

**Research activity 1**

1. Watch a news broadcast on the BBC or ITV and make the following notes of the first 3 stories.

Story 1

What is the story about?

Is it of any sociological interest?

Do you feel there is any bias in the story?

 Story 2

What is the story about?

Is it of any sociological interest?

Do you feel there is any bias in the story?

Story 3

What is the story about?

Is it of any sociological interest?

Do you feel there is any bias in the story?

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 **Research activity 2**

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| Find a story on-line which you think is relevant to Sociology.Save it on your phone if you can. Explain to the rest of the group why you think it is of interest to the Sociologist. |