6.6 Inequality by Gender, Ethnicity and Age: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8192 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Show your understanding by using sociological vocabulary and, where asked, your own examples.

1 Evaluate the view that structural discrimination, rather than differences between groups themselves, best explains patterns of inequality by gender, ethnicity and age in the UK today. In your answer you should refer to sociologists' views and consider more than one form of inequality.

(Total for Question 1 is 12 marks)

2 State one similarity between Townsend's concept of structured dependency in old age and feminist explanations of gender inequality.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

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3 Explain why sociologists are careful to describe patterns of inequality by gender, ethnicity and age as being about groups on average, rather than about any individual person.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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4 Explain Sylvia Walby's (1990) view of patriarchy as operating through several different structures.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

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5 Explain what sociologists mean by the term 'gender pay gap'.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

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6 State what sociologists mean by the term 'ethnic penalty'.

(Total for Question 6 is 2 marks)

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Mark scheme · 6.6 Inequality by Gender, Ethnicity and Age: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

Level 4 A detailed, well-balanced evaluation that accurately explains structural and discriminatory explanations of inequality across at least two of gender, ethnicity and age, supported by accurate reference to named sociologists or sources. The answer analyses evidence of change and continuing debate, and reaches a reasoned, supported judgement. Throughout, patterns of inequality are treated as evidence of structure, discrimination and unequal opportunity, never as evidence about the characteristics of any group; sociological terminology is used accurately and consistently.	**10-12**
Level 3 A clear evaluation that explains structural/discriminatory explanations for at least one form of inequality, with some accurate reference to sociologists or sources, and some awareness of debate or change over time. An attempt at a conclusion, which may be only partly supported. No content attributes inequality to the qualities of any group.	**7-9**
Level 2 Some relevant explanation of one or more forms of inequality, with limited development or accuracy. Little clear evaluation or comparison. No content attributes inequality to the qualities of any group.	**4-6**
Level 1 One or two isolated, undeveloped points about inequality, with little or no sociological terminology or accurate detail.	**1-3**
Level 0 No relevant content, or content that inappropriately attributes inequality to the characteristics of a group rather than to structure or discrimination.	**0**

Indicative content:

- Gender: feminist sociologists such as Sylvia Walby (1990) argue that patriarchy operates through structures such as paid work and the unequal division of domestic responsibilities, helping to explain patterns such as the gender pay gap and women's under-representation in senior roles (the 'glass ceiling'), rather than differences in ability.
- Ethnicity: the Macpherson Report (1999) showed how institutional processes, not only individual prejudice, can produce unequal treatment; sociologists such as Heath have used the term 'ethnic penalty' to describe labour-market disadvantage that persists even once qualifications are taken into account, pointing towards structural and discriminatory explanations.
- Age: Peter Townsend (1981) argued that some of the disadvantage experienced by older people, such as exclusion from paid work and reduced income, reflects 'structured dependency' created by social policy and the organisation of the labour market and retirement, rather than simply being a natural result of biological ageing.
- Evaluation/depth: sociologists can point to evidence of real, continuing change, e.g. equality legislation and shifting social attitudes, which some argue have narrowed certain gaps over time, while others argue structural patterns remain persistent and well evidenced across each area.
- A candidate might also note that these forms of inequality can overlap for some individuals, for example a person's experience can be shaped by gender, ethnicity and age together, which sociologists study as intersecting rather than entirely separate influences.
- A balanced conclusion should recognise the strong sociological evidence for structural and discriminatory explanations of these patterns, while acknowledging ongoing debate about how much progress has been made and how far particular policies have succeeded in reducing them; it must not attribute the patterns to the inherent qualities of any group.

Question 2

identifies a genuine similarity, e.g. both explain a pattern of disadvantage mainly in terms of how society and its institutions are organised, such as policy and the labour market, or the household and paid work, rather than in terms of the characteristics of the disadvantaged group itself	**B1**
brief development	**B1**

Answer: Both explain disadvantage mainly in terms of how society and its institutions are organised, rather than in terms of the characteristics of the disadvantaged group itself.

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Question 3

identifies, e.g. patterns describe general tendencies across large groups, and do not predict or explain any single person's actual outcome, which is shaped by many individual circumstances as well **B1**

development, e.g. this avoids stereotyping individuals based on a group-level pattern **B1**

Answer: Patterns describe general tendencies across large groups, not any single person's actual outcome, which avoids stereotyping individuals based on a group-level pattern.

Question 4

identifies that Walby argued patriarchy is not a single cause but operates through several separate structures in society **B1**

development, e.g. these include structures such as paid employment, for example patterns in pay and job segregation, and the household, for example the unequal division of unpaid domestic work **B1**

identifies that Walby argued the strength of these structures could vary over time and between different groups of women **B1**

development, e.g. this makes her account more flexible than theories that see patriarchy as a single, unchanging cause of gender inequality **B1**

Answer: Walby (1990) argued patriarchy operates through several structures, such as paid employment and the household, and that their strength can vary over time and between different groups of women.

Question 5

identifies the gender pay gap as the average difference in pay between men and women across the workforce (oe) **B1**

development, e.g. sociologists note it is a whole-workforce average, not a claim that any individual woman is paid less than a man for doing the identical job **B1**

identifies a possible structural explanation, e.g. women being more likely to work part time or take time out of paid work for caring responsibilities, or being under-represented in some higher-paid roles **B1**

development, e.g. sociologists study how these patterns relate to wider social expectations about caring roles, not to differences in ability **B1**

Answer: The gender pay gap is the average difference in pay between men and women across the workforce, linked to factors such as part-time work and caring responsibilities, reflecting social expectations rather than differences in ability.

Question 6

identifies, e.g. sociologists such as Anthony Heath have used the term to describe disadvantage in employment outcomes experienced by some ethnic minority groups that remains even after accounting for factors such as qualifications **B1**

development, e.g. this points sociologists towards looking at discrimination and structural barriers, rather than at differences in qualifications or effort, as an explanation **B1**

Answer: Sociologists such as Anthony Heath have used the term 'ethnic penalty' for employment disadvantage experienced by some ethnic minority groups that remains even after accounting for qualifications, pointing towards discrimination and structural barriers.

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