2011 Sociology GA 3: Examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Student responses to the 2011 Sociology examination included many relevant case studies that were used in a meaningful way to reflect students' understanding of key ideas. Students who addressed all parts of questions, showed an understanding of key concepts and included detailed examples to support their responses performed well. Some students displayed a good understanding of theories and case studies but did not fully address each part of complex questions.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced herein have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

For each question, an outline answer (or answers) is provided. In some cases the answer given is not the only answer that could have been awarded marks.

Section A

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	1	1	3	8	15	20	24	14	10	4	1	**5.6**

Students were required to make an assessment about whether a person can belong to more than one community at the same time. They needed to refer to specific case studies in their response.

In order to address this question thoroughly, students needed to:
- demonstrate an understanding of the concept of community
- clarify whether it is possible to belong to more than one community
- refer to two or more specific community groups
- provide examples and explain the ways people can belong (or not).

Many students referred to good examples reflecting the range of communities individuals can belong to. Successful responses explained how people belong and the level of connection to the group, and justified (where appropriate) why it was not possible to belong to more than one community.

The following is an excerpt from a good response.

'Second life' is a virtual community, created by Linden Lab, where members ... are able to explore the Second Life world, socialise with other residents and create and trade virtual property and services. As of 2011 the Second life community had one million active members. It is very possible that a member of the virtual world of 'Second Life', a Gessellschaft community may belong to a different or even competing community such as the Gemeinschaft, Jewish community of Melbourne. This Jewish community reside most prominently in the South East[ern] suburbs of Caulfield, with 44% of residents following Judaism. In the modern world, this once highly Gemeinschaft community has moved towards practices of a Gessellschaft community, where geographical relationships make way for virtual relationships, such as those in the 'Second Life' world.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	1	5	11	13	19	18	17	9	5	1	0	4.5

This question required students to comment on how new information technologies (for example, the Internet, Twitter and Facebook) have changed the concept of community. In doing so, students needed to refer to specific community case studies. Successful answers referred to specific theories such as Ferdinand Tonnies' Gemeinschaft and Gessellschaft (community and society) as a reference point for the evolution of the concept.

In order to address this question successfully, students needed to:
- identify the key features of traditional and contemporary understandings of the concept of community
- outline the way that new information technologies have shaped the concept of community
- provide examples from two or more community groups that illustrated the impact of information technology
- comment on the degree of change to the concept of community.

Many students described how the use of information technologies had affected the experience of community in reference to specific groups but did not make reference to how the concept of community had changed. In addition, some students provided a definition of Ferdinand Tonnies' theory of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft without making links to contemporary examples.

The following is an excerpt from a good response.

> *... although new information technologies have contributed to a shift towards Gessellschaft communities there remain examples of communities, which fit into both of Tonnies theories of community, although ultimately they will be more characteristic of one rather than the other. The Albury West Rotary Club is a geographically located and oriented service club that utilises technology through Facebook, YouTube and other means. Yet this community is still traditional as it is centred on location, revealing that although the concept of community has changed due to information technologies, this does not guarantee a change in all communities.*

Section B

Question 3a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	3	3	7	11	14	17	20	14	7	3	1	**5.1**

This question required students to comment on the ways in which Australian national culture has changed in response to multiculturalism. To adequately address this question students needed to:
- demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of national culture and multiculturalism (for example, government policy, a reflection of culturally diverse society, and the principle of respect for and equality of all cultural groups)
- make reference to Australia's shift from a monoculture to multiculturalism as reflected in the representations
- explain two or more aspects of national culture that have changed due to multiculturalism (for example, sport, religion, dress, equality and other values, language and cultural diversity).

Sophisticated responses acknowledged that not all aspects of culture have changed or changed significantly (for example, things that haven't changed include cricket, symbols such as the flag, and racism). It was of concern that some students stated that multiculturalism was not a current government policy, which is incorrect.

The following is an excerpt from a good response.

> *Multiculturalism, the coexistence of many cultures in parallel facilitated by overarching respect for societal institutions, shows the meaning and potential of national culture. Australia was originally a monoculture, a society in which there is a dominant system of social heritage and learned patterns of thinking, feeling and acting with the expectation that minorities would assimilate to the dominant set of physical and cultural characteristics. This was embodied through its White Australia Policy and within that the Immigration Restriction Act, which imposed a dictation test that would deny, unwanted migrants access to Australia. Australia transitioned over time to a 'multicultural society' that is united by 'respect for each other, our culture of a fair go, our spirit of equality and our humane commitment to those in strife'. This explains how cultures have the potential to evolve as a society ... exemplified by Usman Khawaja's achievement of becoming 'the first Muslim to represent Australia'.*

Question 3b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	12	10	14	17	14	13	9	6	3	1	1	**3.5**

This question required students to identify and discuss debates about multicultural policy in Australia, making links to the article 'New cap is not just cricket'. In order to address this question thoroughly, students needed to:
- demonstrate an understanding of the concept of multiculturalism and/or explain Australian multicultural policy
- identify and elaborate on two or more points of debate surrounding multiculturalism (for example, that multiculturalism has been a success, as seen through the acceptance of cultural diversity in traditional sport, or that multiculturalism has failed and that the policy should revert to a monoculture)
- support their discussion with a range of specific examples about multicultural policy.

In discussing debates about multiculturalism, some students focused on the selection of a Muslim player being 'front page news.' Others focused on the exclusion of Indigenous Australians from debates about multiculturalism. In discussing this issue, students should be careful to consider Australian Indigenous views; for example, that the concerns of Australian Indigenous people are separate to issues of multiculturalism. Many students did not adequately address a

range of perspectives in their chosen debate or concentrated on one side to the exclusion of the other. Many students also needed to make a connection between the contents of the representation and the debate being explored.

The following is an excerpt from a good response.

> *The article recognises that 'it is not all sweetness and light' however there are individuals all over the world who are reluctant to embrace multiculturalism ... Australia had the least racist attitudes after Canada, this is evident in the article as 'Khawaja's selection is another step towards ... the time when every man is judged solely by the content of his character'. Another survey found when asked about societies being made up of many different ethnic backgrounds if this was positive ... 86% believed yes it is.*

Section C

Question 4a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	2	6	19	35	24	14	**3.2**

This question required students to explore whether all citizens are treated equally within Australia. It was necessary for students to provide examples of the experience of citizenship to support their discussion. In order to address this question thoroughly, students needed to:
- demonstrate an understanding of the concept of citizenship (for example, rights, responsibilities and privileges, or TH Marshall's theory)
- explain the difference in treatment of two or more groups within Australian society
- discuss the experience of the groups with evidence from the representation and/or external material.

Most students responded very well to this question. While the provision of a historical context is often helpful in the discussion of inequality, some students needed to include more contemporary examples given the contemporary nature of the study, particularly in relation to the experiences of women and Indigenous Australians.

Question 4b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	5	11	25	27	20	11	**2.8**

This question required students to analyse one representation and determine its connection to the concept of social justice. It was necessary for students to:
- demonstrate an understanding of the concept of social justice (for example, engaging with any of the systems within society that exists to ensure that all citizens have equal outcomes)
- provide evidence from a specific representation
- connect the examples to the notion of social justice within Australian society.

Appropriate examples included:
- representation 1: Indigenous Australians – living conditions/health. This representation demonstrated that, while attempts have been made, social justice is yet to be received as there is a need for the *Closing the Gap* program
- representation 2: youth/children – distribution of wealth/access to education. This representation implied that social justice is an issue for young people from 'low socioeconomic area[s], suburbs and towns where the income is low' in terms of their ability to attend university
- representation 3: gender. This representation suggested that unjust gender discrimination occurs despite anti-discrimination laws. It is therefore questioning the effectiveness of existing methods aimed at social justice
- representation 4: ethnicity. This representation suggested that multicultural tolerance of different cultural practices is stated as an Australian value but is not always the reality.

Question 4c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	4	3	5	7	10	14	16	14	13	8	5	**5.7**

This question was well answered by many students. Students were asked to discuss whether all Australian citizens experience equal chances. It was necessary for responses to reflect an understanding of the concept of citizenship, including an overview and detailed examples of at least two groups of citizens.

The following is an excerpt from a good response.

> *Young Australian citizens ... experience their citizenship ... differently from others. If you are under 18 years of age you do not hold the right to vote, as Australia is a democracy ... voting is an important aspect of taking part in the future of Australia ... The Green paper in 2009 wanted to lower the voting age from 18 to 16 [years], however, some people believe that 16 year olds are not mature enough – this may not be true for all as many 16-year-olds work and pay taxes therefore political decisions effect them.*

Section D

Question chosen	0	a.	b.	c.
%	4	8	14	74

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	5	2	2	3	4	4	4	7	5	7	7	9	8	9	7	6	4	3	2	1	1	**9.8**

Most students approached the essay writing section of the examination very well. Most essays included a formal structure, definitions of key concepts, detailed discussion of key ideas and relevant examples. Some students needed to use more detailed evidence instead of general examples, and some students did not use Australian examples as required.

Question 5a.
In order to answer this question fully, students needed to:
- explain the concept of globalisation (including economic, social, political and technological dimensions)
- explain the concepts of democratic practice and citizenship
- use Australian examples
- provide examples relating to democratic practice and citizenship
- explain how and in what ways globalisation has impacted on or influenced citizenship and democratic practice.

This essay was a less common choice for students. Relevant examples included the following:
- the Internet being used to encourage active citizenship, educate and inform
- websites such as GetUp! and WikiLeaks being used by citizens to exercise democratic rights and privileges.

Question 5b.
In order to answer this question fully, students needed to:
- explain the concept of globalisation (including economic, social, political and technological dimensions)
- demonstrate an understanding of the Australian government's management responsibilities
- show an understanding of the concept of independence
- have an identifiable position and agree or disagree (or both) with the statement or parts of the statement
- use Australian examples that supported their position
- provide an explanation of two social, economic or political issues and outline their connection to governance.

Relevant examples included the following.

Social issues
- pressure to take asylum seekers or provide aid
- internal pressure to preserve culture

Economic issues
- membership of the World Trade Organization provides opportunities that suit Australia
- global financial crisis/European crisis

Political issues
- membership of the United Nations provides opportunities to shape global responses
- global alliances may result in supporting actions that are problematic for Australia

Question 5c.
In order to answer this question thoroughly students needed to:
- explain the concept of globalisation (including the economic, social, political and technological dimensions)
- address the quote stated in the question
- discuss the major arguments in the statement – for, against or both ('Globalisation totally benefits Australia')
- evaluate the degree of benefit
- identify the aspects of globalisation that have created 'benefits'
- use Australian evidence.

Relevant examples included the following.
- Benefits of globalisation: the notion of the global village with the ability to tackle economic, health and social problems; reduced risk of major wars; increased communications and travel; expansion of financial markets; improved standard of living and health for Australian citizens; improved agricultural practices; changes to work, immigration, recreation and culture.
- Disadvantages of globalisation: industry closure and job losses; threat of terrorism; religious exclusion and/or intolerance; disempowerment of the state; loss of cultural markers such as language; the concern that integrated economies mean that national economies are susceptible to a domino effect when economic problems occur in other countries, such as the movement of manufacturing out of Australia; environmental impacts.