

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

SOCIOLOGY

9699/2

PAPER 2 Principles and Methods 2

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER SESSION 2002

1 hour 30 minutes

Additional materials:
Answer paper

TIME 1 hour 30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your name, Centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided at the top of the answer paper/answer booklet.

Write your answers on the separate answer paper provided.

If you use more than one sheet of paper, fasten the sheets together.

There are three questions in this paper. Answer **two** questions only.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

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

This question paper consists of 3 printed pages and 1 blank page.



Answer **two** questions only.

- 1 Sociology aims to understand what humans do, not through studying the biological or individual psychological make-up of individuals, but by examining the ways that the society in which they live influences and shapes what they do. In the debate about whether humans behave ‘naturally’ or are ‘nurtured’, sociologists are firmly on the side of nurture. They claim that in order to participate effectively in society we must learn particular roles and the norms and values appropriate to them through interaction with other individuals. This process is called ‘socialisation’.

However, there are different views in sociology about how individuals learn the *norms* and values of society. For example, is a social identity something that can be chosen and interpreted by individual actors or is an individual’s identity more like the part an actor learns for a performance where their role and lines have already been written for them?

- (a) What is meant by the term *norms*? [2]
- (b) Describe **two** examples of how society may shape what individuals do. [4]
- (c) Explain why sociologists consider that human behaviour is influenced by nurture rather than nature. [8]
- (d) Assess the view that social forces beyond their control determine an individual’s identity. [11]

- 2 The concepts of ‘reliability’ and ‘validity’ are important in the evaluation of any research. If another research group can replicate the methods of one piece of work on a later occasion, and it produces the same results, then it is judged to be reliable. Total reliability is difficult to achieve in any sociological research, and is almost impossible in any *qualitative research* given that this research may typically take the form of a single individual observing a group over several years.

‘Validity’ concerns whether a piece of research successfully achieves what it claims to have set out to do. It is the property of being a genuine, true reflection of the attitudes, behaviour, or characteristics under study.

- (a) What is meant by *qualitative research*? [2]
- (b) Describe **two** reasons why total reliability is difficult to achieve in any sociological research. [4]
- (c) Explain why positivists favour research methods that are high in reliability, while interactionists are critical of these methods. [8]
- (d) Using the concepts of reliability and validity, assess the value of official statistics as a source of evidence in sociological research. [11]

- 3** Social inequality refers to differences between people in terms of their opportunities and rewards. For example, people vary in terms of their money, *status* and power. When people are ranked hierarchically according to their possession of attributes such as income, wealth, power, age, gender and status, this is known as 'social stratification'.

Sociologists suggest that the origins of inequality can be found in the culture and social structures of societies. This is not to deny that there are innate and natural differences between people and that such differences contribute to social inequality. However, the sociological approach emphasizes how cultures and social structures can create and maintain individual inequalities.

Social inequality and stratification greatly affect the quality of people's lives. It can make the difference between, for example, working in a well-paid job or being unemployed, eating well or going hungry, enjoying good health and living to an old age or dying young.

- (a) What is meant by the term *status*? [2]
- (b) Describe **two** examples of how natural differences between people may contribute to social inequality. [4]
- (c) Explain how people's chances of enjoying good health and living to an old age may be influenced by social inequality. [8]
- (d) Assess sociological explanations of why inequality exists. [11]

