

ADVANCED GCE
SOCIOLOGY

2539

Social Inequality and Difference

TUESDAY 29 JANUARY 2008

Afternoon

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Additional materials: 12 page Answer Book
4 page continuation Answer Book



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Write your name in capital letters, your Centre Number and Candidate Number in the spaces provided on the Answer Booklet.
- Read each question carefully and make sure you know what you have to do before starting your answer.
- Answer **one** question. Each question has **five** parts (a) to (e).
- Write your answer on the separate answer booklet provided.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- The number of marks for each question is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.
- The total number of marks for this paper is **90**.
- You will be awarded marks for the quality of written communication where an answer requires a piece of extended writing.

This document consists of **6** printed pages and **2** blank pages.

Answer question 1 **or** question 2. Each question has **five** parts.

You will be assessed on your understanding of the connections between sociological thought and methods of enquiry as they apply to the study of social inequality and difference. You should therefore take every opportunity to include references to aspects of social inequality that you have studied throughout your course.

Question 1 Read the following data carefully and then answer parts (a) to (e).

ITEM A

Experiences of, and beliefs about, poverty (Percentages of men and women agreeing with each experience/belief)

	Men %	Women %
Has regularly experienced poverty	7	10
Feel dissatisfied with their living area	10	11
Believe poverty in GB has increased in the last 10 years	40	48
Believe poverty in GB will increase in the next 10 years	35	44
Believe poverty is the result of injustice in society	26	36

Source: Gordon *et al.*, *Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey*, 2000

ITEM B

Amy is 15 years old and lives with her mother, father and brother in an inner city estate. Her mother is disabled and the family have received social security benefits for all of Amy's life. Amy has taken on a lot of responsibility within the family and she realises that as her family live on a low income it means they live in poverty. At school she has found it difficult to keep pace with her friends especially when they have received more gifts and opportunities than she did. Reflecting on this she said, 'the friends I used to hang around with were getting everything off their parents...I used to feel 'if they knew I can't go because I ain't got enough money it's going to be really embarrassing'. Amy went to great lengths to hide from her friends her inability to participate in social events or to buy the 'right' kinds of clothes. The dangers, of feeling excluded and being singled out as different, are very real for girls like Amy.

- (a) Using Item A, identify **two** beliefs about poverty that show a difference between men and women. [6]
- (b) Using Item B, identify **two** reasons why Amy may feel excluded or different in society. [6]
- (c) Briefly explain **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage of using structured questionnaires when researching experiences of poverty in the contemporary UK. [12]
- (d) Using your wider sociological knowledge outline the evidence that some social groups are more disadvantaged than others in the contemporary UK. [22]
- (e) Outline and evaluate sociological explanations of the existence of an underclass in the contemporary UK. [44]

[Total: 90 marks]

You will be assessed on your understanding of the connections between sociological thought and methods of enquiry as they apply to the study of social inequality and difference. You should therefore take every opportunity to include references to aspects of social inequality that you have studied throughout your course.

Question 2 Read the following data carefully and then answer parts (a) to (e).

ITEM A

Time spent on selected activities by sex, 2005
(average minutes per person per day)

Activity	Men	Women
Eating and drinking	85	79
Cooking and washing up	27	54
Repairs and gardening	23	11
Cleaning and tidying	13	47
Hobbies	22	17

Source: Office for National Statistics

ITEM B

Jennifer Platt conducted a study of middle class career paths. She looked at the career experiences of sociologists working in British universities. The careers of men and women who began working in university sociology departments at similar times and in similar circumstances were compared to see the extent to which gender influenced their career progression. The findings show more similarities than differences between male and female sociologists in terms of promotions gained and career progression. One traditional reason for women to do worse in professional life has been the expectation that they would play the role of housewife, and enable their husband to prioritise his career. However, many of the women in this research had children and carried on working; arguably the flexibility and relative freedom of university life made it easier to combine work with child-rearing than in most other areas of professional life.

- (a) Using Item A, identify:
- (i) The activity that men spend most time on per day [2]
 - (ii) The activity that women spend least time on per day [2]
 - (iii) The activity showing the smallest difference in the time spent on it between men and women. [2]
- (b) Using item B, identify **two** findings from Platt's research. [6]
- (c) Briefly explain **two** methodological difficulties of researching women's career progression. [12]
- (d) Using your wider sociological knowledge outline the evidence that women are disadvantaged in the contemporary UK. [22]
- (e) Outline and evaluate sociological explanations of middle class advantage in the contemporary UK. [44]

[Total: 90 marks]

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Copyright Acknowledgements:

- Q.1 ITEM A table Adapted from Equal Opportunities Commission, *Gender and Poverty in Britain*, 2003. Data source: Gordon *et al.*, *Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey*, 2000. Reproduced by kind permission of Equal Opportunities Commission, www.eoc.org.uk.
- Q.1 ITEM B text Adapted from G. Lloyd, *Problem Girls: Understanding and Supporting Troubled and Troublesome Girls and Young Women*, pp. 31-32, Routledge, 2005.
- Q.2 ITEM A data Source: *The Time Use Survey 2005*, Office for National Statistics, www.statistics.gov.uk. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and the Queen's Printer for Scotland.
- Q.2 ITEM B text Based upon published paper: J. Platt, *Women's and men's careers in British sociology*, British Journal of Sociology, 2004, vol. 55(2).

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