Course Companion

GAC Social Science

Every topic handout in one volume

全部专题讲义合集

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GAC027 Social Science II: Identity and Interaction in Society

GAC Social Science

What this module is, and how it is marked

Two club members miss an online discussion. One observer calls them uninterested. Another asks whether they could use the platform. These explanations lead to different questions and actions. Social science asks you to connect your explanation to evidence rather than a label.

This guide supports GAC027: identity and interaction in society. Its five units connect identity, research, interaction, source analysis and interpretive frameworks. A **societal research project** 社会研究项目 starts with a question you can investigate safely using evidence you are permitted to obtain.

Check your teacher's current assessment brief for tasks, criteria and deadlines. The original exercise sheets on this site are practice, not official assessment papers. Clear definitions, appropriate methods and honest limits help a reader assess your reasoning; this guide does not promise marks for particular phrases or methods.

The making of identity

Identity 身份认同 concerns how people understand who they are and how others recognise them. **Personal identity** 个人身份 concerns a person's distinctive experiences and sense of self. **Social identity** 社会身份 concerns membership of groups. These aspects can overlap and change with context.

Socialisation 社会化 is learning the expectations and practices of social life. Family, peers, school and media can contribute. Their influence is not identical for every person, and learning a practice does not mean always following it. **Roles** 角色 carry expectations: a student may also be a club organiser, friend or family member.

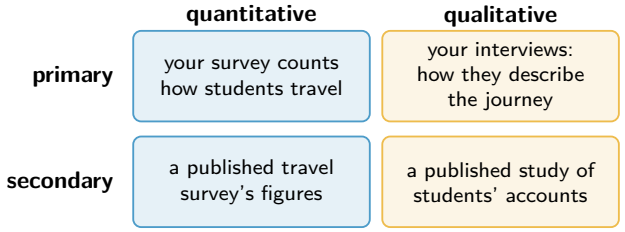
> ■ **Worked example: ask about the person, not just the category**
>
> A student speaks little during one meeting but prepares a clear written plan. The meeting record supports a claim about what the student did in that situation. It does not establish a permanent personality, ability or attitude shared by everyone with the same background. Ask about the task, available time, language and opportunities to contribute before explaining the behaviour.

Social research methodology

A **research question** 研究问题 identifies what you want to find out and the scope of the study. "How do these volunteering students describe the journey to school?" is narrower than "Why do all students choose their transport?" Match your claim to the people and period you can actually study.

Primary research 一手研究 collects evidence for your investigation. **Secondary research** 二手研究 uses existing evidence. A published survey can inform a new question, but its population and definitions may differ from your school. Record where each piece of evidence came from.

Quantitative 定量 methods record counts or amounts. **Qualitative** 定性 methods examine accounts and meanings. A survey can include numeric questions and open descriptions. An interview can include a count as well as explanations. Choose by the question and data, not simply by whether the method is called a survey or interview.



Choose the cell by the question and the data you can get.

■ Worked example: reports are not demonstrated causes

Eight interview volunteers say why they sometimes miss breakfast. Their answers describe their experiences and explanations. They do not establish every student's reason or prove that a reported constraint caused an observed pattern. A survey of reported reasons can also study perceived explanations, but its reach depends on recruitment, wording and response. Neither a large number nor a method label removes those limits.

Participation should be voluntary and appropriate to the task. Obtain the necessary permission, explain the study, avoid unnecessary identifying data and respect refusal. Do not turn an optional study into public pressure on classmates.

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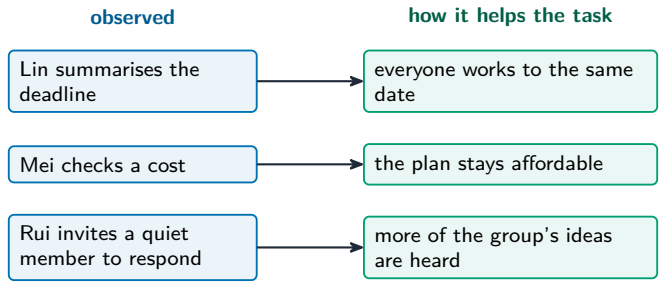
Interaction in society

Norms 社会规范 are shared expectations about behaviour. Some are informal, while formal rules may also shape a situation. **Status** 地位 is a recognised position. An **ascribed** 先赋 position is assigned rather than obtained through a particular achievement; an **achieved** 自致 position is gained through actions or accomplishments. These are analytic categories, not judgements of a person's worth.

Group behaviour 群体行为 depends on the people, task, relationships and conditions. A group may encourage or discourage a risk; do not assume that groups always make people more daring. **Institutions** 制度 are relatively lasting arrangements and practices that organise social life, such as education and family arrangements. Their forms can differ.

■ Worked example: make a contribution observable

In a planning meeting, Lin summarises a deadline, Mei checks a cost and Rui invites a quiet member to respond. These are observed contributions. A useful analysis explains how each helps the task and what remains unresolved. It does not infer that an absent contribution proves a person is unwilling or unable.



Claim what was observed, and say how it helped the task

Critical analysis of sources

Check a source's relevant expertise, publication date, method, definitions and possible interests. Being recent does not make it accurate. Being funded by an interested organisation creates a reason to examine the work; it does not by itself prove every result is false.

Operationalisation 操作化 turns an idea into a defined observation. "Participation" might mean making one forum post within seven days. This measures that action, not every form of contribution or a person's interest. If a later study counts paper responses too, the new measure is broader.

Compare the same definition, denominator, recruitment and period before treating two figures as a trend. A change in definition can change a number even when the underlying situation has not changed. Explain what was counted, what was excluded and what the result can describe.

The impact of existing paradigms

A **paradigm** 范式 is a broad interpretive framework that shapes questions and explanations. **Assumptions** 假设 are starting ideas that require examination. A framework can direct attention to useful evidence while making other explanations less visible. Researchers can use frameworks explicitly; they are not always unaware of them.

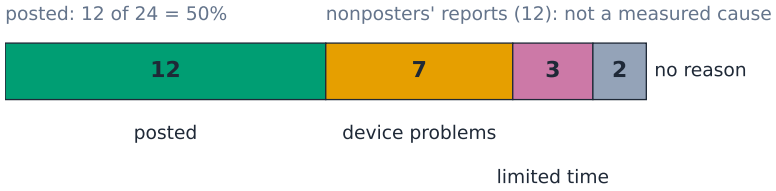
Ethnocentrism 民族中心主义 means treating one's own group's standards as the basis for judging other groups. Avoid claiming that a background determines every member's behaviour. Examine the particular setting and ask participants rather than substituting a group stereotype for evidence.



A framework selects a question, while observations and alternatives test an explanation.

Worked example: motivation or access?

In the companion case, 12 of 24 invited club members post during one seven-day forum. Seven nonposters report device problems, three report limited time, and two give no reason. A motivation-focused framework asks about interest; an access-focused framework asks about opportunity.



The recorded posting rate is 50%; the nonposters' reports are not a measured cause

The recorded posting rate is 50%. Interest, actual device failures and offline contributions were not measured. Access reports deserve checking, but they do not prove one complete explanation. A permitted paper response route can help investigate participation. Keep the new definition and week separate from the first record, and do not promise that a platform change will make everyone contribute.

Vocabulary card meanings

societal research project: A student investigation into how a community is organised. Socialisation: Learning the norms and roles of one's society. Norms: Shared expectations about how people ought to behave. ascribed: A social position given to a person rather than earned, and not always given at birth. achieved: A social position gained by a person's own effort. Institutions: Lasting social structures such as the family, schools, and the law. Ethnocentrism: Judging another culture only by the standards of one's own.

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GAC028 Social Science III: Research Skills and Global Issues

GAC Social Science

What this module is, and how it is marked

A school counts food waste and asks students why they leave food. The counts describe an amount. The answers describe reported reasons. A useful report connects both to a clear question and says what remains unknown.

This guide supports GAC028: global issues, research methods and academic reporting. Start with your teacher's actual project and assessment brief for permitted topics, methods, structure and criteria. The site-created exercises are original practice, not official assessments. They use cases clearly separated from the cited historical context.

Use an achievable, ethically appropriate question. A classroom project can investigate a local part of a wider issue; it does not need to claim it has solved the issue for everyone. Do not collect sensitive or identifying information without a justified need and the required permissions.

Introduction to global issues

A **global issue** 全球性议题 matters across societies or connects places through its causes, effects or responses. Water access, food systems and education access can involve international concerns while differing between local settings. A global issue need not have one cause or a solution that works identically everywhere.



An informal settlement on a Rio de Janeiro hillside: housing, inequality and urban growth are linked global issues

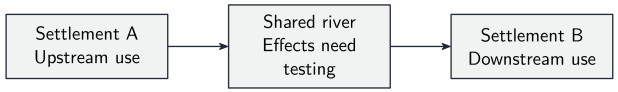
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A **shared resource** 共有资源 is used by several groups. An **externality** 外部性 is an effect on others whose full cost or benefit is not reflected in an action. A **collective action problem** 集体行动问题 arises when a shared benefit is difficult to secure through individual action alone. These concepts fit some cases; do not force all three onto every issue.

Development 发展 can be studied through health, education, living conditions and income. An **indicator** 指标 represents a defined aspect, not the whole life of a community. Compare definitions and context before ranking situations from one number.

Historical context: water cooperation

The first United Nations Water Conference took place in Mar del Plata in 1977. In 2015, the **Sustainable Development Goals** 可持续发展目标 included a dedicated water and **sanitation** 卫生设施 goal, SDG 6. These milestones show sustained international attention. They do not establish that water access was achieved everywhere or describe a particular river's current water quality. Sources checked 2 October 2026: UN water and sanitation and UN water-conference history.



Upstream and downstream users depend on one river, while actual effects need measurement.

Worked example: possible costs and actual findings

Settlement A uses a river for **irrigation** 灌溉. Settlement B is downstream and draws household water. A proposed discharge could impose a water-quality cost on B. This identifies a possible externality; it does not prove **contamination** 污染. No tests are supplied, and no permit is approved.

Shared monitoring could inform both users. Agree on what to measure, where and when to sample, how to report the results and who pays. A discussion proposal is not a permission to discharge. Keep each group's needs visible and judge a response against evidence.

Social research methodology

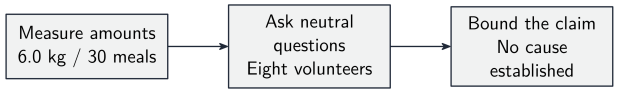
Match a method to a bounded question. Counting plate waste can estimate amounts in observed lunches. **Interviews** 访谈 can explore participants' reported reasons. **Mixed methods** 混合方法 combine different kinds of evidence when that helps the question. Using two methods is not automatically better and does not turn association or self-report into causal proof.

Sampling 抽样 selects observations or **participants** 参与者. Describe the people, places, time, selection and missing responses. Volunteers may differ from nonvolun-

teers. A small **convenience sample** 便利样本 can support a useful local **pilot** 试点研究, but its findings do not automatically represent the school or population.

Validity 效度 concerns whether a measure fits the intended question. **Reliability** 信度 concerns consistency. A checked scale used in the same way helps consistency. It cannot make a three-lunch observation represent an unobserved whole week. Neutral wording also matters: a question that calls a canteen "careless" pushes participants towards a judgement.

Research ethics 研究伦理 include understandable information, voluntary participation, appropriate **consent** 知情同意, respectful treatment and careful handling of data. Not recording names reduces identification risks, but small groups or distinctive details can still reveal a person. Decide what can be withdrawn before collecting data, explain any limit and follow the approved procedure.



Measured amounts and volunteered descriptions answer different questions and need bounded conclusions.

■ Worked example: use the right denominator

Three lunch groups each serve ten meals. Their returned plate waste is 2.0, 3.0 and 1.0 kilograms: 6.0 kilograms across 30 meals, or 0.20 kilograms per served meal. This is not waste per student who left food, because that student count is not given. Eight interview volunteers respond; seven mention portion size and three mention lunch time. Reasons can overlap. The total mentions exceed the **respondent** 受访者 count without an error. These are reported reasons among volunteers, not verified causes or every student's needs. Different menus also limit comparison across days. Extend the study only with permission and an appropriate consistent method.

Report writing skills

Follow the actual report brief. A common structure is question or introduction, method, findings, discussion, conclusion and **references** 参考文献. An **abstract** 摘要 may briefly identify the question, method, result and a key limit where required. Report instructions vary; do not treat one structure as an unchanging official rule.

The method should explain what was observed, how categories were applied, the period and selection, and the approved ethical safeguards. Findings state recorded observations. Discussion evaluates their meaning, alternative explanations and reach. A conclusion answers the bounded question and labels further work as a proposal.

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The question and method lead to findings, while discussion retains limits and permission requirements.

■ Worked example: compare rates before deciding

A five-day bin study records 8 errors in 80 items near a classroom, 18 in 90 at a stair landing, and 15 in 150 at a canteen. Rates are 10%, 20% and 10%. The stair landing has the highest recorded rate. Raw counts alone hide the different denominators.
No labels were changed and no **intervention** 干预 was tested. Therefore the observations do not show that new labels reduced errors. A proposed label-understanding study needs approval and a suitable design. A reference supporting label testing is not evidence of an unmeasured reduction in this school.
Give enough source detail for a reader to trace each borrowed idea, using the required reference style. Keep references separate from your practice data. In a group presentation, assign speaker roles, rehearse handovers, explain the table and invite questions. Do not omit **limitations** 局限性 merely to sound certain. A listener should be able to distinguish what you recorded, what you infer and what you propose next.
Vocabulary card meanings
Mixed methods: A study that combines numerical data with evidence that is not numerical, such as interviews or observations. Research ethics: Rules of consent, harm, and honesty that bind a study.