

General Certificate of Education  
June 2007  
Advanced Level Examination



**SOCIOLOGY**  
**Unit 5**

**SC5W**

Friday 15 June 2007 1.30 pm to 3.00 pm

**For this paper you must have:**

- a 12-page answer book.

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 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 SC5W.
- This paper contains **two** Sections. Answer the questions in **Section A** and **one** question from **Section B**.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

**Information**

- The maximum mark for this paper is 60.
- The marks for questions (or part questions) are shown in brackets.
- Questions 1(d), 2 and 3 should be answered in continuous prose. In these questions you will be marked on your ability to use good English, to organise information clearly and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

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**SECTION A: THEORY AND METHODS**

Answer **all** parts of this Section.

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**Total for this section: 20 marks**

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

**Item A**

The question of whether sociology can or should be a science has been central to the development of sociology as a discipline. Comte (1830) was one of the first to argue that sociology should use scientific methodology, seeking a way of researching society that would be similar in approach to the natural sciences, such as biology and physics.

Sociologists who agree with this point of view are usually referred to as positivists. However, anti-positivists argue that sociology cannot and should not be scientific in its approach to research. 5

In developing their arguments, sociologists and philosophers from both sides of the debate have looked not only at the theories and methods of sociology, but also at the nature of science itself. For instance, Feyerabend (1993) argues that the image of how science works is not matched by its reality. Similarly, in comparing sociology with the natural sciences, Kuhn (1969) argued that sociology cannot be seen as a science because it does not have a paradigm. 10

**Item B**

Secondary data have always been a valuable source of information for sociological researchers. Such data can take many forms and can be qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative data often come from documents such as personal diaries, letters, suicide notes and historical records. Quantitative data can come from sources such as official statistics. 5

It would be foolish of sociologists to ignore this rich fund of information. However, many researchers urge caution in the use of this material. They argue that secondary data must be treated with care as it may not be clear what the information actually means.

Furthermore, many sociologists argue that the most valid source of information available to the researcher comes in the form of primary data from the sociologist's own research. 10

- (a) Briefly explain what is meant by a 'paradigm' (**Item A**, line 13). *(2 marks)*
- (b) Identify and briefly explain **two** reasons why some argue that sociology can or should be seen as a science. *(4 marks)*
- (c) Identify and briefly explain **two** reasons, **apart from** those referred to in **Item A**, why some argue that sociology cannot or should not be a science. *(4 marks)*
- (d) Briefly compare the usefulness of primary and secondary data in sociological research. *(10 marks)*

**Turn over for Section B**

**Turn over ►**

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**SECTION B: THEORY AND METHODS**

Answer **one** question from this Section.

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**Total for this section: 40 marks**

**EITHER**

- 2 Evaluate the relationship between the theoretical perspective of the sociologist and their choice of research methods. *(40 marks)*

**OR**

- 3 Assess the contribution of functionalist and New Right theories and research to our understanding of society today. *(40 marks)*

**END OF QUESTIONS**