



GCE AS/A level

329/01

**SOCIOLOGY SOC3
UNIT 3 – UNDERSTANDING
CULTURE**

A.M. MONDAY, 19 May 2008

1½ hours

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

In addition to this examination paper, you will need a 12 page answer book.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Answer all questions from **ONE** option only.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The number of marks is given in brackets at the end of each question or part-question.

The time you spend on a question should be in proportion to the marks available.

You are reminded that marking will take into account the quality of written communication used in your answer.

*Answer all the questions from **one** option only.*

Option 1: Education

1. Read items **A** and **B**, and then answer **all** the questions that follow.

Item A

Ethnicity, education and employment

The poor educational achievement of white working-class British boys was highlighted in a report that reveals that white boys accounted for almost half of those leaving school with low qualifications or no exam successes at all. In fact they achieve less well than children from minority ethnic backgrounds who are traditionally supposed to have poor results at GCSE.

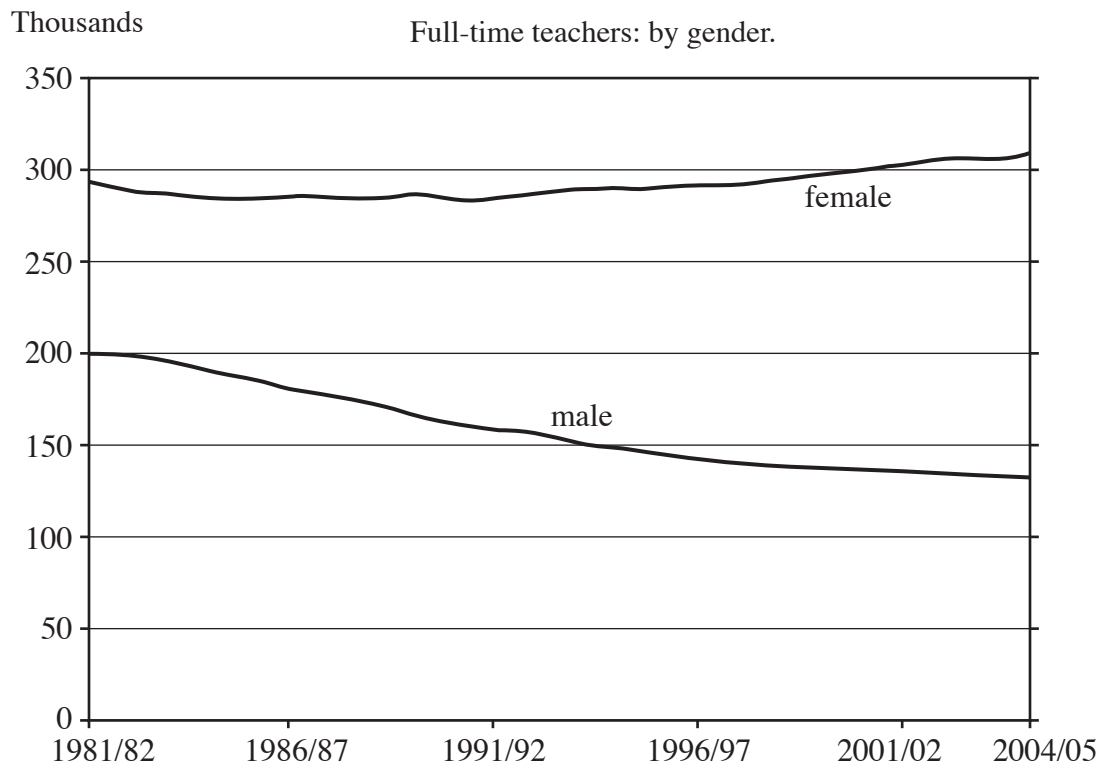
White working class boys generally outnumber girls as low achievers by three-to-two and have poorer reading and writing skills at primary school. Children with such early problems are more likely to be low achievers at 16.

In 2006 nearly 5% of pupils in state schools - 28,000 - had no GCSE passes, and almost 25% - 146,000 - had no more than D grades. White British pupils accounted for 80% of all pupils in the data studied by researchers, so any problems of theirs would account for a large share of the total, the report says.

Robert Cassen, of the London School of Economics, suggested that disadvantaged children are behind educationally before they enter school. They need more pre-school help. Disadvantaged students are also more likely to attend under achieving schools. There is little **equality of opportunity** in British schools.

The great majority of low achievers - more than three-quarters - are white working class and British, and far more are boys than girls. These low achievers come mainly from disadvantaged backgrounds, but many students from the same backgrounds succeed. Many girls who come from the same families and go to the same schools do much better.

Adapted from an article in the Guardian

Item B

Adapted from the National Statistics website

- (a) Explain what is meant by **equality of opportunity**. [10]
- (b) (i) Using **Item A**, identify patterns in the achievement of white working class boys in education. [10]
- (ii) Using **Item B**, identify trends and patterns in the gender distribution of full time teachers in the UK. [10]
- (c) Identify and explain how teachers may affect educational achievement. [25]
- (d) Discuss why social class may influence the examination results of pupils. [45]

Option 2: Health

1. Read items **A** and **B**, and then answer **all** the questions that follow.

Item A

The Media and Mental Illness

Research carried out at the University of Leicester suggests that the British media may be guilty of misguiding the public and promoting distorted views of some mental illnesses.

The press has consistently given sensational coverage to mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, often linking them to serious crime. This is producing a very damaging misunderstanding, not only of such psychotic conditions but also of other, more common illnesses, according to the researcher, Katy-Louise Morgan. The mentally ill are among the few remaining groups who experience **stigma**. This victimization is contributing towards prejudice.

Mental illness is most commonly reported in connection with violent crimes such as murder, causing newspaper readers to make unrealistic links between mental illness and violent crimes.

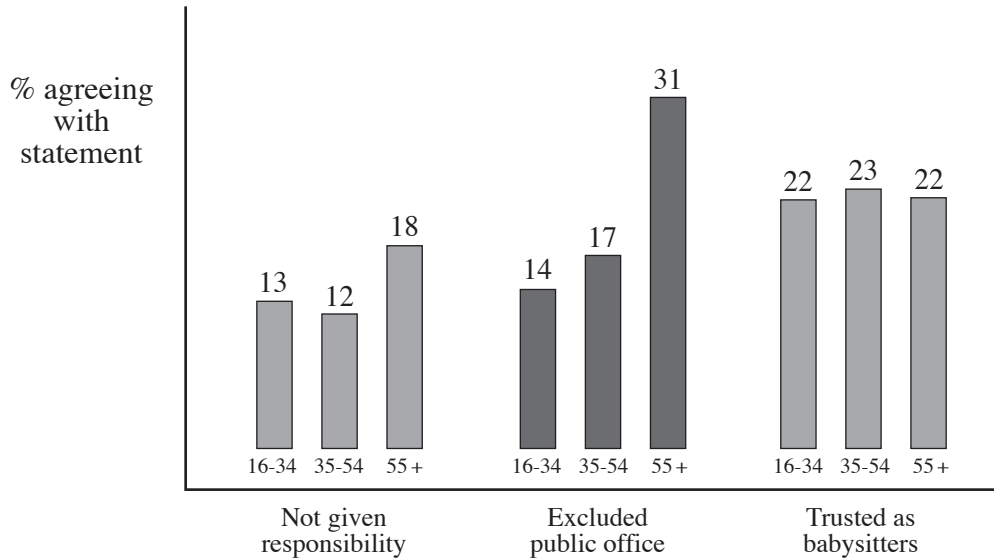
There are two problems. Firstly, schizophrenia and other similar illnesses are actually among the least common of all mental illnesses. Secondly, not all schizophrenics are murderers, nor are all murderers schizophrenic. Most schizophrenic patients are not prone to violence.

The worry here is that if the press maintains this representation of mental illness, it could influence the public's perception and they may begin to see mental illness in a negative light. In order to sell more newspapers the British press is not presenting an objective picture of mental illness. For mental illness to become more accepted and understood, more accurate and favourable representations must be offered by the media.

Adapted from an article in Medical News Today

Item B

Percentage of people agreeing with statements about mental illness by age of respondent.



Taken from *Attitudes to Mental Illness, 2007* published by the Department of Health

- (a) Explain what is meant by the term **stigma**. [10]
- (b) (i) Using **Item A**, identify how attitudes towards mental illness are shaped by the British media. [10]
- (ii) Using **Item B**, identify patterns in the relationship between age and attitudes towards those with mental illness. [10]
- (c) Identify and explain the relationship between disadvantage and the incidence of mental illness. [25]
- (d) Discuss the usefulness of cultural explanations of sickness to an understanding of health issues. [45]

Option 3: Religion

1. Read items **A** and **B**, and then answer **all** the questions that follow.

Item A

New Age Practices

New Age belief differs from traditional religious movements because there is not the sense of being a recognizable organisation in the way that a **cult** is.

There is a whole range of New Age practices, which vary and change. In addition, there are a number of businesses associated with the movement. These businesses often last a very short time and are usually in the form of small shops. 94% of these shops burn incense and in 80%, New Age music is played.

Products include books, magazines, audio-visual material, herbs and remedies, religious and spiritual symbols, super-natural products such as crystals, tarot cards, ouija boards and pyramids. There are often products from tribal cultures, artworks and embroidery, incense and tourist items such as jewellery.

Shops will often have a message board where New Age practitioners, such as tarot card readers or massage therapists, advertise with business cards or leaflets.

There are also a number of organisations associated with the New Age which offer professional services and training such as Transcendental Meditation. These appeal to professional and well educated people who are seeking some kind of personal satisfaction. These may have large customer bases of thousands of people throughout the USA and UK.

As more people adopt New Age practices and beliefs, the more credibility they have. In turn this makes New Age services more attractive to more people.

Adapted from an online dissertation from Loughborough University

Item B

Membership of selected New Religious Movements UK 1980-2000

<i>Movement</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>
The Aetherius Society	100	500	700
Fellowship of Isis	150	250	300
Hare Krishna	300	425	670
3HO	60	60	60
Pagan Federation	500	900	5000
Barry Long Foundation	–	400	–
% of UK population (all known NRMs)	0.007	0.014	0.028

*Adapted from table by Brierly in Moore, Aiken and Chapman **Sociology for A2***

- (a) Explain what is meant by the term **cult**. [10]
- (b) (i) Using **Item A**, identify New Age practices. [10]
- (ii) Using **Item B**, identify patterns and trends in membership of New Religious Movements. [10]
- (c) Identify and explain reasons for the growth of New Age belief and New Religious Movements. [25]
- (d) Discuss the usefulness of Marxism to an understanding of religious practice in Britain. [45]