Unit – Introduction to Society


Full Unit Revision PowerPoint

Topic: Studying Society – Revision Focus Areas

1. Contrasting Key Concepts – Sociology, Psychology, Biology, Journalism

2. Key Terms – Culture, Values, Norms, Socialisation

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14. Collecting Primary Data – Participant Observation, advantages, limitations

15. Collecting Primary Data – Non-participant Observation, advantages, limitations

16. Collecting Primary Data – Longitudinal Studies, advantages, limitations

17. Evaluating the research collected and how good it is

18. Evaluating the research presented and how ethical it is

STUDYING SOCIETY

AQA GCSE Paper 1 Section A

You could do revision cards!!!

Front

(Your title here)
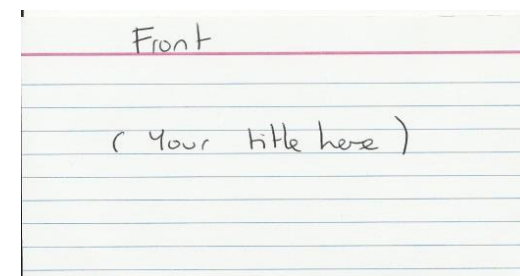
Focus 1
Contrasting Key Concepts – Sociology, Psychology, Biology, Journalism

Some Key Concepts

1. **Sociology** – is the study of society (group of people who share a way of life) and the social factors , structures (families, education, class) and processes (primary/gender socialisation, labelling/ subcultures, formal/informal social control) that influence people.

2. **Psychology** – tries to explain the way people behave/think by looking at individual behaviour (mental health) as opposed to how people act together and are influenced by living in society.

3. **Biology** - tries to explain the way people behave/think by looking for biological (born with – genes) causes as opposed to how people's behaviour is affected by living in society.

4. **Journalism** – Often study similar issues to a Sociologist (poverty, rise in crime, educational underachievement) but research methods usually differ. They often have deadlines to meet so are less systematic and can therefore be less reliable/valid. Can also present biased or one sided views.

Social Process

- Socialisation as a social process.. Within our culture we mostly understand each other and know what is/isn't appropriate.
- Informal social control – rewards and sanctions
- Formal social control – criminal justice system (main kind).
- We learn this through others and primary and secondary socialisation.

Social issue

An issue within society. Society isn't perfect and different people have different ideas about what would make a perfect society. Issues include: poverty, pollution, crime, inequality and discrimination.

What is a……

Social structure

- Like a bridge, society is a built up of structures or parts which is organised in some way. They all fit together and have a function to perform. They help to keep society together and include: family, education and work.

Focus 2
Key Terms – Culture, Values, Norms, Socialisation

Some Key Terms

1. **<u>Culture</u> –** whole way of life of a particular society. Includes values, norms, customs, beliefs and language. Culture varies from place to place and over time. E.g. Human sacrifice in Aztec Empire, eating roasted guinea pig in Ecuador.

2. <u>Values</u> - ideas/beliefs people have about what is desirable. These provide general guidelines for conduct. Values change and vary across cultures. E.g. In Western countries wealth/material possessions are highly praised but North American Apaches choose to give away property rather than to inherit from a dead relative.

3. <u>Norms</u> – Refer to what is appropriate and expected behaviour in different settings (classrooms, work). We learn/follow/have these so that society functions smoothly and there is order. Norms are enforced by rules and social control (formal/informal – positive and negative sanctions). Also vary across place and time.

4. Socialisation: the lifelong process of learning the skills, customs, attitudes, norms and values of your culture. Learning to be a participating member of society.

Socialisation

Secondary socialisation: makes sure that the norms and values are reinforced throughout life.

- School through the formal and hidden curriculum

- Mass media – political socialisation

- The workplace through working with others and learning skills
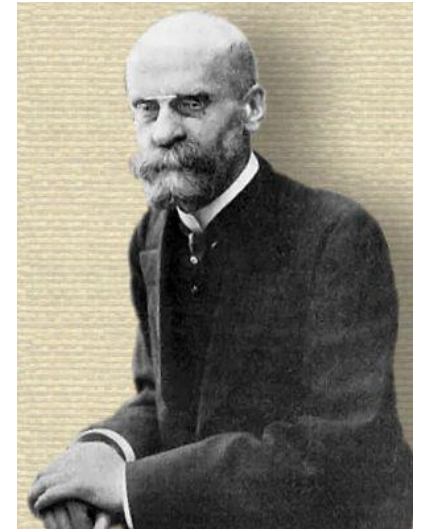
- Peers – through social pressure

Primary socialisation: informal process where your culture's norms and values are learnt. Takes place in early childhood and is usually by parents. Learn things such as gender identity and how to walk and talk.

Focus 3
Sociological Persepectives
(Big Ideas)

Focus 3a
Functionalism

The first Functionalist - Emile Durkheim

1. Lived in unstable France and interested in what kept **societies together**.

2. Believed all Social structures (families, etc) performed important **roles/functions** for societies and helped them to keep working well - if they didn't they wouldn't exist. A society was like a body that needed its organs.

3. Even **Crime** was **beneficial** to society as the sanctioning of wrongdoing showed people that rules mattered and needed to be followed.

4. Durkheim also believed that education was important (especially History) as learning about your country helped you to feel part of it.

Durkheim also established HOW to study sociology – he wrote a book on suicide where he used a scientific approach by looking for patterns in statistics.

Modern Functionalism

- Today we describe Emile Durkheim's view of society as 'functionalist' – this is not a word that he would have used at the time.

- Instead 'Modern Functionalism' was developed more recently in the 1950s and can be linked to the **American Talcott Parsons**.

- He said all societies **had basic needs** that needed to be satisfied if they were to survive.

- Furthermore societies work best when there is **value consensus (agreement about what is important in life)** amongst its members as to what these needs are and how to get them.
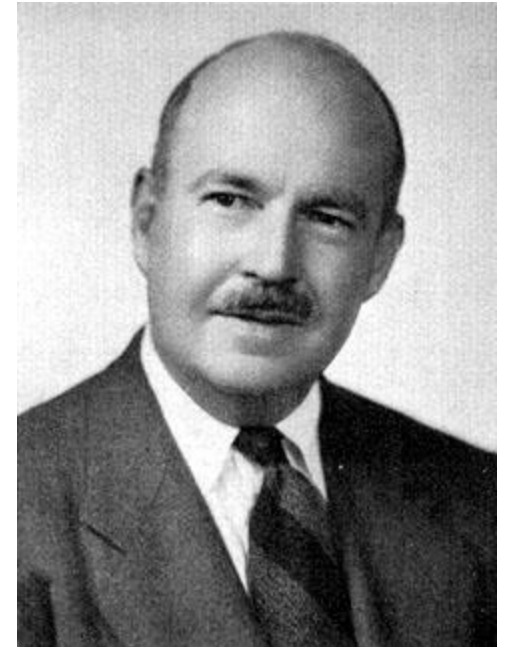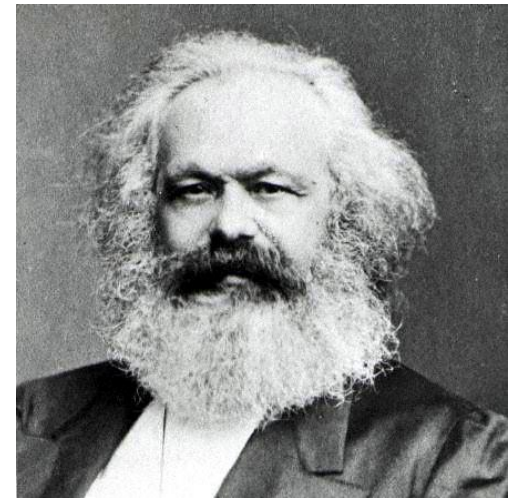
Talcott Parsons (1902-1979)

Focus 3b
Marxism

- Marxism is a conflict theory – there is conflict in society as it only works for 1 group (the rich).

- According to Marx the UK is a capitalist society – this is a society where businesses and properties (Marx calls these the means of production) are owned by individuals AND NOT THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.

Marxism – an idea linked to Karl Marx

- There are 2 groups in society – the bourgeoisie who own the means of production (business owners etc) and the proletariat (the workers).

- Marx believes the bourgeoisie will always exploit the workers. One way they will do this is to pay them as little as possible to maximise their own profit and so that the workers can never become business owners themselves and will always need to work for them to survive.

Understanding Society with Marx

- Marxist sociologists look at the relationships between the rich and poor.

- They believe that **RULING CLASS IDEOLOGY** (the widely circulated beliefs and values of the powerful) is reinforced through socialisation (families/schools/media etc) and that this keep working people in their place.

- Linked to an idea called **FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS**. Working people are socialised to believe that a capitalist society like the UK is fair and that there are opportunities for all – particularly if they have talent and work hard. Marx believes this is untrue.

Focus 3c
Feminism

- Feminism – is a conflict theory like Marxism but they believe the conflict is between men and women. They believe societies like the UK are unfair as they favour men and help them to succeed more than they do women.

- One reason this happens is because boys and girls are **socialised differently (mainly by parents)** and this leads to boys and girls behaving, thinking and seeing themselves differently. This has led to women suffering from inequality and facing barriers to achievement.
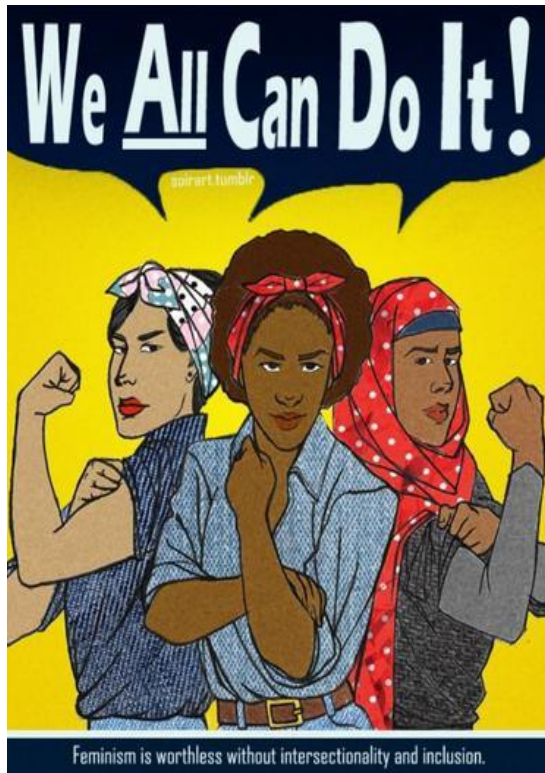
🔑 **FEMINIST**

'a sociologist who explores how someone's gender affects how they do in society and wants equality in the power, status and rights of women and men'

🔑 **PATRIARCHY**

'male domination of society and its institutions which allows for male power and authority over women'

Waves of Feminism (how this idea has developed)

We All Can Do It!
Feminism is worthless without intersectionality and inclusion.

- **1st wave feminism (starts 18th century)** focused on legal issues and getting women the vote as a way of helping equality in society.

- **2nd wave feminism (starts 1960s, USA)** focussed on getting women equal rights in places like work, education and the family. This led to things like the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay acts in the UK and changes to divorce and custody laws etc.

- **3rd wave feminism (1990s onwards)** is still an active movement. Its focus is now on challenging attitudes to gender norms and focuses on how these still cause gender inequalities despite improvements in the law.

Focus 3d Interactionism

Interactionism

- **Interactionism** is the view that human behaviour should be understood through individuals and their small scale interactions with each other and not through what is happening on in the bigger 'social system'. This makes it a completely different idea to the other 3 perspectives.

- It is an idea linked to a man called Max Weber. He was born in second half of nineteenth century in Prussia – a country that experienced lots of change in both how it was run and how people lived and worked..

- Weber believed that an **OBJECTIVE APPROACH** to the study of human behaviour was important – sociologists needed to leave behind any personal views before starting their research and focus on what was happening with the individuals involved.

Some key Interactionist ideas

Self-concept

'the idea an individual has of the kind of person they are'

Labelling

'a label given to an individual or a group BY ANOTHER PERSON that can influence both their own behaviour and view of themselves and also how others view them and respond to them'

Master Status

'when a label that a person has given you becomes the main way that you see yourself'

Eg a failure

Self-fulfilling prophecy

'when a person acts out the label given to them and proves it to be true'

Eg committing more crimes or deviant acts after being labelled naughty

Focus 4
Sociological research processes (6 stages)

Six Steps – Research Process

1. **<u>Develop aims/hypotheses</u>** – just means deciding what issues to investigate. The hypothesis is a view/statement that can be tested – it will be either supported or refuted based on the evidence discovered. Sociologists might develop their research questions/aims in response to social problems/issues of the time (poverty, knife crime etc). Sociologists might also come up with their research aims/questions after conducting a literature review – looking at all previous research done on an area. This can help them to come up with new angle to research or find an existing idea that they want to test for. It could also help them find funding.

2. **<u>Pilot Studies</u>** – Small Scale trial run before main research. Allows Sociologist to test whether the research method chosen will work and if questions are worded well. Can save time/money/effort.

3. Selecting Samples

4. Collecting Data

5. Analysing Data

6. Evaluating Project

Focus 5
Sampling – Types of probability sampling/Non-probability sampling

SAMPLING

Sampling techniques

Not all of the population can be included (time/expense) in a survey so a sample of only some people can be involved.

Making sure your sample has a good proportion of the population that you are attempting to sample and is representative is important.

A sample usually comes from a sampling frame (school register).

Sampling method	What is it?	Advantages	Disadvantages
Simple Random sample (Probability)	Small group taken from a sampling frame at random. Like lottery.	Every member of society has an equal chance of being chosen. Easy to generate (computer)	May not be representative
Stratified Random sample (Probability)	Sample mirrors the population – divide it into strata/layers and draw a sample from each subgroup. E.g. if 10% are men over 65 than draw 10% from that group.	Representative of population	More time consuming
Systematic sample (Probability)	Every nth person is chosen from sampling frame.	Equal chance of being chosen	May not be representative
Snowball sample (Non-Probability)	You ask one person, they ask another and so on.	Helps where no sampling frame available (homeless) - You also don't have to ask lots of people	May be a similar sample as friends etc. not representative.

Focus 6
Types of Data Sources – Types, advantages, limitations

Method of obtaining data:

Primary data

Primary data indicates that sociologists have collected this data personally in order to test a hypothesis.

Secondary data

Secondary data is not collected by the sociologist personally but is data from the research of others, such as government statistics, charities or individuals who have kept a diary of their experiences.

Can be quantitative or qualitative.

Focus 7
Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Methods of obtaining evidence:

Quantitative data

Factual data presented in numerical form – can be easier to compare responses between groups/over time . This help to identify any patterns or trends.

Sources of this data will include questionnaires, structured interviews and official statistics by government agencies (birth rates/crime rates/unemployment)

Qualitative data

Descriptive data about an issue - so for example, what people think about an issue, where they are offering their opinions.

This is data presented in word form – allows for greater discussion.

Primary sources of this data will include unstructured interviews and participant observation.

Qualitative data can also come from secondary sources – photos, newspaper articles, diaries, letters etc.   This is good for supplementing primary data but there's a danger such sources could be forced or reflect writer's prejudices rather than truth.

Pros of official statistics (Quantitative Data)

1. Cheap to use – data already collected.

2. Allows comparisons over time, by location and by social factor.

3. Can be combined with other data (qualitative like interviews or observation methods etc) to get a full picture.

Cons of official statistics (Quantitative Data)

1. Doubts about how valid as may reflect process of how collected.

2. Danger of being 'socially construed' - figures are outcome of choices of people involved in their construction (e.g. Police or victim).

3. Don't tell us the detail – for example what it means to get divorced.

Focus 8
Content Analysis

Key Points – Content Analysis

- This is a method sociologists might use to analysis and get meaning from secondary sources or visual material (newspapers, television broadcasts etc)

- **An example where this might be used is when Feminists want to investigate how different genders are represented in the media by coming up with a set of categories to look out for (e.g. taking orders/giving orders)**

- **Pros – Can generate easier to use and analyse quantitative (number data) so you can look for patterns and trends**

- Limits – can be time consuming, analysing content (for example on TV for sexism) also involves subjective judgments (different people my see things differently) so data gained may be invalid (not true) and not reliable (hard for another sociologist to repeat exactly to test out your conclusions).

Focus 9
Collecting Primary Data – Social Surveys types and questions used

Key Points

- Social Surveys involve collecting information from a LARGE group of people – usually through questionnaires or structured interviews.

- People who use these include Opinion (Political) Pollsters like IPSOS MORI, market researchers and government departments.

- There are two main types of questions that may be used.

	What is it?	Advantages	Disadvantages
Closed question	Limited number of possible answers (Tick Yes/No etc)	Quick and easy to answer	Can't get a lot of detail or depth. Also wording needs to be carefully though about and all possible answers must be anticipated (Questionnaire)
Open question	Respondents can answer how they like	Can get a lot of detail	Lengthy written answers can take a lot of time to analyse. More difficult to convert to statistics (no quantative data)

Focus 10-15
Collecting the Data – Comparing Methods

Research method	Advantage	Disadvantage
10. Postal questionnaire (self-completion, mailed/email, closed and standardised questions)	- Cheap/easy way to get data - **No interviewer effect** - Quantitative stats can be investigated - Easy for others to repeat - Any differences in responses revealing	- Low response. - Who's really answered? - Can be misunderstood - Unsuitable for some (homeless) - Those who not representative?
11. Structured interview (Interviewer reads out, face to face, telephone, standardised questions)	- **Interviewer present, can explain Qs** - Quantitative stats can be investigated - Easy for others to repeat - Any differences in responses revealing	-**Interviewer bias (may influence interviewees - socially acceptable answers – INVALID?)** - Standardised Q stop interviewees developing answer/expressing
12. Unstructured interview (Informal, guided conversation, not standardised Qs, prompts)	-- **Interviewer present, can explain Qs** - Interviewees can talk at length and give more detail or put forward new issues	-Time consuming/cost/small samples - Requite skilled Interviewer - Unique interviews – hard to repeat -**Interviewer bias (may influence interviewees – socially acceptable answers, leading Qs – INVALID?)**
13. Group interview (small group discussions)	- Access wide range of views - Some people more comfortable in a group setting so will give true views	- **Respondents Influencing each other?** - Some people dominate talk - **Some less open here–confidentiality?**
14. Participant observation (researcher takes part – can be overt /aware or covert/secret)	-Observe people in natural setting. -Can provide deeper understanding or a truthful picture	- **Observer effect so INVALID? (Overt)** - Can impact on Qs asked (Covert) - Hard to record data (Covert) - Ethical issues of consent/privacy (Covert) - Time consuming/cost/hard to repeat
15. Non participant observation (observe but not in, 'fly on wall')	- Less likely to be drawn into group discussion/activities than above - More chance to be objective	-More difficult to be unbiased/see through eyes of those being studied. - **Observer effect so INVALID? (Overt)**

Focus 16
Collecting Primary Data – Longitudinal Studies, advantages, limitations

Key Points – Longitudinal Studies

- Studies of the same group of people over a period of time with people having repeat follow up surveys/interviews.

- Example – 1970 British Cohort Study collected information on births of 17,200 babies born over just one week in April 1970. Since then follow ups at age 5, 10, 16, 26, 30, 34 and 42 to monitor health, physical development, education plus social/economic circumstances. Next one due this year.

- **Pros – Can examine social changes over time**

- Limits – timescale makes very expensive, involvement in these studies may affect a person's behaviours, problems maintaining contact, people may end involvement

Focus 17
Evaluating the research collected and how good it is

Sociological research and 'evaluation'

All sociological research output (journal articles/conference papers etc) get evaluated by **peer review**. Before anything gets published it first gets checked/assessed by experienced Sociologists. The reviewers provide feedback and give suggestions on possible amendments.
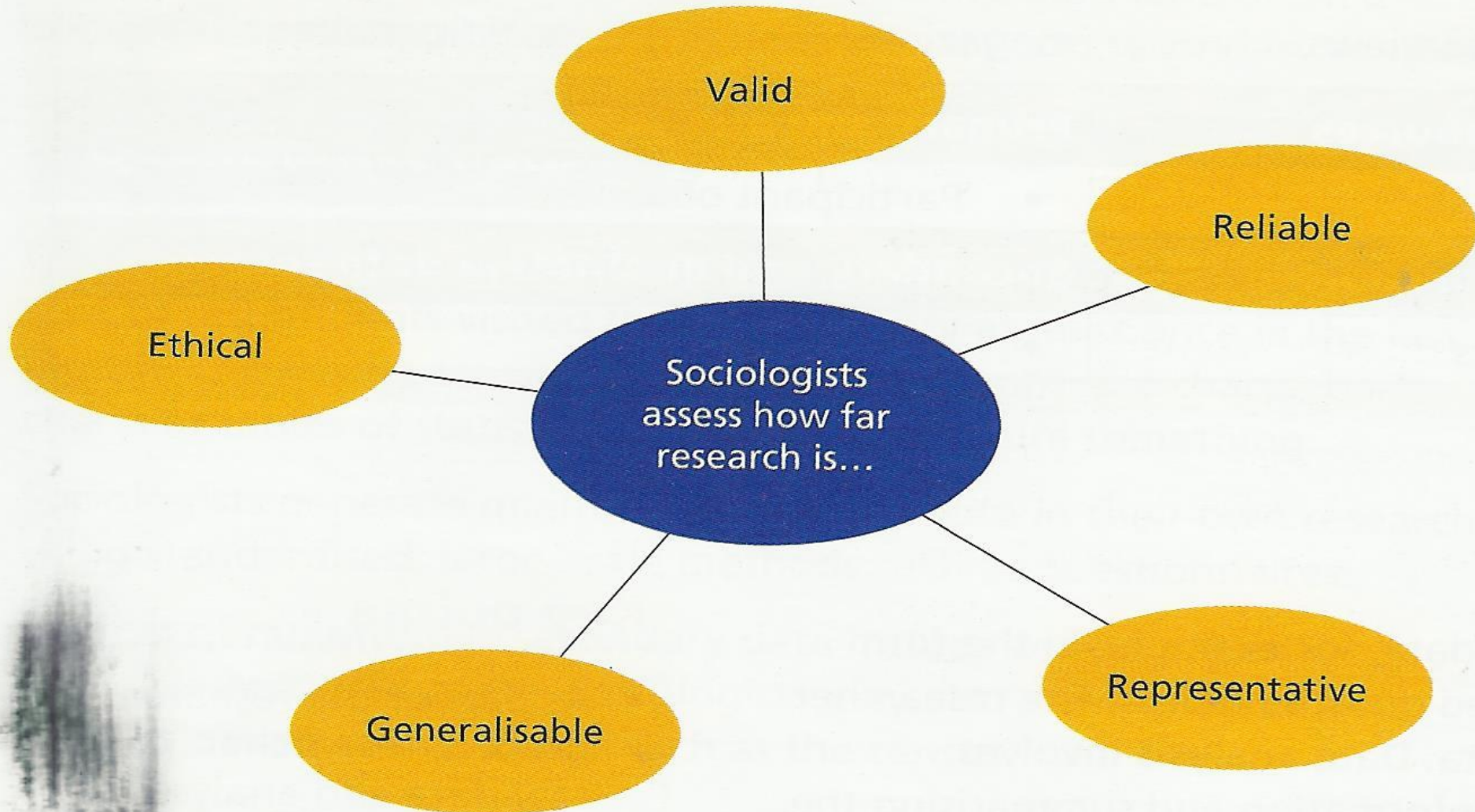
🔑 Peer Review

'When the research done by Sociologists is first assessed by other experienced Sociologists before being published.'

'Form of quality control'

Peer Assessed
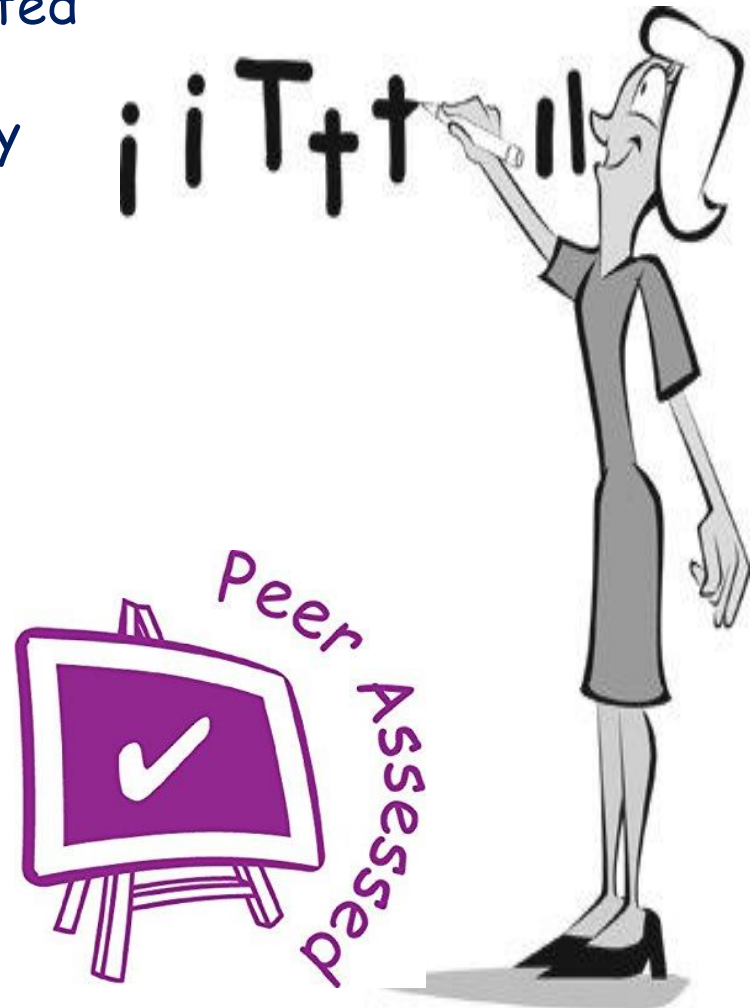
Link – Steps to 'evaluating' research and making sure that

Focus 18
Evaluating the research collected and how ethical it is

Sociological research and ethical issues

Ethics – refers to what is morally right and wrong

Ethical issues occur when there is conflict between the rights of participants and the needs of researchers

British Sociological Association Ethical Code – Published to guide researchers through potential ethical problems and help them take reponsibility for their own ethical practice

- **Informed Consent** – before taking part people should be told about what the study is and why it is being done. They should not be lied to about the purpose/focus (**deception**) and should be aware they have a **Right to Withdraw** and withdraw at any stage.

- **Anonymity** - links to privacy. People's right to be anonymous and their privacy should be respected. Personal data should be kept confidential.

- **Confidentiality** – Personal information should be kept private and not shared without consent.

- **Protection from harm** – participants should not suffer any increase risk of harm if they take part than they would have done anyway.

Some Key Ethical Concepts

Consent
Deception (no)
Confidentiality
Debriefing
Withdrawal
Protection