

OCR

Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Thursday 15 June 2017 – Afternoon

A2 GCE SOCIOLOGY

G674/01 Exploring Social Inequality and Difference

Candidates answer on the Answer Booklet.

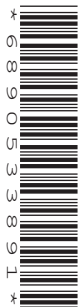
OCR supplied materials:

- 12 page Answer Booklet (OCR12)
(sent with general stationery)

Other materials required:

None

Duration: 2 hours



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Write your name, centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided on the front of the Answer Booklet. Please write clearly and in capital letters.
- Use black ink. HB pencil may be used for graphs and diagrams only.
- Answer Questions 1 and 2 and **either** Question 3 **or** Question 4.
- Read each question carefully. Make sure you know what you have to do before starting your answer.
- Do **not** write in the barcodes.

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**.
- This document consists of **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

INSTRUCTION TO EXAMS OFFICER/INVIGILATOR

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You will be assessed on your understanding of the connections between sociological thought and methods of sociological enquiry as they apply to the study of social inequality and difference. This is linked to the core themes of power, social inequality, socialisation, culture and identity. In your answers to questions you are therefore encouraged to draw upon aspects of social inequality and difference studied throughout your course.

Read the source material and answer compulsory questions 1 and 2. Answer **either** questions 3(a) and 3(b) **or** questions 4(a) and 4(b).

SOURCE MATERIAL

INVESTIGATING LOW INCOME AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Much research in sociology on social inequality has been about the impact of different levels of income and wealth on living standards and lifestyle. For example, the Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK (PSE) research project has recently explored how low income and poverty affects different social groups, including gender, age and race.

One of the main aims of the PSE research was to collect and analyse evidence about how low incomes create social exclusion and influence the lifestyles of households and individuals. Social exclusion occurs when a person or group does not have access to the same resources, experiences and rights as most people in their society. Low income affects many aspects of people's lives, for example health, education and housing. 5

The PSE research used a mixed methods approach. Some of the main methods were: 10

i. A public opinion survey about poverty using a sample based on a random cross section of the whole UK population. Approximately 2500 people took part in early 2012.

ii. Fourteen focus group interviews about public attitudes to poverty in the UK.

iii. A survey using structured questionnaires to gather quantitative data about the living standards of people on low incomes. These surveys were completed in late 2012. The sample included 5193 households in the United Kingdom covering a total of 12097 people. A stratified sample was used to focus the research upon people living on low incomes. The surveys were analysed using statistical methods to produce numerical data on many aspects of daily life, including employment, expenditure, access to services and social networks. 15
20

iv. Semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative data about the day-to-day experience and realities of living on a low income. These semi-structured interviews were completed in 2013. A purposive sample for these interviews was found from the contacts of several community and voluntary organisations working to support people living on a low income. In total 62 interviews were completed. A video film was used to record the interviews for analysis. 25

The researchers were aware that information about life on low incomes is very sensitive. Care was taken to ensure that people taking part in the research gave their consent both before and after the research was conducted. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw and review the video material. 30

The PSE research found that the number of people living on low incomes has been increasing in the past fifteen years. The researchers concluded that:

- almost 18 million people cannot afford adequate housing conditions;
 - 12 million people are too poor to engage in common social activities;
 - one in three people cannot afford to heat their homes adequately in the winter;
 - four million children and adults aren't properly fed by today's standards.
- 35

Life on low incomes was also becoming more difficult. This is shown in the following quotations taken from the semi-structured interviews:

- 'Simple things like clothing. I don't buy new clothing. It comes from donations or the charity shop.'
 - 'I go without for the children so they have proper meals. I can live on one meal a day.'
- 40

A description of research conducted for the Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK study funded by the Economic and Social Research Council from 2010–2015.

QUESTIONS

Use the source material **and** your wider sociological knowledge to answer **both** questions 1 and 2.

- 1 Outline and explain why sampling is used in sociological research. [15]
- 2 Outline and assess the view that using mixed methods is the best way to research the experience of people living on a low income. [25]

Using your wider sociological knowledge answer **either** question 3(a) and 3(b) **or** question 4(a) and 4(b).

- 3 (a) Outline the evidence for differences in middle and working class life chances. [20]
- (b) Outline and assess post-modern views of social class. [40]

OR

- 4 (a) Outline the evidence that some ethnic groups are privileged in the contemporary UK. [20]
- (b) Outline and assess the view that ethnic inequality is related to social class. [40]

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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