

ADVANCED GCE
SOCIOLOGY

Exploring Social Inequality and Difference

G674

Candidates answer on the answer booklet.

OCR supplied materials:

- 16 page answer booklet
(sent with general stationery)

Other materials required:

None

Monday 20 June 2011
Morning

Duration: 2 hours



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Write your name, centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided on the answer booklet. Please write clearly and in capital letters.
- Use black ink. Pencil may be used for graphs and diagrams only.
- Read each question carefully. Make sure you know what you have to do before starting your answer.
- Answer questions 1 and 2 and **either** question 3 **or** question 4.
- 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.

Candidates will be assessed on their 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 their answers to questions candidates are therefore encouraged to draw upon aspects of social inequality and difference studied throughout their course.

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

SOURCE MATERIAL

Investigating ‘Boy Racers’

Karen Lumsden conducted ethnographic research into the culture of ‘boy racers’, in Aberdeen, Scotland.

In contemporary western society car cultures are an increasingly popular leisure pursuit amongst young people. Known in the UK as ‘boy racers’ the popular image is of a young male driving a modified car with a spoiler, alloys, lowered suspension, and a loud exhaust and stereo system. The ‘cruising’ scene’ involves large groups of young people, mainly males, gathering late at night to socialise and participate in informal races.

‘Boy racers’ and their ‘meets’ have been presented as a social problem by the media; coverage of reckless driving, anti-social behaviour and environmental nuisance has prompted attempts to control the subculture by the authorities.

Karen Lumsden spent 150 hours in overt participant observation to gain an insight into gender inequality and interaction within the ‘boy racers’ subculture, mainly in the Aberdeen Beach area. She also accompanied members of the group to scrap yards, garages and shops, to search for car parts and accessories. In her ethnographic methodology Lumsden used internet sites, documents and media articles as sources of data collection. Fieldwork also consisted of semi-structured interviews with members of the group, which were recorded and transcribed. Access was gained through one of the leaders of the ‘boy racers’ group. He became the main ‘gatekeeper’ for the research.

For the young, female, heterosexual, middle class researcher, fitting into a male-dominated, and largely working class culture, proved difficult. Lumsden recalls, ‘I was reduced to the status of passenger or girlfriend.’ Establishing relationships was not easy. Some of the behaviour was difficult to accept. Lumsden’s gender meant that she experienced sexist behaviour and sexual advances from members of the sub-culture. This affected her emotionally and influenced the events she attended and the people she interviewed. She acknowledged that, ‘personal preferences and dislikes play an important part in fieldwork.’

Lumsden highlights the need for ethnographic researchers to be reflexive. She suggests that sociologists need to take account of their own social positions, experience and values in their research. Her gender and sexuality shaped her interpretation and representation of the ‘boy racer’ culture.

Adapted from ‘Don’t Ask a Woman to Do Another Woman’s Job’: Gendered Interactions and the Emotional Ethnographer, by Karen Lumsden, in *Sociology*, Volume 43, No 3, 2009.

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

- 1 Outline and explain why semi-structured interviews may be used in sociological research. [15]
- 2 Outline and assess the view that ethnographic research is the best way to study gender inequality in youth sub-cultures. [25]

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

- 3 (a) Outline the evidence that some age groups are advantaged in the contemporary UK. [20]
(b) Outline and assess functionalist explanations of age inequality. [40]

or

- 4 (a) Outline the evidence that patterns of gender inequality are changing in the contemporary UK. [20]
(b) Outline and assess the view that patriarchy is the main cause of gender inequality. [40]

[Total: 100]

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