

General Certificate of Education
January 2006
Advanced Subsidiary Examination



SOCIOLOGY
Unit 1

SCY1

Tuesday 10 January 2006 1.30 pm to 2.45 pm

For this paper you must have:

- an 8-page answer book

Time allowed: 1 hour 15 minutes

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is SCY1.
- This paper is divided into **three** Sections. Choose **one** Section and answer **all** parts of the question from that Section.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 60.
- The marks for questions (or part questions) are shown in brackets.
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers. Part questions (e) and (f) should be answered in continuous prose. Quality of Written Communication will be assessed in these answers.

Choose **one** Section and answer **all** parts of the question from that Section.

SECTION A: FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS

Total for this section: 60 marks

1 Read **Items 1A and 1B** below and answer parts (a) to (f) which follow.

Item 1A

In recent decades there have been major changes in the family in Britain. For example, for two married couples in every five, it will not be a case of ‘till death us do part’. Instead, partly because the law now makes it easier to obtain a divorce, their marriages will end in the divorce court. The increased divorce rate has also brought other changes in family life. For example, it has contributed significantly to a growth in the number of lone-parent families, most of which are headed by women. Another important recent trend is that towards serial monogamy. 5

At the same time, while the number of first marriages has fallen, the number of couples cohabiting is rising. However, some sociologists argue that marriage and cohabitation, once thought of almost as opposites, are now becoming increasingly similar. 10

Item 1B

According to one widely held view, the extended family was the bedrock of pre-industrial society. It performed a wide range of functions, ranging from being the unit of production to educating the young, arranging marriages and caring for the sick. Similarly, in many non-industrial Third World societies today, the extended family remains central to everyday life. For example, as the anthropologist Roger Keesing says, “in some places, a person is either a relative or an enemy”. 5

However, some sociologists argue that, in today’s developed societies, the extended family has been undermined by the needs of an industrial economy and the growth of the state. As a result, it has lost its functions. Yet even in our modern or post-modern society, others argue, the extended family remains as important now as it was in the past. 10

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- (a) Explain what is meant by ‘serial monogamy’ (**Item 1A**, line 7). *(2 marks)*
- (b) Suggest **two** ways in which marriage and cohabitation are becoming increasingly similar (**Item 1A**, lines 9 – 10). *(4 marks)*
- (c) Suggest **three** reasons why lone-parent families are usually headed by women (**Item 1A**, lines 5 – 6). *(6 marks)*
- (d) Identify and briefly explain **two** reasons for the increase in the divorce rate **apart from** changes in divorce law (**Item 1A**, lines 1 – 4). *(8 marks)*
- (e) Examine the ways in which feminist sociologists have contributed to our understanding of family roles and relationships. *(20 marks)*
- (f) Using material from **Item 1B** and elsewhere, assess the view that ‘the extended family remains as important now as it was in the past’ (**Item 1B**, lines 10 – 11). *(20 marks)*

Turn over for Section B

SECTION B: HEALTH

Total for this section: 60 marks

2 Read **Items 2A and 2B** below and answer parts (a) to (f) which follow.

Item 2A

The functionalist Talcott Parsons argued that the medical profession acts as a gatekeeper. That is, it controls legitimate access to the sick role and exempts the sick from their normal role responsibilities. However, the individuals admitted to the sick role must want to get well and must comply with ‘doctor’s orders’ to do so. In return for performing this function on society’s behalf, the medical profession is given high status and reward. 5

Although Parsons saw health as a sociological issue, feminists have criticised his approach for ignoring the importance of gender differences in health care. For example, women are more likely than men to visit the doctor. Functionalists have also been criticised for neglecting ethnic differences in access to professional health care. 10

Item 2B

Health warnings on cigarette packets tell us that smoking can cause a range of life-threatening diseases. Food labelling alerts us to products high in harmful ingredients. The media bombard us with health messages telling us to take regular exercise, eat sensibly and not drink too much alcohol. Public health campaigns have taught us about the dangers of unprotected sex and intravenous drug use. Health professionals explain to mothers-to-be that breastfeeding is better for their baby than using infant formula feeds. 5

However, despite access to all this health information, many people behave in ways that are likely to damage their health. But health-damaging behaviour is more common among some social groups than others: there are class, gender and ethnic differences in health-related behaviour. For example, working-class women are more likely than middle-class women to smoke and less likely to stop smoking when pregnant. Sociologists disagree as to why such differences exist. 10

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- (a) Explain what is meant by ‘legitimate access’ to the sick role (**Item 2A**, line 2). (2 marks)
- (b) Suggest **two** reasons for ‘ethnic differences in access to professional health care’ (**Item 2A**, line 10). (4 marks)
- (c) Suggest **three** reasons why ‘women are more likely than men to visit the doctor’ (**Item 2A**, line 9). (6 marks)
- (d) Identify and briefly explain **two** criticisms made of Parsons’ view of the medical profession and the sick role, **apart from** those referred to in **Item 2A**. (8 marks)
- (e) Examine the ways in which health and illness are socially defined and constructed. (20 marks)
- (f) Using material from **Item 2B** and elsewhere, assess sociological explanations of why ‘health-damaging behaviour is more common among some social groups than others’ (**Item 2B**, lines 9 – 10). (20 marks)

Turn over for Section C

SECTION C: MASS MEDIA

Total for this section: 60 marks**3** Read **Items 3A and 3B** below and answer parts (a) to (f) which follow.**Item 3A**

Many early researchers believed that the media exert an immediate, direct influence over their audiences. Later sociologists rejected this, arguing that the media have at most only a limited or indirect effect. However, more recently, some have claimed that the media's effects are powerful but complex. For example, they work by agenda-setting and creating frameworks of interpretation.

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A major problem for researchers is how to demonstrate these effects. Psychologists have used experiments in an effort to show that the media can promote delinquency, with audiences imitating the deviant behaviour they witness. While most sociologists reject the use of experiments as unsatisfactory, many remain interested in the relationship between the media and deviance. Some, such as Stan Cohen and Stuart Hall, argue that the mass media amplify deviance, for example by sensationalising or exaggerating it.

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Item 3B

Some Marxists argue that the media serve the interests of the powerful simply by media owners exerting direct control over media output. By contrast, hegemonic or structuralist Marxists do not accept that owners need to exercise direct control, nor do they see ruling-class ideology as being imposed on an unwilling audience.

Instead, hegemonic Marxists argue that the media serve the ruling class as a result of the structures and processes through which media production takes place. Through these, the media produce a particular world-view. In this world-view, the established social class hierarchy appears 'natural' and seems to reflect a social consensus. This world-view is produced largely by white, middle-class, middle-aged male journalists and producers with middle-of-the-road political views. It is their views that dominate the mass media's output; other views are excluded or dismissed as extreme.

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- (a) Explain what is meant by ‘agenda-setting’ (**Item 3A**, line 4). *(2 marks)*
- (b) Identify **two** sociological models that see the mass media as having ‘only a limited or indirect effect’ on their audiences (**Item 3A**, line 3). *(4 marks)*
- (c) Identify **three** concepts, **apart from** those mentioned in **Item 3A**, that sociologists might use to understand the process by which ‘the mass media amplify deviance’ (**Item 3A**, line 11). *(6 marks)*
- (d) Identify and briefly explain **two** reasons why using experiments may be an unsatisfactory way of studying media effects on their audiences (**Item 3A**, lines 8 – 9). *(8 marks)*
- (e) Examine the ways in which the mass media portray any **two** of the following: ethnicity; sexuality; disability. *(20 marks)*
- (f) Using material from **Item 3B** and elsewhere, assess the hegemonic view of the mass media. *(20 marks)*

END OF QUESTIONS

There are no questions printed on this page