



SOCIOLOGY: BRIDGING ACTIVITY

Name:

The topics that you will be studying are:

Year 12

- Socialisation, Culture and Identity
- Youth Subcultures
- Research Methods
- Sociology of Education
- Globalisation and the Digital World

Year 13

- Globalisation and the Digital World
- Social Inequality and Difference

Textbooks are not mandatory but may support you in your private study periods and at home.

Online textbooks can be purchased for the duration of the course:

Book 1: <https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/subjects/sociology/products/16-18/ocr-sociology-for-a-level-book-1-student-etextbook>

Book 2: <https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/subjects/sociology/products/16-18/ocr-sociology-for-a-level-book-2-student-etextbook>

Please come prepared to your first lesson with an A4 ring binder folder, pens, pencil and highlighters. Throughout the course you will also need a calculator. It would be a good idea to also purchase plastic A4 wallets.

Task 1: Research Methods, Culture, Socialisation and Identity

Complete definitions for the following key concepts linked to research methods:

Key Term	Definition
Qualitative	
Quantitative	
Primary Evidence	
Secondary Research	
Positivists	
Interpretivists	
Sample	

Jackson also found that some girls and boys became part of a lad/ladette culture because of a fear of academic failure. It was a defensive mechanism and would provide them with a reason for their failure. She found it was a desire to be socially accepted that also fuelled 'laddish' behaviour in girls as well as boys. They wanted to 'fit in', to be seen as conforming to hegemonic masculinities and not normative femininities.

'I think if you talked about laddish girls about 20 years ago they would be the ones that were tomboys. If you talk about laddish girls now, they are the ones who experiment [sexually] and who, if you like, are shameless.'

Task 2:

1. Read Jackson's research
2. What was the aim of Jackson's research?
3. What research methods were used?
4. What samples were used in the research?
5. What were the findings from Jackson's research?
6. Jackson took an Interpretivist approach to her research. How would a Positivist investigate this topic and why?

Task 3: Sampling

When sociologists are conducting research, they need to plan who they will conduct their research on. In order to do this, they will use sampling methods. A popular sampling method to use is stratified sampling.

What is stratified sampling?

A sociologist would like to conduct interviews on a stratified sample of 20 students that include different ethnic groups from Year 12.

These are the breakdown of students in Year 12 by ethnic group:

White British: 60

Asian: 10

Black Caribbean: 20

Other: 10

Using these categories, explain how a sociologist would select a representative, stratified sample of 20 students to interview. How many from each ethnic group would be selected and how?

Task 4: Education



Statistically there are certain groups in society that achieve more highly than others in education. There are several factors that are argued to influence this such as class, ethnicity and gender. You are to complete an essay which answers the following question:

“Discuss the factors which lead to differences in educational achievement”.

Please include statistics and specific examples.

[illegible]

1. Watch this clip on Oxana Malaya who was abandoned by her parents:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93HymGXC_wM

2. Write down the main points from the clip:

-
-
-
-
-

3. Comment on what the case of Oxana Malaya teaches us about the following:

Importance of the family	
How are we taught the basics in life?	

4. What is meant by the term 'social construction'?

5. Give at least 3 examples of social construction in society. State why they are social constructions.

TASK 6: Sociological perspectives

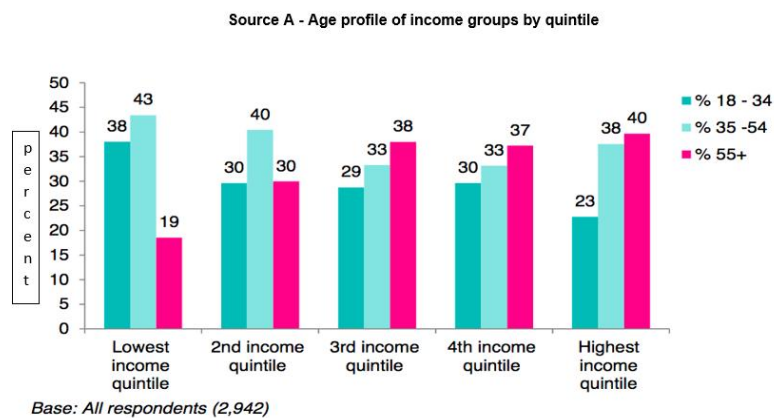
Within your sociological studies you will be expected to discuss several sociological approaches/theories to society. Your task is to research Functionalism, the New Right perspective, Marxism, Feminism and Postmodernism. Complete the table below.

	Key thinkers	Views of society	Links to a contemporary piece of news	Similarities and differences to other approaches/theories
Functionalism				
The New Right				
Marxism				
Feminism				
Postmodernism				

Task 7: Analysing Quantitative Data

When conducting sociological research, data must be analysed in order to arrive at conclusions.

For example, here are results from a workforce survey:



A summary for this graph would be:

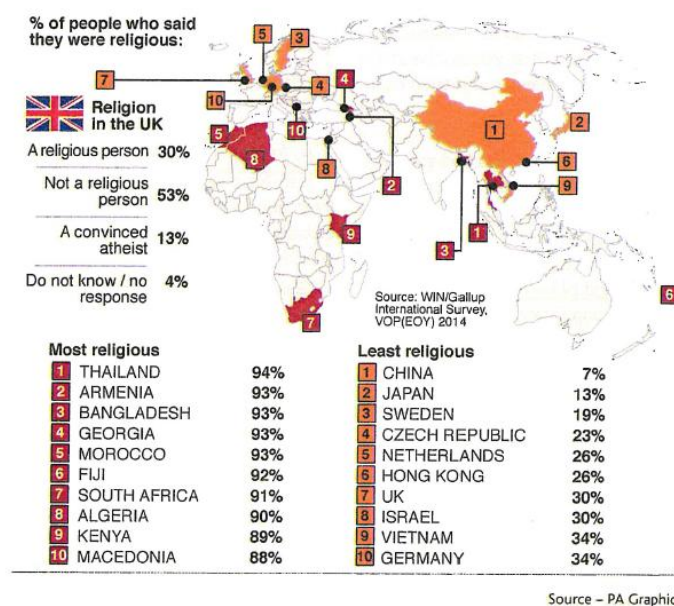
This source shows how age groups are represented in different income quintiles. It shows how much people earn according to age.

55+ year olds in the sample earn more money than lower age groups. 55+ year olds make up 19% of the lowest quintile of income range, in comparison to making up 40% of the highest quintile income range. This is a difference of 21%

18-34 year olds in the sample are over-represented in the lowest quintile with 38%. The highest income quintile includes 23% of 18-34 year olds. This is a difference of 15%.

Using this format, summarise the data in the following source:

1.



Task 8: Culture and Identity

- 1. Read the chapter on ‘Culture & Identity’ and highlight key points.
- 2. Complete the definitions for the key concepts list on the last page.

Defining culture

What would you be like if all human influences were removed from your life? Tragic stories of feral children, such as that described on the left, show us very clearly that being human is about contact with other people. Without that contact we are reduced to basic and instinctive behaviour. But when humans work together – as they usually do – they create **cultures** that are complex, fascinating and utterly different. Our own culture always appears to be the most 'normal', while other cultures may seem strange, different and even inferior in some cases (a view known as **ethnocentrism**). Did you notice that the odd culture of the 'Shirbit' (described on the left) was actually a description of 'British' behaviour, especially our obsession with cleanliness, as it might appear to someone from a very different culture? ('Shirbit' is an anagram of 'British'.)

The idea of 'culture' is very important for sociologists. Culture is commonly defined as the way of life of a social group. More specifically, the term refers to 'patterns of belief, **values**, attitudes, expectations, ways of thinking, feeling and so on' which people use to make sense of their social worlds (Billington et al. 1998). Culture also consists of customs and rituals, **norms** of behaviour, **statuses** and **roles**, language, symbols, art and material goods – the entire way in which a **society** expresses itself.

The formation of culture

Culture is made up of several different elements, including values, norms, customs, statuses and roles.

Values

Values are widely accepted beliefs that something is worthwhile and desirable. For example, most societies place a high value on human life – although during wartime this value may be suspended. Other examples of British values include fair play, democracy, free speech, achievement, tolerance, wealth, property, romantic love, marriage and family life.

Norms

Norms are specific rules of behaviour that relate to specific social situations. They govern all aspects of human behaviour. For example, norms govern the way we prepare and eat food, our toilet behaviour and so on. Norms also govern how we are supposed to behave according to our gender – that is, there are rules governing what counts as masculine or feminine behaviour. These norms have changed in recent years – for example, only 40 years ago, women with young babies going out to work or wearing trousers to work would have met with social disapproval.

Customs

Customs are traditional and regular norms of behaviour associated with specific social situations, events and anniversaries which are often accompanied by rituals and ceremonies. For example, in Britain many people practise the custom of celebrating Bonfire Night on November 5th, and this usually involves the ritual of burning a Guy Fawkes

effigy and setting off fireworks. It is also the social custom to mourn for the dead at funerals, and this usually involves an elaborate set of ritualistic norms and a ceremony. For example, it is generally expected that people wear black at funerals in Britain. Turning up in a pink tuxedo would be regarded as **deviant**, or norm-breaking, behaviour.

Statuses

All members of society are given a social position or status by their culture. Sociologists distinguish between 'ascribed' statuses and 'achieved' statuses. Ascribed statuses are fixed at birth, usually by inheritance or biology. For example, gender and race are fixed characteristics (which may result in women and ethnic minorities occupying low-status roles in some societies). Achieved statuses are those over which individuals have control. In Western societies, such status is normally attained through education, jobs and sometimes marriage.

Roles

Society expects those of a certain status to behave in a particular way. A set of norms is imposed on the status. These are collectively known as a role. For example, the role of 'doctor' is accompanied by cultural expectations about patient confidentiality and professional behaviour.

Different types of culture

High culture

This is a culture which is mainly subscribed to by the powerful and wealthy elite, i.e. the upper class. It is generally seen by its supporters as superior to other types of culture, particularly popular culture, because it is claimed that it can only be appreciated if people have a particular type of education or outlook that knows good taste, and which values creativity, artistic expression, critical discussion and serious philosophical issues.

High culture usually involves the appreciation of art, sculpture, classical music, opera, ballet, the plays of Shakespeare and other classic playwrights, poetry and 'great' or classic literature such as Austen, Dickens etc. Supporters of high culture believe these activities are culturally special and more worthy because they represent the nation's cultural heritage. It is argued that they should be set apart from the banality of everyday life. This is why society invests millions of pounds in institutions such as museums and art galleries, and in subsidising the arts. Newspapers, magazines and television treat these pursuits with reverence in terms of the time and space devoted to them, e.g. Sky even has a channel, i.e. Sky Arts devoted to the pursuit of high culture.

High culture is often sponsored by the government as good for intellectual and creative development, and consequently is encouraged through aspects of state schooling, e.g. studying Shakespeare. The study of high culture is usually a normal part of the curriculum in private schools.

The institutions which focus on high culture are usually establishment organizations, e.g. the Royal Opera House, the Royal Ballet etc which reinforces their sense of importance and high status. Finally, following high cultural pursuits can be a very expensive business and consequently

some high cultural pursuits are often out of the reach of ordinary people.

Popular culture

Popular or mass culture is mainly associated with the entertainment culture – television, cinema, pop music, popular literature, newspapers, magazines etc – enjoyed by the majority of the population. Most popular culture is manufactured mainly by media conglomerates in order to make a profit.

Most popular culture is within reach of ordinary people and consequently forms a major part of their leisure activities. Some sociologists, notably post-modernists, see popular culture as a very positive development because it increases the choices available to people in terms of their identities and lifestyles. It has opened up all sorts of possibilities in terms of our consumption of material goods and how we live our lives in terms of how we want to look and behave. Popular culture in this sense has contributed to society becoming more diverse and complex.

However, not all sociologists agree that popular culture has a positive effect on society. The Marxist sociologists, Clarke and Critcher (1995) argue that we are not free to make choices because our consumption of popular culture is shaped and manipulated by advertising and global corporations.

Other sociologists see popular culture as an inferior and superficial candyfloss culture that has resulted in the dumbing down of intelligence, creativity, critical thinking etc.

Some sociologists have argued that this type of culture is manufactured for mass consumption rather than created for its own sake and, consequently, has little or no artistic merit compared with the products of high culture. Moreover, it is suggested that popular culture is harmful because it discourages critical thought. Others suggest that it is a corrupting influence on young people because celebrity culture, in particular, provides them with deviant and dubious role models.

However, in recent years, popular culture is being increasingly combined with high culture. In the world of classical music and opera, for example, the cross-over success of singers such as Charlotte Church and classical instrumentalists such as Vanessa Mae and Nigel Kennedy have blurred the boundaries between high and popular culture.

Consumer culture

Consumer culture is the product of the increasing emphasis on the consumption of goods and services that has developed over the past thirty years. If we examine the economy of the UK, we can see that it is still in the process of evolving from a manufacturing economy to a service economy. Increasingly factories producing goods such as cars and televisions are less important than companies that produce services such as banking, insurance, hotels, fast food, retail etc in terms of both economic output and numbers employed.

Shopping has become a major leisure pastime in the last ten years and consequently turned the UK into a consumer culture for four major reasons:

- Investment in new shopping experiences such as super-large supermarkets and out-of-town shopping centres

which aim to serve regions rather than just the immediate urban areas.

- The take-off of on-line or internet shopping.
- The easy availability of credit cards and loans.
- The increasing importance of **conspicuous consumption** – the buying of particular brands, logos and designer goods in an attempt to gain status and respect from others which has been strongly encouraged by the advertising industry and endorsed by celebrity culture.

Global culture

Only 30 or so years ago, our culture was local and familiar. Travelling abroad was not a common activity; most of the products we consumed were produced in the UK and, although we watched Hollywood films and listened to American singers, there was also a reasonably healthy British entertainment industry focused on pop music and television. Today, however, it can be argued globalization is now a profound influence on how we live our cultural lives. As Marsh and Keating (2006) note:

<<The British are increasingly a globalized people. We appear willing to travel far and wide. We increasingly eat and drink the foods and beverages that our European or even North American neighbours consume. We drive similar, if not identical cars, albeit on the other side of the road. Moreover, our consumption patterns are increasingly influenced and shaped by the growth of global media and advertising. I can now sit in my hotel room in the USA or Egypt, and watch my favourite Premier League side lose yet again. Our world, that is to say the affluent Western world, is the world of Levi's, a world of Gap, a world of Coca-Cola, McDonald's, H&M, a world of Oil of Ulay.>> (p. 431)

Some sociologists, especially postmodernists, argue that this global culture is good for us because it offers us more choice in terms of constructing our identities and lifestyles. Consequently postmodernists argue that our personal identities as well as our cultural identity are now influenced in a positive way by a range of cultures from around the world.

Subcultures and cultural diversity

When societies become larger and more complex, different subcultures may emerge in the same society. Subcultures are social groups that are usually committed to the wider culture that dominates a society. However, they also subscribe to values, norms, customs and lifestyles that are uniquely their own. British society today hosts a range of subcultures and consequently cultural diversity is now the norm. Such diversification takes a number of forms. For example:

- The modern UK is characterised by multiculturalism, a multicultural society. This refers to the fact that about 7 per cent of the British population is made up of ethnic minority people who subscribe to the norms and values of wider British culture whilst remaining committed to aspects of their mother culture such as language, religion and traditional customs and rituals.
- Britain is a class society and consequently different socio-economic groups, e.g. the upper class, the

middle-class and the working-class, have their own sets of values, norms and leisure activities.

- Different regions of Britain – Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland – have their own cultural customs and traditions.
- Since the 1950s, young people have often organised themselves into spectacular youth cultures organised around fashion, music, etc. Some of these have engaged in behaviour in opposition to societal values, e.g. illegal drug use, violence etc.
- Some members of society may subscribe to political subcultures which may be in conflict with societal values, e.g. members of some groups may be committed to environmentalism or feminism and set up squats or communes to live out their counter-cultural values.
- The de-criminalisation of homosexuality and liberalisation of social attitudes has led to the emergence of visible gay and lesbian subcultures and social scenes in most large British cities.

Culture and society

The concept of 'culture' is often used interchangeably with the concept of 'society', but it is important to understand that they do not mean exactly the same thing. Culture forms the connection between the individual and society – it tells the individual how to operate effectively within social institutions such as the family, marriage, education and so on.

Bauman (1990) notes that socialization into culture is about introducing and maintaining social order in society. Individual behaviour that lies outside the cultural norm is perceived as dangerous and worth opposing because it threatens to destabilize society. Consequently, societies develop cultural mechanisms to control and repress such behaviour.

Culture and identity

Culture plays an important role in the construction of our identity. Identity generally refers to our sense of self – this is made up of two components; how we see ourselves and how we think others see and judge us.

Culture and identity are closely related. Culture is what links the individual and their sense of self to society because who we think we are is related to what society – in the shape of cultural values and norms – says we should be like. We are born into particular cultural positions or statuses – we do not choose our social class, gender, ethnic group, age, religion and nationality. However, there is also some choice on our part – that is, we often actively identify with aspects of our culture with regard to particular groups or activities, e.g. a football team, a friendship network, a fashion or trend.

Theoretical perspectives on the formation of culture

Sociobiology

Sociobiologists generally believe that culture is the product of biology or nature. This contrasts with the sociological

point of view that culture is the product of social learning or nurture. For example, Morris (1968) argued that biology shapes culture, because sharing culture is based on the in-built or genetic need to continue the life of the social group over time, i.e. to survive.

Most sociologists reject this view. If human behaviour were biologically determined, they argue, we could expect to see little variation in how people behave, whereas human behaviour is actually richly diverse. For example, if we look at other societies, we can see very different values and norms relating to gender roles, marriage, family and bringing up children. Sociologists argue that if human behaviour is influenced by biology at all, it is only at a reflex or physical level, e.g. we feel hungry or need to go to the toilet. However, when you look more closely, you find that even these biological influences are shaped by culture. Cultural values and norms determine what we eat. For example, insects are not popular as a food in Britain, and cannibalism would be regarded with horror. Cultural norms also determine how we eat. For example, eating behaviour is accompanied by a set of cultural norms called 'table manners', while the binge eating associated with bulimia is normally conducted in secret because of cultural disapproval. Even when we eat are shaped by cultural rules – think, for example, about what time you have 'dinner' or breakfast.

Culture as a system – functionalism

The founder of functionalism, Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) believed that society and culture were more important than the individual. This belief was based on a simple observation: society exists before the individual is born into it and continues relatively undisturbed after the death of the individual.

Durkheim (1893) noted that modern industrial societies are characterized by social order rather than chaos or anarchy. People's behaviour is generally patterned and predictable. Durkheim argued that this was because society's members were united by a **value consensus**, meaning that they shared the same cultural values, goals and norms. Functionalists see culture as the cement that bonds individuals together in the form of society and allows people to interact successfully with each other.

Culture in pre-industrial societies

Durkheim argued that the function of the social institutions that make up society – the family, religion, education, etc. – was to socialize individuals into the value consensus. He noted that in traditional pre-industrial societies, socialization agencies such as religion were extremely powerful cultural influences over individual behaviour. Consequently, in these societies, individual identity was secondary to cultural conformity. In other words, people went along with what society demanded; they rarely spoke out or complained. These societies, therefore, demonstrated high levels of solidarity or social belonging because people felt very similar to each other. Social order was a natural outcome of these processes.

Culture in modern societies

Durkheim notes, however, that industrial societies are much more complex. The social changes that occurred

during the 18th and 19th centuries, such as industrialization and urbanization, have the potential to undermine value consensus and cultural conformity because we experience a great deal more choice in our beliefs and actions; we have more opportunity to be individuals. As a result, we become less like each other. This is potentially disruptive, because people may become confused about what values, beliefs, rules, etc., they should live by and come into conflict with each other. Durkheim called this 'anomie'.

Despite this, Durkheim believed that social order would still be generally maintained (although in a weaker form than previously), because social institutions continue to socialize people into a shared culture – in particular, the cultural goals that achievement, competition and hard work are all important, and that people should be prepared to take their place in the **specialized division of labour**, i.e. the way the economy organizes work. This specialized division of labour reinforces social order because it results in people being dependent upon each other for society's survival and continuation. Jobs do not exist in isolation from each other – teachers need supermarket workers, sewage workers, plumbers, bus drivers, and vice versa.

Criticizing Durkheim

Durkheim has been criticized for exaggerating cultural consensus and hence social order. Social conflict between groups within the same society is generally neglected. Interpretivist sociologists are critical of Durkheim because he sees people as less important than society and culture, i.e. as if their actions and choices are shaped solely by social and cultural forces, and socialization. There is little acknowledgement that people play an active role in shaping culture. However, on the positive side, Durkheim is probably correct to suggest that there is a core culture that is widely shared by a majority of people in a society. The fact that you are sitting reading this text now in pursuit of an A-level in Sociology supports this observation.

Culture as a system – Marxism

Marxism focuses on the economic organization of modern societies, particularly the fact that societies like the UK are **capitalist societies** characterized by class inequalities in wealth, income and power. **Social class** refers to the amount of economic power, i.e. wealth, that social groups have or do not have. Karl Marx (1818–83) saw capitalist societies as characterized by class inequality and conflict. One group – the bourgeoisie – owned and controlled the means of production – the factories, raw materials, investment capital – and exploited the labour power of another group – the proletariat or working class – in order to make even greater wealth.

Culture as ideology

Marx noted that the bourgeoisie, in order to protect their interests, used their wealth to acquire political and cultural power. As Marx and Engels (1974) stated: 'the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class

which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force.' In other words, cultural ideas and values are dominated by ruling-class ideas and values. Marx called this ruling-class culture '**ideology**'. He argued that social institutions such as religion, education, the mass media and even the family, functioned to socialize society's members – especially its working-class members – to accept ruling-class culture and, consequently, to see their own low status and lack of opportunity as 'normal', 'natural' and a product of their own shortcomings. How these agencies do this in practice will be explored further in Topic 2.

Criticizing Marx

Marx's theory may be guilty of overemphasizing social class as the main source of conflict in modern societies. There is evidence that gender, religion, **ethnicity** and **nationalism** may be just as important as causes of inequality. Marxism also assumes that the working class are the passive victims, or puppets, of ruling-class culture and ideology. However, surveys suggest that the working class are aware of inequality and exploitation, but may choose to live with it because of the benefits that capitalism brings in the form of living standards and materialism.

Conclusions

Functionalist and Marxist accounts of culture are probably correct in their assumption that culture is generally shared. On the whole, people get married, live in families, see education as a good thing, vote in elections, follow the Highway Code and respect the law. Shared culture also helps us to make sense of the world. However, both theories are probably guilty of overstating this sharing of culture and, as a result, fail to note that modern societies are now characterized by **cultural diversity**.

The debate about culture is generally focused on three major questions:

- 1 Is nature responsible for culture, or is culture the product of learning? This will be further explored in Topic 2.
- 2 Are society and culture integrated into a unified shared whole, or is society characterized by subcultural diversity and possible conflict? This will be explored in greater detail when we examine subcultures based on social class, ethnicity, and age in Topic 3.
- 3 Are human beings cultural robots passively reacting to the demands of cultural and social forces beyond their control, or are they the masters/mistresses of their own destinies?

Interpretivists are critical of both functionalism and Marxism for ignoring the role of human agency in the construction of culture and identity. They argue that culture is actively created by people via social interaction. They would argue that culture is not static – rather it is constantly evolving, as people interpret the actions of others around them and make their own choices about their behaviour.

Key concepts



This recap activity will ensure that you go over those all important key concepts. Complete the key concept chart by writing a definition of the concept. Refer to the core text book or your classroom notes to help you.

Key concepts	Definitions
Norms	
Values	
Status	
Roles	
Culture	
High culture	
Popular culture	
Subculture	
Cultural diversity	
Multiculturalism	
Consumer culture	
Global culture	



Want to stretch and challenge yourself?
Try these tasks...

Investigation into the results: Findings

You are on an investigation team who need to investigate **Jackson's findings**. The government have given you the task of giving a brief report.

- 1 What did she find out?
- 2 Why should we question her findings?
- 3 Why should we trust her findings?
- 4 What methodological concept are you being asked to research.

Consider:

Method: Does it allow the full truth to be told?

Researcher effect: Do they affect the sample's ability to tell the truth?

Recording: Does the researcher manage to feedback the whole truth?

Investigation into the methods: Positivism

You are on an investigation team who need to investigate Jackson's methods from a **Positivist view**. The government have given you the task of giving a brief report.

- 1 What would a Positivist want from the methods?
- 2 Why?
- 3 How far are Jackson's methods reliable? (Argue for and against)
- 4 Was reliability something that was necessary in Jackson's research? And why?

Investigation into the methods: Sampling

You are on an investigation team who need to investigate **Jackson's sampling**. The government have given you the task of giving a brief report.

Consider:

1. Are sample groups representative? (argue yes and no)
2. Were samples selected in a biased manner?
3. Were they practical i.e. easy to do?
4. Were they fit for purpose?

