

VCE Sociology

Units 1 & 2

Pheona Donohoe



Social Education Victoria

VCE Sociology Units 1 & 2

by Pheona Donohoe

Published January 2012

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ISBN 978 0 9871272 0 4

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Executive Editor (SEV): James Fiford

Cover design: David McBurney

Text design: Production Works

Editorial: Major Street Publishing

Printing: Currency Communications

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The author and publishers wish to acknowledge the following sources for allowing the reproduction of the images throughout this book.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Social Education Victoria has compiled and published a range of textbooks designed for new VCE Study Designs beginning in 2012. Of the four new publications, two are for Politics - namely *VCE Australian and Global Politics Units 1 & 2*, by Kimberly Cornell, and *VCE Global Politics Units 3 & 4*, by Anna-Louise Simpson. The other two textbooks are for Sociology - namely *VCE Sociology Units 1 & 2*, by Pheona Donohoe, and *VCE Sociology Units 3 & 4*, by Fiona Gontier.

It should be noted that SEV regards these textbooks as an ongoing project and is working on additional materials (to be available to SEV members via the website) that will enhance or add to the textbooks' case studies and examples. Please refer to www.sev.asn.au for further details.

The compilation of the textbooks has been a complex task and one that has been completed according to a very tight timeframe. In the role of SEV Executive Editor of these textbook projects, I have worked closely with a large group of people. I would like to congratulate the authors, the researchers, the design team, the editors, proofreaders and the printers for the commitment, diligence, patience and skill they have exhibited over the journey.

On behalf of Social Education Victoria and our various stakeholders, and sincerely hoping that I don't neglect to mention anyone, I would like to specifically recognise the following people and thank them for their important contributions to this book, *VCE Sociology Units 1 & 2*: Pheona Donohoe (author), Neil Todd (permissions and proofreading) David McBurney (cover design and production advice), Professor Evan Willis, Janet Argeres, Jess Chamoff, James Milner (expert advice), Pam Dudgeon (proofreading), Jenni Beattie (proofreading), Colin Fiford (proofreading) and Tess Baster and Anna Makridis of Currency Communications (printing and production advice). Finally, I wish to thank Lesley Williams at Major Street Publishing and Kerry Stacey from Production Works, for their monumental effort in the editing, design and layout of the book.

In closing, I wish to highlight the online support SEV will also provide as a part of your textbook purchase. At the SEV website (www.sev.asn.au) there will be some links to the relevant URLs that are referred to throughout each textbook. Instead of having to type in each link from the textbook, simply identify which ones you might like to explore further and then click through to them via the SEV website!

We at Social Education Victoria trust that this publication will help to play a part in your enjoyment and understanding of this subject and wish you all the best for your studies.

James Fiford
Executive Officer
Social Education Victoria

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Baby Boomer. A term created by popular media for a child born in the generation between 1946 to 1964 when Australia experienced a large increase in births and post Second World War affluence.

Generation X. The generation of people born between 1963 and 1980. They are described as being individualistic, flexible, technologically proficient and possessing a strong work/life balance.

Generation Y. The generation of people born between 1981 and 1994 to Baby Boomer parents. Generation Y are digital natives who grew up using information and communication technology (ICT).

Generation Z. The generation of people born between 1995 and 2009 to members of Generation X. Generation Z are often associated with excessive consumerism and Internet technology.

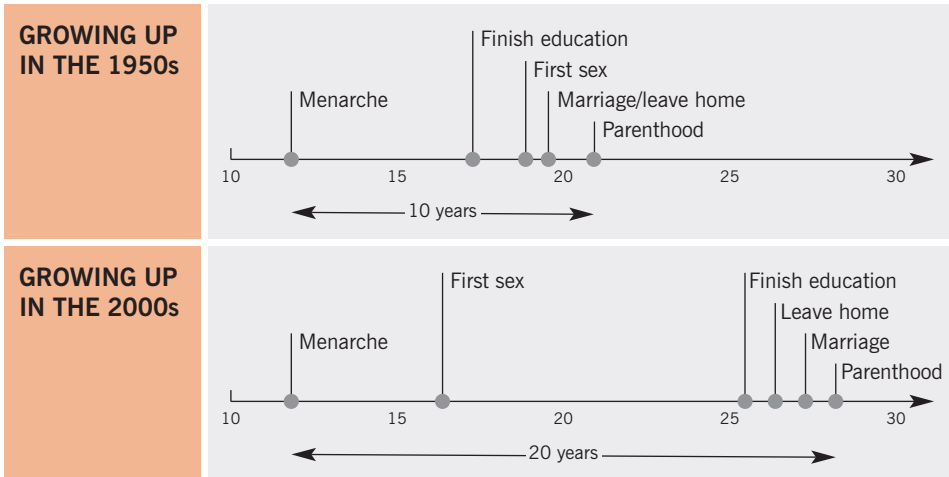


FIGURE 1.01: Changes to significant first experiences of young Australians in the 1950s and 2000s

Young people from various generations have different interpretations and experiences of youth based on birth rates, significant world events and shared life experiences (ABS 2009). Generations usually cover 20 years and there is often an overlap between the experiences of individuals within different generations. The Australian generations since the end of the Second World War in the mass media are commonly categorised as Baby Boomers and Generations X, Y and Z, although the names and associated years are disputed.

Australian **Baby Boomers** (born between 1946 and 1964) were born into a strong economy. They experienced great sociocultural change, including significant steps towards the abolition of the White Australia Policy and increased post-war migration (www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/08_abolition.htm). They also witnessed the introduction of new technologies that dramatically enhanced their lives, such as domestic white-goods, television (1956), and new cultural expressions like rock'n'roll. The Vietnam War (1962-1973) dovetailed the Baby Boomers with Generation X. **Generation X** (born between 1963 and 1980) experienced significant instability including increased lone-parenting following 'no-fault divorce' law reform (1975), increased multiculturalism, corporate downsizing, and the HIV AIDS 'epidemic'. This has led, some contend, to individualism and cynicism. Although personal computers were introduced during Generation X, the real digital natives were Generation Y. Few members of **Generation Y** (born between 1981 and 1994) experienced life free from computers or the Internet. Generation Y also experienced social instability arising from an economic downturn, globalisation, September 11, the Gulf War (1990-1991) and greater awareness of environmental degradation. Generation Y is postmodern, individualistic and socially active. There is great overlap between Generation Y and Generation Z. Most members of **Generation Z** (born between 1995 and 2009) have lived with

the Iraq War as a constant. Mobile phones, text messaging and social networking are also the norm. Instantaneous access to online information encourages transitory subcultural experience.



FIGURE 1.02: “Twitter wireless interactive social media platforms”: cartoon demonstrating generation gap between youth and the elderly

Young people today - members of Generation Y and Z - are having sex for the first time at a younger age, staying in education for longer and significantly delaying adult responsibilities including leaving home, marriage and child-birth (Jordan, Bayly & Sawyer 2005). Teenage births, smoking and substantiations (verifications) of child abuse or neglect notifications are on the decline, and death rates have halved in the two decades to 2007 (AIHW 2009a; AIHW 2010). However, there are still unacceptably high levels of physical and sexual assault with almost 20,000 children experiencing abuse (AIHW 2009a). The Garvan Institute of Medical Research identified anorexia as the third most common chronic illness in young females (after obesity and asthma) affecting one in 200 young females, with one in five attempting suicide and 20% eventually dying from the disorder (Garvan Institute 2011) (www.thebutterflyfoundation.org.au). A 2010 survey of 50,000 young Australians identified body image as a major concern for 78.1% of 11 to 14 year olds and 40% of 20 to 24 year olds (Mission Australia 2010). Problems


Revision

SHORT-ANSWER TEST

1. Define crime.
2. Choose and define one of the following types of crime: crimes against the person, crimes against property, victimless crime, white-collar crime and corporate crime. Then discuss the impact of this crime on individuals (micro-level), communities (meso-level) and society (macro-level).
3. Using Australian crime data, highlight any significant demographic differences (e.g. age, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity) between victim and offender cohorts.
4. Explain why Australian crime data relating to socioeconomic status and ethnicity must be treated with sensitivity.
5. Identify how two of the following factors may predispose an individual to commit crimes: social class, mental health problems, poverty, addiction, abuse and rebellion.
6. Define punishment.
7. Explain the purpose of punishment in the context of retribution, deterrence, rehabilitation and societal protection.
8. Define sentencing and restorative justice and describe how they function as forms of punishment.
9. Identify the strengths and limitations of sentencing and restorative justice.
10. Define recidivism and explain how recidivism rates can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of sentencing and restorative justice.
11. Identify how sentencing and restorative justice attempts to shape human behaviour by using illustrative/descriptive examples from the Victorian criminal justice system.

EXTENDED-RESPONSE QUESTIONS



1. Find a contemporary advertising campaign targeted towards crime prevention. Analyse the representation by identifying whether it focuses on retribution or utilitarianism, and how it does this. Discuss the likely impact of the representation on victims, convicted offenders and those considering committing crime.
2. After an offender is found guilty of an offence in a court of law, a judge or magistrate will impose a sentence. Identify and describe three common sentence options. Discuss the severity and purpose of the sentence in your response. Your extended response should also include data relating to the frequency of the sentence option and the types of crimes most typically associated with it.

3. Watch the documentary 'Facing the Demons' about restorative justice ( www.aso.gov.au/titles/documentaries/facing-demons/). Analyse the film in terms of how the restorative justice process promotes 'healing' for the victim, community and offender.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Why do individuals commit crime? Describe how certain factors may predispose an individual to commit crime. You may consider factors such as social class, mental health problems, poverty, addiction, abuse and rebellion.
2. How does punishment intend to shape human behaviour? Discuss in relation to the aims of punishment including retribution, deterrence, rehabilitation and societal protection.
3. Is there a relationship between severity of punishment and the strength of change in criminal behaviour?

RESEARCH PROJECTS

1. Many contributing factors may predispose an individual to become involved in crime. Choose one factor, such as homelessness or addiction, and develop a media report for a print, television, radio or online news agency (such as Triple J's 'Hack' program -  www.abc.net.au/triplej/hack/) that examines the chosen factor. The media report should be tailored to a wide audience and combine quantitative statistics with qualitative evidence that personalises the issue. The report should sensitively inform the audience of the complexity of the chosen factor, offender characteristics (e.g. age, gender and socioeconomic status), types of crimes likely to be committed and expected responses from the criminal justice system and other government departments and agencies.
2. Participate in the Sentencing Advisory Council's 'Virtual You be the Judge' program ( www.sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au/page/education/virtual-you-be-judge) then write a report about one of the cases. The report should summarise the crime, verdict, maximum penalty and any additional information the 'court' considered when issuing its sentence. The following questions should also be addressed: Was the information from the defendant, defence lawyer, prosecutor and victim impact statement or pre-sentence report sufficient? What would you have liked to know that wasn't presented? What sentence did you choose? How accurate was your sentence compared with the one actually served? What have you learnt about sentencing that you did not already know?
3. Prepare a research report that evaluates the effectiveness of sentencing and restorative justice in shaping human behaviour. Firstly, define punishment, sentencing, restorative justice and recidivism. Secondly, research rates of recidivism for sentencing and restorative justice. Thirdly, describe which form of punishment is most effective in shaping human behaviour.

MULTIMODAL PROJECTS

1. The sociological concepts of crime and punishment change over time and across cultures. Use the Internet to research crime and punishment in three different contemporary societies. Collate and summarise the research in the form of a tourist information brochure advising Australian travellers of these differences. The brochure should include definitions of crime and punishment and an explanation for the reported cross-cultural variations.
2. Newspapers frequently report on crime in the community, often as front-page news. Design the front page of a newspaper with headlines, images and short articles about the following crimes: crimes against the person, crimes against property, victimless crime, white-collar crime and corporate crime. Annotate the 'bad news day' front page by justifying the placement of articles, content of the headlines and sub lines, the size of font and the types of images used. The articles may be factual or fictitious. The beginning of each article should incorporate a definition of the type of crime followed by an illustrative/descriptive example.
3. Prepare a multimedia presentation (using tables, graphs and images) that analyses crime data in Australia. Use one slide per source of data: overall trends, victim and offender age, gender and socioeconomic. Use a variety of credible sources including the Australian Bureau of Statistics (www.abs.gov.au), the Australian Institute of Criminology (www.aic.gov.au), Sentencing Advisory Council (www.sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au) and Victoria Police (www.police.vic.gov.au). Include both quantitative and qualitative data to support your presentation.