

**OXFORD CAMBRIDGE AND RSA EXAMINATIONS
ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE**

G671

SOCIOLOGY

Exploring socialisation, culture and identity

THURSDAY 27 MAY 2010: Morning

DURATION: 1 hour 30 minutes

SUITABLE FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED CANDIDATES

Candidates answer on the Answer Booklet

OCR SUPPLIED MATERIALS:

8 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 ALL the questions.**

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 100.**
- **You may interpret and apply the pre-release material as well as your own sociological knowledge for any question, wherever it is relevant and appropriate.**

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ROBERT MACKENZIE, MARK STUART, CHRIS FORDE, IAN GREENWOOD, JEAN GARDINER, ROBERT PERRETT, (2006) 'ALL THAT IS SOLID?': CLASS, IDENTITY AND THE MAINTENANCE OF A COLLECTIVE ORIENTATION AMONGST REDUNDANT STEELWORKERS', *SOCIOLOGY*, 40, 5: 833–852

Mackenzie et al carried out research into the social and economic effects of redundancy in the Welsh steel industry. In contrast to the idea that there now exists a class-free society of individuals, a key theme that emerged during this research was the consistent identification of respondents with their social class and their manual working environment (the steelworks).

The research explored the experiences of redundant workers from five Welsh steel factories. Since May 2001, over 3000 jobs have been lost from the Welsh steel industry. The researchers' key aim was to investigate the economic and social impacts of redundancy on steelworkers and their families, how they experienced this and how they sought to cope with it and build lives 'post' steel. The research involved interviews with redundant steelworkers, their partners, economic development agencies, plus trade union and management experts. In total, 125 workers were interviewed (93% of whom were men), along with a sample of their partners (nine). Accessing a sample of redundant steel workers was gained through the main steel trade union, whose training branch had a database of all steelworkers made redundant in Wales since 2001. A sample of respondents was chosen from each of the five sites on a random basis, stratified by age and occupational experience (such as types of job and length of service). The interviews themselves were of a semi-structured nature, and sought to build up individual 'biographies' of redundant workers. The interviews lasted between one

and three hours, with one and a half hours the norm. In addition, non-participant observation was conducted within the training branch offices, at union meetings and at the development agency 'drop-in sessions' held at local social clubs and colleges.

McKenzie found that respondents still saw themselves as 'steelworkers', even though they were redundant. The ex-steelworkers demonstrated a strong emotional attachment to their previous work and a firmly established group identity. The nature of the work and the shift patterns involved had encouraged a strong sense of being a steelworker. This was reflected in a certain set of shared values and experiences which helped create a strong camaraderie between co-workers, further supported by socialising outside of the workplace and often living close to each other. For many, the loss of this camaraderie and the loss of the social side of daily employment were amongst the hardest things to come to terms with following redundancy. There were examples of ex-steelworkers consciously trying to sustain these work-based social networks after redundancy:

“A handful of us get together once a month for a meal, and we still always talk in the ‘Royal we’ about the steel factory, so it’s still in the back of our minds.”

McKenzie also found that the steelworkers' identity had offered high status and a positive self image. Making the adjustment to the loss of income proved difficult and claiming benefits (Job Seekers Allowance) was regarded as an affront to their dignity, based on the self-image developed as a hard-working, high wage earning steelworker. In terms of the breadwinner identity there were repeated expressions of guilt, frustration and a sense of helplessness at the inability to fulfil this traditional role. This was linked to issues of masculine

identity. For many, becoming a man was tied-up with the start of work at the steel factory, often following in the footsteps of family male role models, frequently spanning several generations.

Because of the celebration of ‘hard work’ as a key group value, the anxiety of dealing with the absence of work was arguably heightened amongst ex-steelworkers. However, it was not only employment in the steel factory but work itself that was central to a sense of self and self worth, which in turn affected how individuals were seen by others:

“If you meet someone and they ask you what you are doing, everything stems from that. If you are not working they think you are a lazy (scrounger).”

Answer ALL questions.

- 1 Define the concept of status. Illustrate your answer with examples. [8]**
- 2 Outline and explain any TWO mechanisms of social control. [16]**
- 3 Explain and briefly evaluate how males are socialised into traditional masculinities. [24]**
- 4 Using the pre-release material and your wider sociological knowledge, explain and evaluate the use of semi-structured interviews to research the importance of work in shaping people's identity. [52]**



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