



General Certificate of Education
June 2004
Advanced Level Examination



SOCIOLOGY
Unit 5

SC5W

Friday 18 June 2004 Afternoon Session

In addition to this paper you will require:
a 12-page answer book.
You may use a calculator.

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is SC5W.
- This paper contains **two** Sections. Answer the question in Section A and **one** question from Section B.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 60.
- Mark allocations are shown in brackets.
- You will be assessed on your ability to use an appropriate form and style of writing, to organise relevant information clearly and coherently, and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.
- The degree of legibility of your handwriting and the level of accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar will also be taken into account.

SECTION A – THEORY AND METHODS

Answer **all** parts of this Section.

1

Total for this Section: 20 marks

Item A

Goffman's problem was that as he began to write about the mental hospitals he had studied, the existing language for discussing people confined to such institutions inevitably influenced him. Also, whilst mixing, talking, interacting with and studying all the people involved with the institution, he was bound to be influenced by them. The staff who ran the institutions, the legal professionals who assigned people to them, the families who had solved their problem with an unruly family member, the police for whom mental patients were seen as a public nuisance, all contributed to the vocabulary of the institution. How could Goffman avoid taking for granted such categories as "mental illness" and the perspectives associated with them? 5

Source: adapted from H. BECKER, "The Politics of Presentation: Goffman and Total Institutions", <http://home.earthlink.net/~hsbecker>, 1999

Item B

In-depth interviews offer rich possibilities for researchers who are prepared to use them. However, they are not the easiest of research methods. They are rarely quick and easy to do. Preparation is vital, and the respondent needs to be put at ease and given time to develop their answers. The researcher needs to be alert to the responses so that interesting leads are pounced upon and followed up. In fact, this type of method will test the researcher's skills to the limit. The researcher not only has to keep focused clearly and sharply on the topic, but must also be aware of all the personal factors that might affect the outcome of such methodology and lead to "interviewer effect". 5

- (a) Identify the research method used by Goffman in his study of mental hospitals (**Item A**). (2 marks)
- (b) Identify **two** personal factors that "might affect the outcome of such methodology" (**Item B**, line 7). (4 marks)
- (c) Identify and briefly explain **two** ways in which researchers like Goffman might guard against being unduly influenced by the people they are studying. (4 marks)
- (d) With reference to the **Items** and elsewhere, briefly examine the view that qualitative research methods are too subjective to produce useful sociological research. (10 marks)

SECTION B – THEORY AND METHODS

Answer **one** question from this Section.

Total for this Section: 40 marks

- 2** “Every sociological perspective has its limitations. However, some are more useful than others for understanding society.”

Assess this view.

(40 marks)

- 3** Evaluate the view that sociological arguments and research findings generally have little influence on the social policies of governments. *(40 marks)*

END OF QUESTIONS

THERE ARE NO QUESTIONS PRINTED ON THIS PAGE