

OXFORD CAMBRIDGE AND RSA EXAMINATIONS
ADVANCED GCE
2539
SOCIOLOGY

Social Inequality and Difference

THURSDAY 11 JUNE 2009: Afternoon

DURATION: 1 hour 30 minutes

SUITABLE FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED CANDIDATES

Candidates answer on the Answer Booklet

OCR SUPPLIED MATERIALS:

12 page Answer Booklet

OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED:

None

READ INSTRUCTIONS OVERLEAF

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- **Write your name clearly in capital letters, your Centre Number and Candidate Number in the spaces provided on the Answer Booklet.**
- **Use black ink. Pencil may be used for graphs and diagrams only.**
- **Read each question carefully and make sure that you know what you have to do before starting your answer.**
- **Answer ONE question. Each question has FIVE parts (a) to (e).**

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- **The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.**
- **The total number of marks for this paper is 90.**
- **You will be awarded marks for the quality of written communication where an answer requires a piece of extended writing.**

Answer question 1 OR question 2. Each question has FIVE parts.

Question 1 is on pages 4–5.

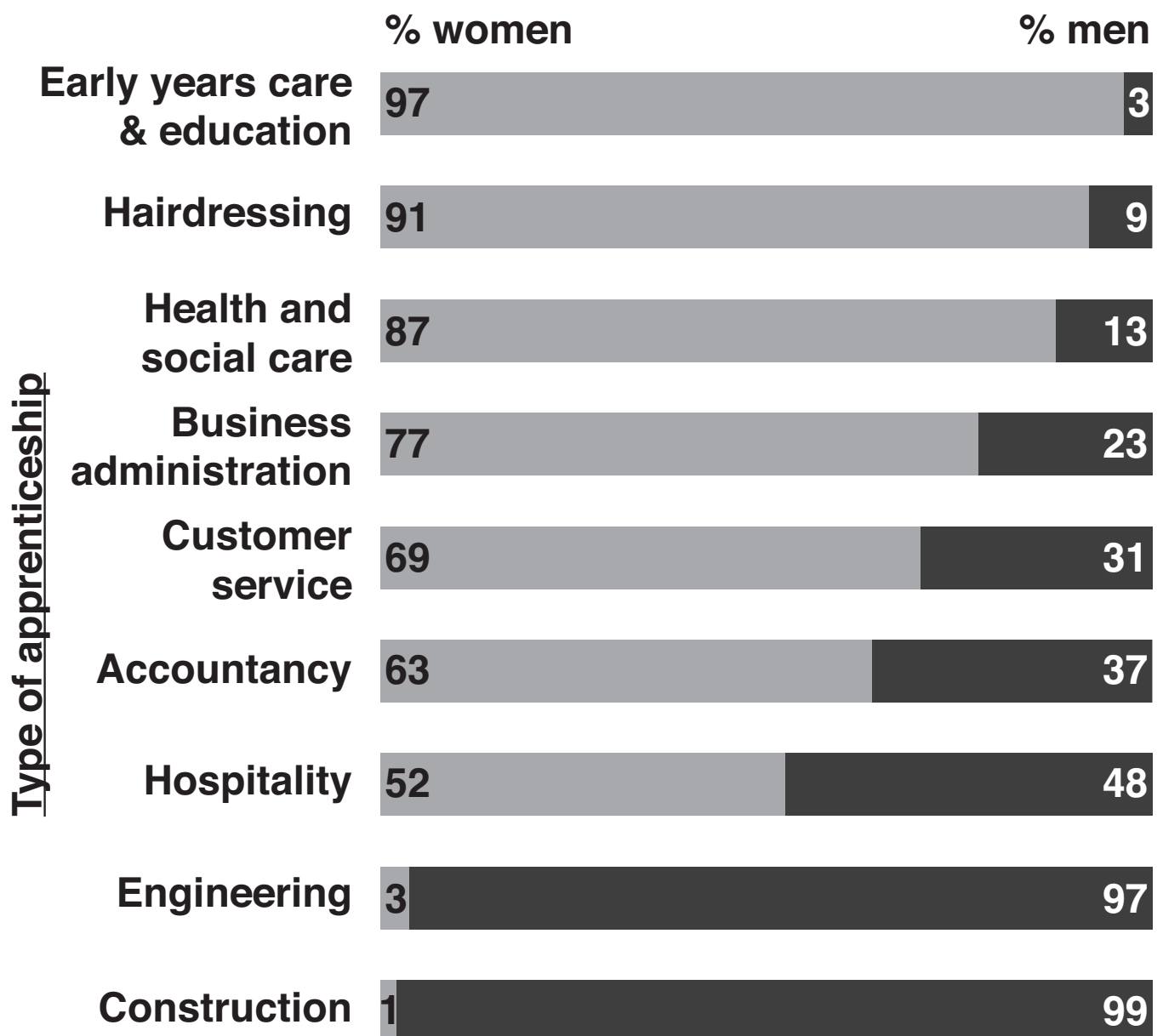
Question 2 is on pages 6–8.

You will be assessed on your understanding of the connections between sociological thought and methods of enquiry as they apply to the study of social inequality and difference. You should therefore take every opportunity to include references to aspects of social inequality that you have studied throughout your course.

QUESTION 1 Read the following data carefully and then answer parts (a) to (e).

ITEM A

Apprenticeship by gender, 2005



Source: Equal Opportunity Commission, Facts about women and men in the UK, 2006

ITEM B

A sociologist called Darren Thiel spent a year carrying out a participant observation study of builders working on a construction site in central London that he called Topbuild plc. He found masculine practices that were very similar to the ‘shop floor culture’ observed in many earlier sociological studies of class bound areas of social life; factories, schools and on the streets. The builders’ informal workplace practices were characterised by general game playing, ‘having a crack’ and/or a laugh, and conflict with those in authority. It was a culture that spread out from the workplace into leisure activities ... Talk of working hard, playing hard, drinking hard and fighting hard were dominant in the men’s conversations. In addition to this the men’s masculine practices were framed by a strong code of group loyalty towards workmates, family and friends.

Adapted from: ‘Class in Construction; harder building workers, dirty work and physical cultures’, Darren Thiel, June 2007, British Journal of Sociology, p227–251

- (a) Using ITEM A, identify the TWO types of apprenticeship most dominated by men. [6]**
- (b) Using ITEM B, identify TWO features of the builders’ masculine practices. [6]**
- (c) Briefly explain ONE advantage and ONE disadvantage of using participant observation to research the culture of workers on a building site. [12]**
- (d) Using your wider sociological knowledge, outline the evidence to show that the working class is disadvantaged in the contemporary UK. [22]**
- (e) Outline and assess feminist explanations of gender inequality in the workplace in the contemporary UK. [44]**

[Total: 90 marks]

You will be assessed on your understanding of the connections between sociological thought and methods of enquiry as they apply to the study of social inequality and difference. You should therefore take every opportunity to include references to aspects of social inequality that you have studied throughout your course.

QUESTION 2 Read the following data carefully and then answer parts (a) to (e).

ITEM A

Self-defined class membership within selected occupational groups (all figures are %)

	Working Class	Middle Class	Other/ no comment
University teachers	4	79	17
Solicitors	18	64	18
Marketing and sales managers	29	62	9
Accountants	43	57	0
Sales assistants	42	40	18
Local government officers	52	41	7
Car mechanics	70	18	12
Painters and decorators	81	12	7
Postal workers and mail sorters	91	9	0

From Middle Britain: Summary Report, Future Foundation, 2007

ITEM B

Many contemporary sociological studies make the claim that social class identity is in decline. The 2003 British Social Attitudes Survey included a series of questions aimed at understanding identities in contemporary Britain. One of the questions asked in the survey was:

‘People differ in how they think or describe themselves. If you had to pick just one thing from this list to describe yourself – something that is very important to you, when you think of yourself – what would it be?’

The choices offered to the respondents included amongst others working class, middle class, British, elderly, young, working person, unemployed, wife/husband, mother/father. The most commonly cited identity was ‘parent’ at 24%. 13% gave working class as the most important identity, with a further 2% giving middle class. Class identity was the second most commonly stated identity after that of parent, suggesting it is still one of the most common forms of identification in Britain. However while class identity may not be dead, the data showed that it is heavily gendered, with many more males identifying with social class than females.

Adapted from: Class belonging: a quantitative exploration of identity and consciousness, P Surridge. British Journal of Sociology, 2007 pp207–226

- (a) Using ITEM A, identify the TWO occupational groups within which there is the smallest difference between the percentage of people defining themselves as working class and the percentage defining themselves as middle class. [6]
- (b) Using ITEM B, identify TWO findings from the 2003 British Social Attitudes Survey. [6]

- (c) Briefly explain ONE advantage and ONE disadvantage of using structured questionnaires to research changing class identities in the UK. [12]
- (d) Using your wider sociological knowledge, outline the evidence to show that some social groups are disadvantaged in the contemporary UK. [22]
- (e) Assess Marxist explanations of the class structure in the contemporary UK. [44]

[Total: 90 marks]



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