

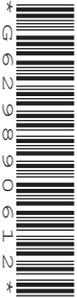
**Tuesday 19 June 2012 – Afternoon**

**A2 GCE SOCIOLOGY**

**G674/01/I Exploring Social Inequality and Difference**

**INSERT – QUESTION BOOKLET**

**Duration: 2 hours**



**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- 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.

**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**

- Do not send this Insert for marking; it should be retained in the centre or recycled.

*You will be assessed on your understanding of the connections between sociological theory 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.*

Answer questions 1 and 2 and **either** question 3 **or** question 4.

## **SOURCE MATERIAL**

### **Investigating Social Class, Gender and Work**

Gail Hebson investigated how class shaped women's everyday experience and identity at work. In particular Hebson wanted to see how women's ambitions and career aspirations were shaped by their class.

The study was based in the south west of England. Access to suitable participants proved difficult as many work places approached were unwilling to take part. This was mainly due to ethical reasons, for example concerns about confidentiality and company image, and possible disruption to the workplace. Hebson therefore had to gather her sample based on personal recommendation from some of her contacts. 5

The sample included 18 working class women in manual occupations in packaging, cleaning and operating machines from two manufacturing companies making sweets and shoes. The sample also included 18 middle class women working in professional occupations in a building society and advertising company as personnel, marketing and financial managers. All participants were working full time and were of white ethnic origin. The age composition of the two groups was similar but only five of the middle class women had children, compared to 13 of the working class women. 10  
15

The data in the study was gathered using unstructured, qualitative interviews. All of the women were asked about their experience of work and perceptions of their future careers. In addition they were asked to discuss their views of social class, trade unions, feminism and political parties, as well as their view of their own class position and identity.

Hebson found that there were two main ways in which women's career aspirations were affected by class. Firstly their aspirations were influenced by their access to economic and cultural resources, for example through job opportunities, geographic mobility and educational qualifications. Secondly, their aspirations were also shaped by their feelings about their own class position. 20

Many working class women saw their identity as based around factory work and even when job opportunities arose to leave or progress within the company, opportunities were rejected. For many of the middle class women the feelings of over-work and stress that can be associated with many professional occupations meant that they had reduced their ambitions, especially when they planned to start families. In the study, although women as a whole tended to restrict their job opportunities, they did so for different reasons, which were based upon their different class identities and their feelings about class in everyday life. 25  
30

*Adapted from 'Renewing Class Analysis in Studies of the Workplace', by Gail Hebson, in Sociology, Volume 43, No 1, 2009.*

**3**

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

- 1** Outline and explain how ethical issues may affect sociological research. [15]
- 2** Outline and assess the view that unstructured interviews are the best way to research class and women's career aspirations. [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 that social class affects life chances in the contemporary UK. [20]
- (b)** Outline and assess functionalist explanations of social class stratification. [40]
- or**
- 4 (a)** Outline the evidence that men are advantaged in the contemporary UK. [20]
- (b)** Outline and assess feminist explanations of gender inequalities. [40]

**[Total: 100]**

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