

GAC027 Social Science II: Identity and Interaction in Society

GAC Social Science

What this module is, and how it is marked

GAC027 asks how a person's sense of who they are is formed, and how that shapes the way people act together. Five units run from identity to research methods to the assumptions a society carries without noticing.

Assessment is a **societal research project** 社会研究项目 you design and run, a report or presentation, a test, and coursework.

- The research project is the module. Choosing a question you can actually answer with the data you can actually collect is most of the skill.
- △ Choose neutral, well documented topics — study habits, transport, media use, school life — and argue from your own evidence. The skill assessed is method, not opinion.

The making of identity

- **Identity** 身份认同 is how a person understands who they are, and it is built from more than one source at once.
- **Personal identity** 个人身份 is what makes you distinct; **social identity** 社会身份 is the groups you belong to.
- **Socialisation** 社会化 is how a person learns the norms of a group — from family first, then school, peers and media.
- **Roles** 角色 come with expectations attached, and a person occupies several at once.

Social research methodology

- A **research question** 研究问题 must be answerable with evidence you can obtain. "Is society fair?" is not one; "Do students at this school spend more on transport than on food?" is.
- **Primary research** 一手研究 is data you collect; **secondary research** 二手研究 uses what others collected.
- **Quantitative** 定量 data are numbers; **qualitative** 定性 data are words and meanings. Neither is better — they answer different questions.

- A **sample** must be described honestly: who, how many, how chosen.

Worked example. Two ways to study why students skip breakfast.

Quantitative: a survey of 200 students gives how many, and how it varies by year group.

Qualitative: eight interviews give why — the bus time, the queue, not being hungry at six.

The survey cannot tell you why, and the interviews cannot tell you how many. Saying which question you are answering is what selects the method.

Interaction in society

- **Norms** 社会规范 are the unwritten rules of a group; breaking one reveals it.
- **Status** 地位 is a position in a group, **ascribed** 先赋 (given) or **achieved** 自致 (earned).
- **Group behaviour** 群体行为 differs from individual behaviour: people take more risks, or fewer, in groups than alone.
- **Institutions** 制度 — family, school, law, media — are patterns of behaviour stable enough to outlive the individuals in them.

Critical analysis of sources

- Judge a source on **authority**, **currency** and **bias**, as in GAC005 — but here the bias is often in what a study **measured**, not in what it says.
- **Operationalisation** 操作化 is turning an abstract idea into something measurable. “Wellbeing” becomes a specific scale, and the choice of scale is arguable.
- $\triangle$ A statistic is a measurement of a definition. Change the definition of “unemployed” and the number changes without anything happening in the world.

The impact of existing paradigms

- A **paradigm** 范式 here is a shared way of seeing that a society does not notice it is using.
- **Assumptions** 假设 inside a paradigm look like facts from within it, which is why comparison across societies is the standard tool for seeing them.
- **Ethnocentrism** 民族中心主义 is judging another group by your own group’s standards, and it is the error this unit exists to make visible.
- A good Level II answer names the assumption, says whose it is, and shows what changes if you drop it.