

General Certificate of Education
June 2005
Advanced Subsidiary Examination



SOCIOLOGY
Unit 2

SCY2

Wednesday 25 May 2005 Morning Session

In addition to this paper you will require:
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 SCY2.
- 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.
- Mark allocations are shown in brackets.
- You will be assessed on your ability to use an appropriate form and style of writing, to organise relevant information clearly and coherently, and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.
- The degree of legibility of your handwriting and the level of accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar will also be taken into account.

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

SECTION A – EDUCATION

1

Total for this Section: 60 marks

Item 1A

Boys of Afro-Caribbean origin are among those groups who do least well in the British education system. One possible explanation for their under-achievement is the effect of factors within school. These factors include such things as streaming, the ethnocentric nature of the curriculum and the ethnocentric way in which school is organised, as well as racist labelling by teachers.

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However, while such factors may play a part in creating ethnic differences in educational achievement, this would not explain why girls of Afro-Caribbean origin do relatively well in school, since they too are presumably exposed to these same factors. Also, compared with white girls, white boys also under-achieve, and this can hardly be explained by racism in school.

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Item 1B

According to some sociologists, many working-class children are disadvantaged by their early experiences. Studies of pre-school socialisation show important differences between social classes that contribute to differences in educational achievement. Some working-class parents have lower expectations of their children, place less emphasis on constant improvement and do not reward success systematically. Working-class homes, with fewer books and educational toys, may provide a less stimulating learning environment. Similarly, some working-class children are not taught to use the elaborated speech code used both by middle-class families and by the school.

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The government considers these factors so important that it has sought to intervene. For example, Sure Start involves over 500 local programmes in deprived areas, working with disadvantaged families to promote young children's intellectual, linguistic and social development so that they are in a position to do well when they start school.

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- (a) Explain what is meant by “streaming” (**Item 1A**, line 3). *(2 marks)*
- (b) Identify and briefly explain **one** criticism made of the labelling theory of educational under-achievement. *(4 marks)*
- (c) Suggest **three** examples of how the curriculum and/or the ways school is organised may be “ethnocentric” (**Item 1A**, lines 3 – 4). *(6 marks)*
- (d) Identify and briefly explain **two** factors **apart from** those referred to in **Item 1A** that may account for the educational under-achievement of boys. *(8 marks)*
- (e) Examine the different functions that the education system may perform for individuals and society. *(20 marks)*
- (f) Using material from **Item 1B** and elsewhere, assess the view that working-class under-achievement in education is the result of home circumstances and family background. *(20 marks)*

SECTION B – WEALTH, POVERTY AND WELFARE

2

Total for this Section: 60 marks**Item 2A**

Members of minority ethnic groups on average have both a lower income and less wealth than the majority population of Britain. For example, in 2000, only 18 per cent of whites fell in the bottom fifth of the income distribution, as against 26 per cent of Black Caribbeans, 32 per cent of Indians and 61 per cent of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

As a result, members of minority ethnic groups are more likely to be in poverty and to be receiving means-tested benefits. For example, compared to whites, about twice the proportion of Black Caribbeans are in receipt of income support and housing benefit. Despite this, there is evidence that members of minority ethnic groups face greater difficulties in accessing the benefits system. For example, a study by the Commission for Racial Equality in Manchester (1995) found that Asian claimants were asked for supporting evidence more often, and fraud officers were called in more frequently, than in the case of non-Asian claimants. 5 10

Item 2B

We can distinguish between two broad types of explanation of poverty. On the one hand, ‘victim-blaming’ theories see the cause of poverty as lying within the poor themselves. For example, in the 19th century, Herbert Spencer argued that the poor were often in poverty because of individual inadequacies such as laziness, low intelligence or wastefulness. However, more recent victim-blaming theories tend to see the culture of the poor as the root of the problem, rather than the inadequacies of individuals. 5

The other broad type of explanation blames poverty on the structure of society. These are ‘conflict’ theories. They see poverty as the result of an unequal society in which there exist conflicts of interest between different groups. In these conflicts, some groups have less power and it is these groups who are most likely to find themselves in poverty. Some conflict theories, such as Marxism, see poverty as the inevitable outcome of the stratification system. 10

- (a) Explain what is meant by “means-tested benefits” (**Item 2A**, line 6). (2 marks)
- (b) Explain the difference between “income” and “wealth” (**Item 2A**, line 1). (4 marks)
- (c) Suggest **three** reasons why members of minority ethnic groups are more likely than the majority of the population to be in poverty (**Item 2A**). (6 marks)
- (d) Identify and briefly explain **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage of “means-tested benefits” as a solution to poverty (**Item 2A**, line 6). (8 marks)
- (e) Examine the contribution of voluntary, private and informal providers to the welfare of the population. (20 marks)
- (f) Using material from **Item 2B** and elsewhere, assess conflict theories of poverty. (20 marks)

Turn over ►

SECTION C – WORK AND LEISURE

3

Total for this Section: 60 marks**Item 3A**

Managers often re-organise work with the aim of increasing efficiency, and this may involve introducing new working practices to raise workers' productivity. Some managers regard the working practices of informal work groups as an obstacle to higher output. However, sometimes such groups can organise work more efficiently than the formal bureaucracy typical of many workplaces.

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The attempt by managers to raise productivity can result in conflict with the workforce, for example because workers fear that it will result in job losses, having to work harder or for less pay, or having to adopt 'flexible' practices such as shift work or taking on extra responsibilities. However, while these fears may give rise to workplace conflict, the level of conflict varies considerably both between companies and industries and over time. Although this conflict is sometimes expressed through an official strike, it can take many other forms.

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Item 3B

According to Marx, work in capitalist society is inevitably alienating. Since workers do not own the means of production, they are alienated from the product of their labour: what they produce belongs not to them but to the capitalist who employs them.

Workers are also alienated from the process of production. Since capitalist production is based on intensive mechanisation and the detailed division of labour, work becomes deskilled and monotonous. The machine does not free workers from their labour, but simply robs work of all interest and makes it boring. In Marx's view, therefore, in capitalist society work can never be more than simply a means to an end: a way of earning a wage to stay alive.

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- (a) Explain what is meant by "informal work groups" (**Item 3A**, line 3). (2 marks)
- (b) Suggest **two** reasons why the level of workplace conflict "varies considerably" (**Item 3A**, lines 9 – 10). (4 marks)
- (c) Identify **three** different forms that conflict at work may take, **apart from** official strikes (**Item 3A**, lines 10 – 11). (6 marks)
- (d) Identify and briefly explain **two** reasons why bureaucracy is not always the most efficient way of organising and managing work (**Item 3A**, lines 4 – 5). (8 marks)
- (e) Examine the reasons for differences in the leisure patterns of different social groups. (20 marks)
- (f) Using material from **Item 3B** and elsewhere, assess the view that alienation at work is inevitable in a capitalist society. (20 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS

Turn over ►