OXFORD CAMBRIDGE AND RSA EXAMINATIONS

AS Level

H180/02

SOCIOLOGY

Researching and understanding social inequalities

TUESDAY 24 MAY 2016: Morning
TIME ALLOWED: 1 hour 30 minutes
plus your additional time allowance
MODIFIED ENLARGED 24pt

YOU MUST HAVE:
OCR 12-page Answer Booklet
(OCR12 sent with general stationery)

READ INSTRUCTIONS OVERLEAF

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INSTRUCTIONS

Use black ink.

Answer ALL the questions.

Write your answers in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.

INFORMATION

The total mark for this paper is 75.

The marks for each question are shown in brackets [ ].

Quality of extended responses will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).

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SECTION A

Read the source material and answer ALL the questions in Section A.

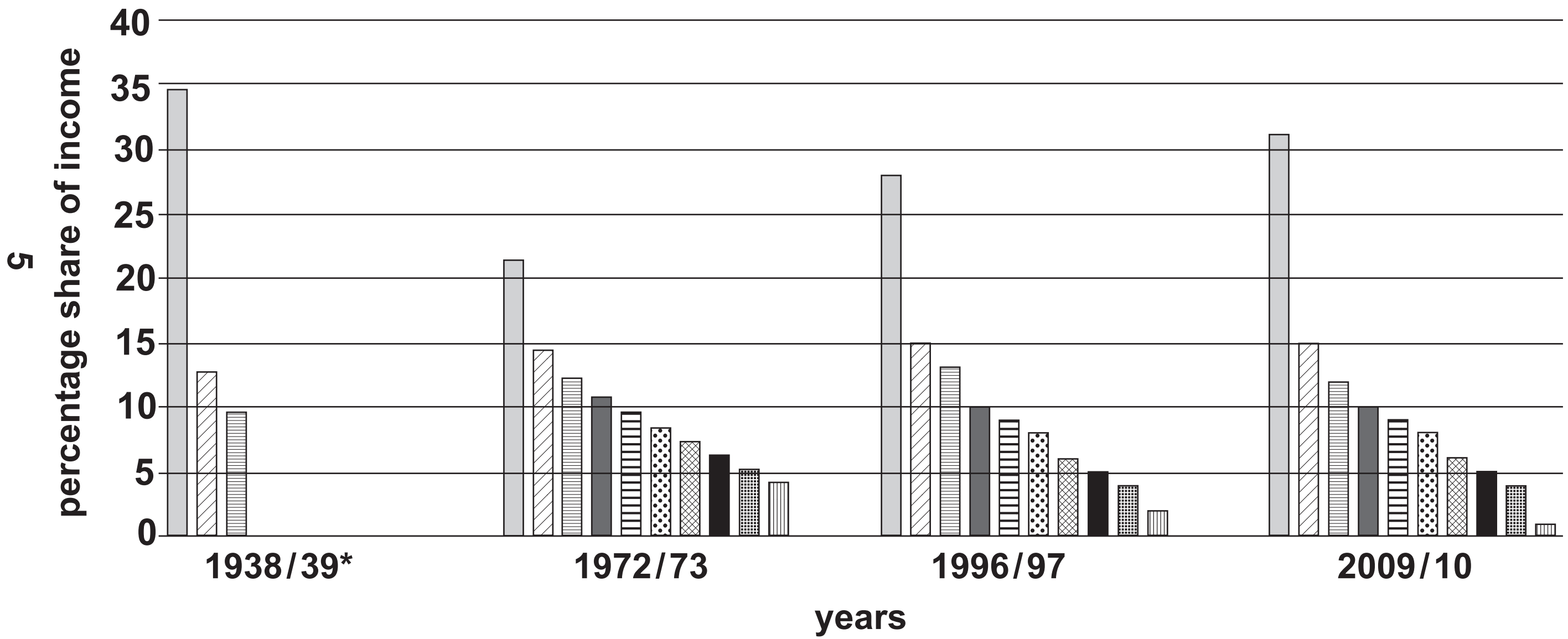
SOURCE A

Income share over time

KEY:

top 10% | second 10% | third 10% | fourth 10% | fifth 10%

sixth 10% | seventh 10% | eighth 10% | ninth 10% | bottom 10%



*No data available for 1938/39 apart from the top 30%

Adapted from The Equality Trust, ‘About Inequality’

SOURCE B

Researching women's social capital and poverty

Victoria Gosling set out to investigate the personal experiences of women living on a deprived inner city housing estate in Northern England, which she called 'Maple Hill' (not its real name). The aim of her research was to assess the extent to which women in poorer neighbourhoods possessed social capital. Social capital describes how far people have useful social contacts or are part of social networks which can support them to improve their lives. The initial stage included participant observation, focus groups (discussions with different groups of people within the community) and interviews with women attending local community groups and community workers. These methods were used to gather background information about the housing estate and make contact with potential participants. The main method of data collection involved semi-structured interviews with twenty-one women, aged between 18 and 80 years old, exploring at length their personal understandings and experiences of social exclusion. Each woman was interviewed once, and interviews lasted between one and three hours (although the majority exceeded two hours).

Interviewees were gathered from a number of different sources. Most were from contacts Gosling had made in her initial research and another six by snowball sampling. One problem was that some of the women who were approached about the research initially agreed to become involved but changed their minds when it came to the interview. Nevertheless, the interviews gave rich accounts of the women's experiences.

Gosling suggests that her background as a white, working-class woman enabled her to build up a rapport with the women on the estate, all of whom were from a similar background. She found that on occasion disclosing personal information about her own experiences was useful in encouraging the women to talk about their lives and experiences. Accessing local community groups helped Gosling to establish some level of trust with the women, which was necessary for interviewing the women about very personal issues such as poverty and family life. It also allowed detailed and more open accounts of the women's lives to be reached.

Gosling suggests that far from lacking any social capital, many of the women interviewed in her research possessed some social capital in the form of support from family, friends and neighbours. This helped them to cope with the daily pressures of living in poverty, for example by providing them with emotional and financial support, a sense of safety and security and informal childcare. However, such support merely enabled the women to 'get by' and cope with daily life, rather than 'get on' and escape poverty.

Adapted from: Victoria Gosling (2008) 'I've Always Managed, That's What We Do':
Social Capital and Women's Experiences of Social Exclusion',
Sociological Research Online 13(1)1.

Answer ALL the questions in Section A.

1 Describe TWO conclusions which could be drawn about the distribution of income in the UK from the data in SOURCE A. [4]

2 Using SOURCE B, explain why sociologists may feel it is important to build up a rapport with the people they are studying. [9]*

3 With reference to SOURCE A and your wider sociological knowledge, explain why quantitative data might be useful in studying the distribution of income in the UK. [12]*

4 Using SOURCE B and your wider sociological knowledge, explain and evaluate the use of semi-structured interviews for researching the lives of women in poorer neighbourhoods. [20]*

SECTION B

Answer ALL the questions in Section B.

5 Outline TWO ways in which social class may affect a person's life chances. [10]*

6 Evaluate feminist explanations of gender inequalities in work and employment. [20]*

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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