



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary Level and Advanced Level

CANDIDATE
NAME

CENTRE
NUMBER

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SOCIOLOGY

9699/23

Paper 2 Principles and Methods 2

May/June 2010

1 hour 30 minutes

Candidates answer on the Question Paper

No additional materials are required

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

DO **NOT** WRITE IN ANY BARCODES.

Write your Centre number, candidate number and name on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen.

You may use a soft pencil for any diagrams, graphs or rough working.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **two** questions.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.

This document consists of **10** printed pages and **2** blank pages.



Answer **two** questions.

For
Examiner's
Use

- 1 There is a tradition in sociology of studying social problems. Some sociologists become involved in this area of research with the aim of understanding the problems, while others also put forward possible solutions in the form of *social policies*. This raises complicated issues about whether sociologists should be involved in seeking to change society for the better.

A social problem can be defined as any condition or form of behaviour that leads to concerns about the stability of society. Crime, unemployment, vandalism and divorce are some of the phenomena that may be considered social problems. The concept of a social problem is relative, as what is viewed as a social problem in one society may not be regarded as such in another. Poverty is an example of this. Even within a particular society, the way that social problems are viewed may differ between social groups. For example, some people may view immigration as a problem, while others think that the problem is the racism shown towards immigrant groups by the host population.

It is usually the most powerful groups who are able to define what is considered to be a social problem and what social policies are adopted for dealing with it. For this reason, it is important to discover where power lies in order to identify and understand social problems.

- (a) What is meant by the term *social policy*?

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- (b) Describe **two** ways in which a high level of unemployment may threaten the stability of a society.

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(c) Explain why immigration may be seen as a social problem.

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PLEASE TURN OVER FOR QUESTION 2

2 Social surveys are research projects that involve collecting standardised data about a large number of people. This data is typically gathered from questionnaires, though other research methods may be used. In contrast to qualitative research, which provides an in-depth study of social life, surveys usually produce data that is less detailed but which can form the basis for making statistical generalisations. Social surveys are high in reliability, but may lack validity.

Sociologists usually try to obtain a *representative sample* of the population they wish to study in a survey. Random sampling is an effective way to select a large number of people to study. However, depending on the aims and nature of the research project, other types of sampling may be used.

Surveys involving the collection of information at one point in time are referred to as cross-sectional surveys. Cross-sectional surveys provide a snapshot picture of society. Longitudinal surveys provide data about different stages in the life of an individual or group. This data can be used to analyse change at the individual or micro-level. Longitudinal studies were first used by researchers in the United States during the 1940s to measure changes in public attitudes. It was thought to be more effective to follow the same sample over a period of time rather than to select a new sample each time attitudes were surveyed.

(a) In sociological research what is meant by the term *representative sample*?

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(b) Describe **two** types of sampling used in sociological research apart from random sampling.

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- (c) Explain why questionnaires are a useful method of collecting standardised data about a large number of people.

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3 Social mobility refers to the upward or downward movement of individuals between the different levels that make-up the system of social stratification. Using occupation as an indicator of class, sociologists have distinguished between long-range and short-range mobility, and between inter-generational and *intra-generational* mobility. However, there are problems associated with using occupation as an indicator of class for the purposes of studying social mobility. It is also a problem that many studies have not included data on women's mobility, as patterns of female mobility usually differ from patterns of male mobility. A further problem is that researchers often fail to identify ethnicity as an independent variable that may affect opportunities for social mobility.

It is generally agreed that the rate of social mobility is significantly higher in modern industrial societies than in traditional societies. Modern industrial societies are therefore often described as 'open'. They may also be described as meritocratic. A meritocracy is a system in which people are rewarded on the basis of how hard they work and how much ability they possess. However, there is a debate in sociology about the extent to which modern industrial societies are meritocratic.

(a) What is meant by the term *intra-generational mobility*?

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(b) Describe **two** problems of using occupation as an indicator of social class.

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