

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

G671

SOCIOLOGY

Exploring socialisation, culture and identity

FRIDAY 15 JANUARY 2010: Afternoon

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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ARCHER, L., HOLLINGWORTH, S. AND HALSALL, A. (2007) 'UNIVERSITY'S NOT FOR ME – I'M A NIKE PERSON': URBAN, WORKING-CLASS YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEGOTIATIONS OF 'STYLE', IDENTITY AND EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT, SOCIOLOGY, 41, 2: 219–237

Despite the government's wish to increase the numbers of working class young people entering Higher Education, the numbers of working class students currently going to university is low. Many leave education for good at 16. This research, which is part of a larger study on young, urban, working-class people, considers ways in which members of the social group invests in a style and identity which help to shape their view that 'university's not for me ...'. The aim of the study was to explore the identities and aspirations of young people in London schools, who had been identified by teachers as 'at risk' of dropping out of education or 'unlikely to progress into post-16 education'. Archer et al argue that the identity taken up and acted out by urban working class youth is one based on knowing they are looked down on by their middle class peers, by the school system and by wider society. They argue that urban, working-class youth actively negotiate a position of social disadvantage which is based on a certain style: '... I'm a Nike person ...'. However, this adopted style merely reinforces the reality of their marginalised and disadvantaged social status and results in a lot of conflict with teachers and the school system. For example, in a discussion about wearing trainers in school, one girl commented:

"It's just shoes, I don't understand the rule Shoes don't affect my learning ..." (Jordan, white working class girl).

Archer et al also argue that holding the view that 'university's not for me' means that these young people are less likely to be successful in education. The researchers also argue that working class urban youths' style differs from that of middle class youth and is one of the contributory factors in relation to the reproduction of educational inequalities.

The research took place over two years in six London schools. The schools were spread out across the city: two in the North, one in the East, one in central London and two in the West. They wanted to include a range of schools from different areas and with a diversity of pupils which were selected on the basis of data on pupil achievement from the Department for Education. All of the selected schools had a high proportion of underachieving pupils and were from disadvantaged areas. The access was obtained by initially contacting head-teachers who then acted as gatekeepers to the Year 10 and 11 form tutors and who also put the researchers in touch with some support staff. Pupils who were 'at risk' of dropping out of school were identified by the schools and the research team then wrote to their parents/guardians as well as the pupils themselves to gain permission for the interviews. Following this initial contact all of the pupils who agreed to take part were included in the study. The data was collected from interviews with fifty-three pupils from Years 10 and 11, discussion (focus) groups, photographic diaries and semi-structured interviews with teachers. Most of the fifty-three young people, whose age range was 14-16 years old, were interviewed four times. Some of the sample group left the study as a result of moving away or changing their contact details. The sample was comprised of twenty three girls and thirty boys. In relation to ethnicity the breakdown was thirty-six white UK, one Black African/Caribbean; six mixed ethnicity; four Asian; three Middle Eastern and

three White other. The young people all lived in socially disadvantaged areas where there was high poverty, crime and drugs. They attended schools which were undersubscribed and considered less attractive than other schools in the area. Many of the interviewees had experienced repeated failure from the constant testing (SATS) they had endured during their school careers and described themselves as 'stupid' or 'not exactly a star student'.

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, eight pupils were asked to keep photographic diaries (they were invited to take photographs of anything that was either meaningful to them, reflected their identities or their daily lives), and a further 36 pupils took part in discussion groups – five pupils in each. The interviews varied in length from half an hour to one and a half hours. This enabled Archer et al to collect data that was, in the main, qualitative. The interviews were conducted on the school premises although a few took place in local cafes or other places identified by the pupils. These were usually when a pupil had left school or were frequently absent. Some interviews took place in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) when pupils were moved into them by the schools over the two years.

In relation to ethics, parents of the pupils involved were asked for consent since the pupils were under 16 years old. The pupils' identities were anonymised by the use of pseudonyms which the pupils chose themselves. All of the interviews and discussion groups were audio recorded and a professional transcriber was employed to type them up.

Archer et al found that the style of the urban young working-class youth was linked to their class identity. A style which gave them a sense of self-worth and value and which enabled them to resist the worthlessness they might otherwise experience from attending ‘crap’ schools in ‘rubbish areas’. They saw the style as ‘cool’ which was partly related to its association with black masculinity which was distinct from that of the middle class and symbolised ‘hardness’ and ‘street cred’.

“You wouldn’t really expect [upper class] people to come out in Nike tracksuits and stuff, we expect them to have that Gucci designer stuff. But people like us we’re Nike” (Sean, Year 10 male).

Answer ALL questions.

- 1 Define the concept of popular culture. Illustrate your answer with examples. [8]**
- 2 Outline and explain TWO ways in which young people are influenced by their peers. [16]**
- 3 Explain and briefly evaluate the ways in which class may shape a person’s identity. [24]**
- 4 Using the pre-release material and your wider sociological knowledge explain and evaluate the use of qualitative data collection techniques when researching the identities of young people who are seen as school failures. [52]**



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