

General Certificate of Education  
June 2007  
Advanced Subsidiary Examination



**SOCIOLOGY**  
**Unit 1**

**SCY1**

Wednesday 23 May 2007 9.00 am to 10.15 am

**For this paper you must have:**

- an 8-page answer book.

Time allowed: 1 hour 15 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 SCY1.
- This paper is divided into **three** Sections.  
Choose **one** Section and answer **all** parts of the question from that Section.  
Do **not** answer questions from more than one Section.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

**Information**

- The maximum mark for this paper is 60.
- The marks for part questions are shown in brackets.
- Parts (e) and (f) of your chosen question should be answered in continuous prose. In these part questions you will be marked on your ability to use good English, to organise information clearly and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

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Choose **one** Section and answer **all** parts of the question from that Section.

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**SECTION A: FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS**

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**Total for this section: 60 marks**

**1** Read **Items 1A and 1B** and answer parts (a) to (f) which follow.

**Item 1A**

Before industrialisation, many families worked at home in farming or cottage industries such as textiles. While each member of the family had their own ascribed status, these small units of production nevertheless involved all members of the family – men, women and children – cooperating together.

However, with the arrival of large-scale industry in the late 18th century, work shifted from the home to the factory, mine or textile mill. Initially, this new form of production also involved all members of the family, but gradually women and children were excluded by law from many occupations and found themselves increasingly dependent on the man's wage. 5

Some sociologists argue that, during the early industrial period, the working-class extended family flourished because of the advantages it offered to its members. Subsequently, however, the family gradually became more 'symmetrical'. 10

**Item 1B**

For functionalist sociologists, the family is a key social institution. They see it as performing vital social functions that help maintain social stability while at the same time meeting the needs of all its members. For example, Murdock (1949) saw the family as reproducing the next generation and socialising them into the shared culture. He also saw the family as meeting its members' economic needs and satisfying adults' sexual needs in a way that does not disrupt social order. 5

However, many sociologists claim that functionalists present far too rosy and uncritical a picture of family life. For example, feminists and Marxists argue that functionalists ignore the conflict and exploitation that take place within the family. Others argue that functionalists have too simplistic a view of the relationship between family structure and the wider society. 10

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- (a) Explain what is meant by ‘ascribed status’ (**Item 1A**, line 2). *(2 marks)*
- (b) Suggest **two** reasons why the working-class extended family might have flourished during the early industrial period (**Item 1A**, lines 10 – 11). *(4 marks)*
- (c) Identify **three** features of the symmetrical family (**Item 1A**, line 12). *(6 marks)*
- (d) Identify and briefly explain **two** reasons for changes in the position of children since industrialisation, **apart from** that referred to in **Item 1A**. *(8 marks)*
- (e) Examine the reasons for the increase in family and household diversity in the last 40 years. *(20 marks)*
- (f) Using material from **Item 1B** and elsewhere, assess the functionalist contribution to our understanding of the family. *(20 marks)*

**Turn over for Section B**

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**SECTION B: HEALTH**

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**Total for this section: 60 marks**

2 Read **Items 2A and 2B** and answer parts (a) to (f) which follow.

**Item 2A**

Since the industrial revolution, there have been great improvements in the general health of the population. For example, there have been huge reductions in deaths from infectious diseases since the 19th century. Many argue that this is the result of improvements in medical knowledge and practice, such as vaccinations and antibiotics. However, deaths from many infectious diseases were already falling long before doctors had discovered a cure or developed a vaccine. Sociologists argue instead that social changes were largely responsible for lower death rates. 5

Medicine has also had little success in narrowing the social class gap in illness. Some sociologists argue that this is because the gap is the result of cultural and behavioural differences between the classes. Furthermore, many argue that we have witnessed the medicalisation of society in the last 50 years. In addition, others such as Marxists argue that medicine and the medical profession perform important functions for capitalism. 10

**Item 2B**

According to interactionists, mental illness is a social construction. They see it as the outcome of a process of interaction and negotiation, in which the individual comes to be labelled mentally ill by others. These include relatives, colleagues and, most importantly, psychiatrists, since ultimately psychiatrists have the power to impose a label and make it 'stick'. For example, courts may accept their diagnosis and confine the individual to a mental hospital against their will. 5

Once hospitalised, 'mental patient' is likely to become the individual's master status and all his or her actions henceforth may be interpreted by others in this light. This may produce a self-fulfilling prophecy, in which the individual takes on the identity and behaviour patterns expected of the mentally ill. However, as Goffman (1968) showed, patients do not always respond in this way, and some may resist the label. 10

- (a) Explain what is meant by the ‘medicalisation of society’ (**Item 2A**, line 11). (2 marks)
- (b) Suggest **two** cultural and/or behavioural differences between social classes that may cause differences in health and illness (**Item 2A**, lines 9 – 10). (4 marks)
- (c) Identify **three** changes since industrialisation that may have improved the health of the population, **apart from** improved medical knowledge and practice (**Item 2A**, lines 1 – 2). (6 marks)
- (d) Identify and briefly explain **two** functions that medicine and the medical profession may perform for capitalism (**Item 2A**, line 12). (8 marks)
- (e) Examine the reasons for differences in access to health care by different social groups. (20 marks)
- (f) Using material from **Item 2B** and elsewhere, assess the usefulness of the labelling approach to our understanding of mental illness. (20 marks)

**Turn over for Section C**

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**SECTION C: MASS MEDIA**

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**Total for this section: 60 marks**

**3** Read **Items 3A and 3B** and answer parts (a) to (f) which follow.

**Item 3A**

Marxists and interactionists argue that the news output of the mass media is biased. They argue that much of this bias is due to the processes by which the news is selected and presented. For example, gatekeepers such as newspaper editors and producers of television news programmes prefer to use some news sources rather than others, reflecting a hierarchy of credibility. Similarly, according to Galtung and Ruge (1981), they select stories based upon news values, such as importance, clarity of events, expectedness and unexpectedness. These values are widely shared by these gatekeepers and other media professionals. 5

However, editors are not all-powerful. For example, Kitzinger and Skidmore's (1994) study of the reporting of child sexual abuse found that other groups influenced the news agenda. These groups could include victims, offenders, police, lawyers and courts. 10

**Item 3B**

Reception analysis (or the 'structured interpretation' model) sees media messages as having no single fixed meaning. Thus, different social groups 'read' or interpret the same message differently because they have different experiences, interests and social positions. Nevertheless, there is still a dominant reading that reflects the programme makers' intended meaning. 5

For example, Morley's (1980) study of the news programme 'Nationwide' found that middle-class bank managers and working-class apprentices had a *dominant* reading, accepting the programme's consensus assumptions that everyone in society shares the same values. By contrast, shop stewards (elected shop-floor trade union representatives) had an *oppositional* reading that rejected the programme's entire consensus framework. Another group, full-time trade union officials, had a *negotiated* reading that accepted the programme's general framework but objected to its coverage of specific union issues. 10

- (a) Explain what is meant by a 'hierarchy of credibility' (**Item 3A**, line 5). (2 marks)
- (b) Suggest **two** factors that might influence news output **apart from** those referred to in **Item 3A**. (4 marks)
- (c) Identify **three** news values **apart from** those referred to in **Item 3A**. (6 marks)
- (d) Identify and briefly explain **two** criticisms that other sociologists might make of Marxist views of the mass media (**Item 3A**, line 1). (8 marks)
- (e) Examine the ways in which the mass media portray any **two** of the following: age; disability; ethnicity; social class. (20 marks)
- (f) Using material from **Item 3B** and elsewhere, assess the view that audiences' interpretations of media messages are shaped by the social groups that they belong to. (20 marks)

**END OF QUESTIONS**

**There are no questions printed on this page**