



Monday 16 June 2014 – Morning

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 bar codes.

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. Answer questions 1 and 2 and **either** questions 3(a) and 3(b) **or** questions 4(a) and 4(b).

SOURCE MATERIAL

Investigating Change at Work

McCabe wanted to investigate change in the workplace and explore how power affected relationships between management and workers. He conducted a case study into employment at a major UK bank which was trying to reduce the number of people employed and cut costs. McCabe discovered that many employees were facing greater workloads, a pay freeze and redundancies. However McCabe also noticed that there was little resistance to the increased pressure and poorer working conditions, even though many were very unhappy. The employees did not challenge the changes being introduced. 5

McCabe wanted to explore the reasons why these employees accepted these changes and tolerated conditions that made their working conditions much worse. The research was designed as a case study of three branches of the bank. The research involved a large number of unstructured interviews of 45–60 minutes with 82 employees from these branches. Employees were interviewed individually and in groups. Management were asked to select the employees to be interviewed. Open-ended questions were used; for example, ‘What are the main changes you have seen in the company?’ and ‘What is it like to work here?’. The interviews were tape recorded and analysed afterwards to identify common themes and issues. 10 15

The case study also involved content analysis of secondary data such as documents produced by the bank and their employees during the introduction of the changes and new working conditions. The documents included management policies, descriptions of new procedures, training materials, notes of meetings and company videos. Some personal documents such as work diaries and job contracts were also used. 20

McCabe found that employees came to accept these changes because they needed a job to earn a living and couldn’t do anything about the situation. One employee said about the changes, ‘It’s got to be take it or leave it ... if you want to stay, that is what is expected of you’. This reflected the inequalities of power in workplace relationships.

McCabe found that acceptance was also due to the way that work may provide employees with a sense of shared purpose and identity. By working hard within teams they thought that they could help one another to enjoy success and gain financial reward for themselves and the bank as an organisation. This attitude encouraged the employees to accept the changes being introduced and act as willing workers even though it may not have been in their own interests. 25

This case study concluded that the reasons why the workers accepted change were complex. These reasons were due to power inequalities and the way that the workers interpret their lives and give meaning to their work. 30

*Adapted from ‘Accounting for Consent: Exploring the Reproduction of the Labour Process’,
by Darren McCabe, in Sociology, Volume 45,
Issue 3, 2011.*

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

- 1 Outline and explain why secondary data is used in sociological research. [15]
- 2 Outline and assess the view that case studies are the best way to research the attitudes of employees to change in the workplace. [25]

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

- 3 (a) Outline the evidence that young people experience inequality in the contemporary UK. [20]
- (b) Outline and assess the contributions sociologists have made to explain age inequality. [40]
- or**
- 4 (a) Outline the evidence that some social classes are privileged in the contemporary UK. [20]
- (b) Outline and assess sociological explanations of the changing class structure. [40]

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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