



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Tuesday 13 October 2020 – Morning

A Level Sociology

H580/02 Researching and understanding social inequalities

Time allowed: 2 hours 15 minutes



You must have:

- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink.
- Write your answer to each question in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Fill in the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- Answer **all** the questions.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is **105**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- Quality of extended response will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document has **4** pages.

ADVICE

- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

SECTION A

Source A

Qualitative research on the impact of poverty.

This study aimed to investigate similarities and differences in the impact of poverty on different social groups. Semi structured interviews were conducted with sixty-two participants in Gloucestershire and Birmingham between 2012 and 2013. The five quotations below are from respondents in the interviews discussing their experience of living in poverty.

'I don't go out...the last time was probably eight years ago, that I went out socially'. (Lone Parent, Female, Birmingham)

'...when you have no job and obviously you have very little money in your pocket it affects you in every field. When I was working I would go down the pub and have a couple of pints and a laugh with my mates. You would feel happy in the morning and you go to work. Now, I can't do that anymore, so I have lost all of my mates. I can't afford to go to the pub'. (Unemployed Male, Birmingham)

'I used to like going down the football but I can't do it on jobseekers [jobseeker's benefit]. I need to keep away from thinking about going to watch the football and think about other stuff.... and there are other things when my mates phone me up and ask whether I am going up Broad Street and I can't afford it... I probably last went out 4 months ago'. (Young Unemployed Male, Birmingham)

'I don't get to take him to the cinema or out bowling or anything like that because I don't have the money. Wilfie's [my son's] life is pretty much stuck in; we play games and things like that. But when he hears what his friends have done, they have gone to the cinema last night or they have done this or that, it's like "sorry son we can't"'. (Lone Parent, Female, Birmingham)

'My daughter has never been on holiday, in fact she has only had two day trips to Weston'. (Lone Parent, Female, Gloucestershire)

Adapted from: Simon Pemberton, Eileen Sutton, Eldin Fahmy and Karen Bell (2014) *Life on a Low Income in Austere Times*, Poverty and Social Exclusion UK.

Source B

A quantitative study of the relationship between type of school, place and entry into top universities.

In 2018 Rebecca Montacute completed research for the Sutton Trust investigating links between where young people live, what type of school or college they attend and their chances of success in applying to university. Montacute was particularly interested in how students did in applying to the Russell Group universities (usually regarded as the highest status universities including Oxford and Cambridge (Oxbridge)) but also other top universities such as London School of Economics, Imperial College, Bristol University and Durham University.

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Montacute based her research on statistical data provided by UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). This is a centralised service through which virtually all applications for undergraduate courses in the UK are processed. UCAS provided considerable assistance in collecting and analysing the data which was used in the report. The report looked at schools and colleges in England only and data covered the UCAS application cycles 2014–15, 2015–16 and 2016–17. The total applications and acceptances from these three cycles were combined in order to calculate acceptance rates for different groups of students.

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UCAS provided a list of apply centres (schools, colleges or other institutions through which students make their applications) which had recorded HE applications in the three cycles covered in the report. UCAS then used this data to calculate the following:

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- Percentage of students from different types of schools and areas applying for different types of universities.
- Acceptance rates of students from each group.
- Average A Level points scores of different groups of students.
- Average A Level point scores for Russell Group facilitating subjects (these are more traditional academic A Level subjects, such as Maths, Physics, History or English Literature which are often looked on more favourably by Russell Group universities).

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The apply centres were broken down into six types: state comprehensive schools, state selective schools (e.g. grammar schools), independent schools, general FE colleges, sixth form colleges and other (mainly private colleges).

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Some of Montacute's findings included the following:

- 60% of those from independent schools in higher education attend a Russell Group university, compared to just under a quarter of those from comprehensives and sixth form colleges.
- The proportion of HE applicants from state schools in England who gain a place at Oxbridge differs substantially by region, with differences between the South and East of England compared to the rest of the country. Around 1.5% of HE applicants from the South East, South West, London and East of England went to Oxbridge, but only around 0.8% of those from the North or the Midlands.
- Schools with similar exam results had very different rates of progression to top universities, and especially to Oxbridge. Almost a quarter (23%) of students in independent schools in the top fifth of all schools for exam results applied to Oxbridge, but only 11% of students in comprehensives in the same high achieving group of schools did so.

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The report concludes by making a number of recommendations as to how universities might improve access for groups who are disadvantaged in the current system.

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Adapted from: Rebecca Montacute (2018) *Access to Advantage: The influence of schools and place on admissions to top universities*, Sutton Trust.

Answer **all** the questions in Section A.

- 1 Using data from **Source A**, outline **two** conclusions which could be drawn about the effects of poverty on people living on low incomes. [4]
- 2* With reference to **Source B**, explain **two** ways in which the government, universities or schools and colleges might make use of the findings of this study. [6]
- 3* With reference to **Source A**, explain **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage of sociologists using semi structured interviews to study the effects of poverty. [10]
- 4* Using **Source B** and your wider sociological knowledge, explain and evaluate the use of secondary quantitative data to investigate the influence of type and location of school on entry into top universities. [25]

SECTION B

Answer **all** the questions in Section B.

- 5* Outline ways in which discrimination can affect the opportunities of different social groups in work and employment. [20]
- 6* Evaluate different sociological explanations of age inequalities. [40]

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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