

General Certificate of Education
June 2006
Advanced Subsidiary Examination



SOCIOLOGY
Unit 3

SC3W

Tuesday 16 May 2006 1.30 pm to 2.30 pm

For this paper you must have:

- an 8-page answer book

Time allowed: 1 hour

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 SC3W.
- This paper consists of **one** question. Answer **all** parts of the question.
- 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 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.

SOCIOLOGICAL METHODS

Answer **all** parts of the question.

Total for this question: 60 marks

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

Item A

Designing a research study involves making a number of key decisions. The first is the choice of topic to be investigated; this will be influenced by a range of factors.

Once the research topic has been selected, the sociologist has to decide whether to use primary or secondary data. Some sociologists prefer to gather the data themselves using methods such as interviews or self-completion questionnaires. Where sociologists decide to collect primary data, they often carry out a pilot study. Other sociologists use material that is already in existence, such as media reports or personal documents. Many sociologists make use of both primary and secondary data. 5

Item B

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the government department that provides statistical services for the UK. It is responsible for registering all births, deaths and marriages in England and Wales. It also collects and creates a wide range of key social statistics. One of its main tasks is to carry out the Census every ten years. The ONS website had this to say about the 2001 Census: 5

“We all use public services at various times and these need to be planned. We need accurate information on the number of people, where they live and what their needs are. Because the same questions are asked of everyone, and the information is recorded in the same way throughout the UK, the Census allows us to compare different groups of people.

The results of the 2001 Census are the most accurate ever. However, no large-scale data collection exercise will ever be completely accurate. The proportion of people returning a form in England and Wales was 94 per cent. Response rates were lowest for inner-city areas; this could be the result of these areas having higher proportions of temporary residents”. 10

Source: adapted from CENSUS 2001, www.statistics.gov.uk, March 2002

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- (a) Explain what is meant by a 'pilot study' (**Item A**, line 6). *(2 marks)*
- (b) Suggest **two** factors that may influence a sociologist's 'choice of topic to be investigated' (**Item A**, line 2). *(4 marks)*
- (c) Suggest **three** problems sociologists may encounter when using 'media reports' in their research (**Item A**, line 7). *(6 marks)*
- (d) Identify and briefly explain **two** reasons why some sociologists prefer to collect and use primary data in their research (**Item A**). *(8 marks)*
- (e) Examine the problems that some sociologists may find when using participant observation in their research. *(20 marks)*
- (f) Using material from **Item B** and elsewhere, assess the usefulness of official statistics in sociological research. *(20 marks)*

END OF QUESTIONS

There are no questions printed on this page

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