



GSOC.SA8 Values, Norms, Roles and Social Control

AQA 8192 · Calculators not allowed · about 75 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Where a question refers to Item I, use both the Item and your own knowledge of values, norms and roles in your answer.

Item I: Priya starts a new job

A hypothetical scenario written for this exercise, for students to apply role and social control concepts to.

Priya has just started work at a large hospital, where she must now balance her existing roles as a parent and a part-time student alongside her new role as a trainee nurse. In her first week, senior staff explain the ward's strict rules on hygiene, timekeeping and patient confidentiality, and Priya notices that even small breaches, such as being a few minutes late, are quickly and firmly corrected by colleagues.

1 A single social status, such as 'teacher', usually comes with more than one role attached to it.

- ☐ A) Role set
- ☐ B) Role conflict
- ☐ C) Achieved status
- ☐ D) Value consensus

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 The sociologist Robert Merton (1957) introduced the concept of a 'role set' to describe an idea related to, but different from, role conflict.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

- 3** Look again at Item I. Priya must now balance her existing roles as a parent and a part-time student alongside her new role as a trainee nurse.

Using Item I, explain how Priya's situation is an example of role conflict, and suggest one way she might manage it.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

- 4** Look again at Item I. Even small breaches of the ward's rules, such as being a few minutes late, are quickly and firmly corrected by colleagues.

Using Item I, explain how the ward's response to lateness is an example of social control.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

- 5** The sociologist Erving Goffman (1961) studied places he called 'total institutions', where a person's whole daily life is controlled within a single setting.

(Total for Question 5 is 6 marks)

- 6** State one criticism of Goffman's concept of the total institution.

(Total for Question 6 is 2 marks)

7 Norms and values can differ significantly between different societies and cultures.

(a) Define 'ethnocentrism'. (2)

(b) Define 'cultural relativism'. (2)

(Total for Question 7 is 4 marks)

8 Explain one reason sociologists generally try to avoid an ethnocentric approach when studying other cultures.

(Total for Question 8 is 2 marks)

9 Explain two ways agencies of social control might differ between a strict, close-knit community and a large, anonymous city.

(Total for Question 9 is 4 marks)

- 10** Roles, values and social control differ between settings and cultures, and sociologists disagree about how much this variation matters for understanding social order.

Evaluate the view that strong social control is necessary to maintain order within institutions and communities. In your answer you should refer to sociologists' concepts and consider more than one type of social control.

(Total for Question 10 is 12 marks)

- 11** For each description below, state which concept covered in this pack it best matches.

(a) The several different roles attached to a single social status, such as a teacher's roles towards pupils, colleagues and parents. (1)

(b) A setting where a person's whole daily life is controlled by one authority, largely cut off from wider society. (1)

(c) Judging another culture's practices using the standards of one's own culture. (1)

(Total for Question 11 is 3 marks)

- 12** Explain one difference between role conflict and role set.

(Total for Question 12 is 2 marks)

- 13** Explain one reason resocialisation in a total institution might be more powerful than ordinary secondary socialisation.

(Total for Question 13 is 2 marks)

- 14** Explain why sociologists studying norms and values across different cultures try to apply cultural relativism rather than ethnocentrism.

(Total for Question 14 is 2 marks)

- 15** Give one example of informal social control operating in a setting other than a workplace or a family.

(Total for Question 15 is 2 marks)

- 16** Explain one reason an organisation such as the military might deliberately use total-institution features to change new members' behaviour quickly.

(Total for Question 16 is 2 marks)

Mark scheme · GSOC.SA8 Values, Norms, Roles and Social Control

Question 1

- **B1** A (role set)
- **Answer: A**

Question 2

- **B1** identifies that a 'role set' refers to the several different roles attached to a single social status, e.g. a teacher's role set might include teaching pupils, managing colleagues and reporting to parents
- **B1** explains that this is different from role conflict, which involves tension between roles attached to two separate statuses (e.g. parent and employee)
- **B1** explains that a role set can itself create tension between the different roles within one status, e.g. a teacher balancing being supportive to pupils with being strict about discipline
- **B1** correct source attribution, e.g. reference to Merton (1957)
- **Answer: Merton's (1957) 'role set' refers to the several roles attached to a single status, e.g. a teacher's role set includes teaching pupils, managing colleagues and reporting to parents; unlike role conflict between two separate statuses, a role set can create tension between the different roles within one single status, such as being supportive yet strict.**

Question 3

- **B1** correctly identifies role conflict as tension between roles attached to different statuses (parent, student, trainee nurse)
- **B1** applies this to Item I, e.g. shift patterns as a trainee nurse may clash with childcare or study time
- **B1** a plausible way of managing the conflict, e.g. negotiating flexible shifts, or prioritising one role temporarily during busy periods
- **B1** clear, accurate use of role terminology
- **Answer: Priya's parent, student and trainee-nurse roles can make competing demands, e.g. shift patterns clashing with childcare or study time; she might manage this by negotiating flexible shifts or, temporarily, prioritising one role during particularly busy periods.**

Question 4

- **B1** identifies that correcting small breaches quickly is a method of social control, encouraging conformity to workplace norms
- **B1** applies this to Item I, e.g. colleagues, not just formal managers, are the ones correcting Priya's lateness
- **B1** development, e.g. this shows social control can operate through everyday peer interaction, not only through official disciplinary procedures
- **B1** clear, accurate use of social control terminology
- **Answer: Colleagues quickly correcting even small lateness shows social control operating through everyday peer interaction, encouraging conformity to workplace norms, not only through the ward's official disciplinary procedures.**

Question 5

- **B1** identifies that Goffman used 'total institutions' to describe settings where people live, work, eat and sleep under one authority, largely cut off from wider society
- **B1** gives a correct example, e.g. prisons, some psychiatric hospitals, or military training bases
- **B1** identifies 'resocialisation' as a process that can occur in a total institution, where a person's previous identity is broken down
- **B1** development, e.g. through the removal of personal possessions, a strict routine and standardised clothing or appearance
- **B1** explains that a new identity or set of behaviours, suited to the institution, is then rebuilt in its place
- **B1** correct source attribution, e.g. reference to Goffman's Asylums (1961)
- **Answer: Goffman's (1961) 'total institutions', such as prisons or some psychiatric hospitals, are settings where people live, work, eat and sleep under one authority, largely cut off from wider society. 'Resocialisation' can occur there: a person's previous identity is broken down, often through removing possessions and imposing a strict routine, and a new identity suited to the institution is rebuilt.**

Question 6

- **B1** identifies a genuine criticism, e.g. critics argue not every resident or member of such an institution experiences resocialisation to the same degree, since individuals can and do resist or only partly accept the new identity imposed on them
- **B1** brief development, e.g. or that modern versions of some institutions Goffman studied have since changed their practices, reducing how 'total' they now are
- **Answer: Critics argue not every member of a total institution experiences resocialisation to the same degree, since individuals can resist or only partly accept the imposed identity, and that some institutions Goffman studied have since changed their practices, reducing how 'total' they now are.**

Question 7

- (a) **B1** identifies ethnocentrism as judging other cultures using the standards and values of one's own culture, often assuming one's own culture is normal or superior (oe)
- (a) **B1** development/example, e.g. assuming that a custom unfamiliar to a person must be 'wrong' or 'strange' simply because it differs from their own upbringing
- (a) **Answer: Ethnocentrism is judging other cultures using the standards of one's own culture, often assuming one's own culture is normal or superior, e.g. assuming an unfamiliar custom must be 'wrong' simply because it differs from one's own upbringing.**
- (b) **B1** identifies cultural relativism as the view that a culture's norms and values should be understood in the context of that culture, rather than judged against the standards of another culture (oe)
- (b) **B1** development/example, e.g. trying to understand why a practice makes sense within its own cultural context, rather than assuming it is wrong because it differs from one's own
- (b) **Answer: Cultural relativism is the view that a culture's norms and values should be understood within their own context, rather than judged against another culture's standards, e.g. trying to understand why a practice makes sense within its own setting.**

Question 8

- **B1** identifies that an ethnocentric approach risks misunderstanding or unfairly judging practices that make sense within their own cultural context
- **B1** development, e.g. this could lead to inaccurate conclusions, since the sociologist's own cultural assumptions are being used as the standard rather than genuinely trying to understand the culture being studied
- **Answer: An ethnocentric approach risks misunderstanding or unfairly judging practices that make sense within their own cultural context, leading to inaccurate conclusions because the researcher's own cultural assumptions, rather than genuine understanding, become the standard used.**

Question 9

- **B1** one way, e.g. in a close-knit community, informal social control (e.g. gossip, disapproval from people who know each other well) may be very powerful because most people are known to one another
- **B1** development of that way
- **B1** a second, different way, e.g. in a large, anonymous city, people may be less well known to those around them, so informal social control may be weaker and formal social control (e.g. police, cameras) may play a relatively larger role
- **B1** development of that way
- **Answer: In a close-knit community, informal social control such as gossip or disapproval can be powerful because people know each other well; in a large, anonymous city, people are less well known to those around them, so informal control may be weaker and formal control, such as police or cameras, can play a relatively larger role.**

Question 10

- **Level 4** (10-12): A detailed, well-balanced evaluation that accurately explains BOTH the case for strong social control maintaining order (e.g. drawing on Goffman's total institutions, or informal control in close-knit communities) AND a case questioning it (e.g. resistance to resocialisation, or the costs of very strict control), supported by accurate reference to named sociologists. Strengths and weaknesses of each side are analysed, and a reasoned, supported judgement is reached. Sociological terminology is used accurately and consistently throughout, and cultural variation is discussed without ranking any culture's norms as superior.
- **Level 3** (7-9): A clear evaluation that explains a case for and a case questioning strong social control, with some accurate reference to sociologists. Some analysis of strengths/weaknesses. An attempt at a conclusion, which may be only partly supported.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Some relevant explanation of social control, with limited development or accuracy. Little clear evaluation or comparison.
- **Level 1** (1-3): One or two isolated, undeveloped points about rules, roles or control, with little or no sociological terminology or accurate detail.
- **Level 0** (0): No relevant content.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Case for strong social control: Goffman's total institutions (1961) show how strict rules, routines and resocialisation can maintain order and produce predictable behaviour within an institution, as illustrated by the ward's firm response to lateness in Item I.
 - Case for informal control: in close-knit communities, informal social control (disapproval, gossip) can maintain order effectively without needing heavy formal enforcement, because people are known to one another.
 - Case questioning strong control: critics of the total-institution model argue individuals can resist or only partly accept resocialisation, so very strict control does not guarantee genuine conformity, only outward compliance.
 - Case questioning strong control further: excessively strict social control, formal or informal, can carry costs, such as reduced individual wellbeing, autonomy or trust, and may provoke resistance rather than acceptance.
 - Cultural variation: what counts as an appropriate level or type of social control varies between cultures and settings; cultural relativism suggests these differences should be understood in context rather than one being assumed as the correct standard.
 - A balanced conclusion might argue that some social control is necessary for most institutions and communities to function predictably, but that the most effective and humane control balances clear expectations with respect for individual resistance and cultural context, rather than relying on total, unquestioned conformity.
 - A convincing top-level answer draws on more than one named concept (e.g. Goffman's total institutions alongside informal community control) and uses Item I as a worked example rather than treating social control only in the abstract.

Question 11

- (a) **B1** role set
- (a) **Answer: Role set**
- (b) **B1** total institution
- (b) **Answer: Total institution**
- (c) **B1** ethnocentrism
- (c) **Answer: Ethnocentrism**

Question 12

- **B1** identifies that role conflict involves tension between roles attached to different, separate statuses (e.g. parent and employee)
- **B1** identifies that a role set involves several roles attached to a single status (e.g. a teacher's roles towards pupils, colleagues and parents), which can create tension within that one status
- **Answer: Role conflict is tension between roles attached to different, separate statuses, such as parent and employee; a role set is several roles attached to a single status, such as a teacher's roles towards pupils, colleagues and parents, which can create tension within that one status.**

Question 13

- **B1** identifies that a total institution controls almost every part of daily life at once (living, working, eating, sleeping), unlike ordinary secondary socialisation, which happens gradually across many separate settings
- **B1** development, e.g. this concentrated, all-encompassing control can break down and rebuild identity more quickly and completely than the more gradual influence of school, media or peer groups
- **Answer: A total institution controls almost every part of daily life at once, unlike ordinary secondary socialisation, which happens gradually across many separate settings; this concentrated control can break down and rebuild identity more quickly and completely.**

Question 14

- **B1** identifies that cultural relativism allows a practice to be understood on its own terms, within its own social and historical context
- **B1** development, e.g. this produces a more accurate sociological account than automatically judging the practice against the standards of the researcher's own culture
- **Answer: Cultural relativism allows a practice to be understood on its own terms, within its own context, producing a more accurate sociological account than automatically judging it against the standards of the researcher's own culture.**

Question 15

- **B1** a plausible example, e.g. neighbours disapproving of an untidy front garden, or a friendship group's reaction to someone breaking an unwritten social rule
- **B1** a brief, correct explanation of why it counts as informal social control, e.g. it involves no official process, only social disapproval
- **Answer: Neighbours showing disapproval of an untidy front garden is informal social control: it involves no official process, only social disapproval from people who are not a family member or employer.**

Question 16

- **B1** identifies that removing a person from their previous environment and controlling their daily routine can weaken the influence of their earlier identity and habits
- **B1** development, e.g. this can make it easier and faster to instil new, consistent standards of behaviour needed for the organisation's purpose, compared with gradual, ordinary secondary socialisation
- **Answer: Removing a person from their previous environment and controlling their daily routine weakens the influence of earlier habits, making it easier and faster to instil new, consistent standards of behaviour than gradual, ordinary secondary socialisation would.**