

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

SOCIOLOGY

9699/02

Paper 2 Principles and Methods 2

October/November 2006

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

If you have been given an Answer Booklet, follow the instructions on the front cover of the Booklet.
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.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

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

This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.



Answer **two** questions.

1 One of the central concerns of Sociology is to explain how and why societies hold together. What prevents societies breaking down into lawlessness and chaos? This is known as the problem of social order. There are essentially two types of explanation of social order. One is associated with functionalist theory and the work of Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons in particular. Functionalists focus on the role of shared norms and values in maintaining cohesion in society. The second explanation of social order derives from the Marxist tradition. For Marx, social order is the product of the balance of power between competing groups. This involves the powerful constraining weaker groups, with cohesion sustained through economic pressures, political and legal coercion, and ruling class ideology. This type of order implies ongoing conflict and a struggle for change, rather than enduring stability. In Marxist theory, the State plays a key role in managing conflict and maintaining social control in the interests of the ruling class.

- (a) What is meant by the term *ideology*? [2]
- (b) Describe **two** examples of how economic pressures may play a part in maintaining social order. [4]
- (c) Explain the role of the State in managing conflict and maintaining social control. [8]
- (d) Assess the strengths **and** limitations of the functionalist and Marxist theories of social order. [11]

2 In-depth interviews offer many advantages for researchers who are prepared to use them. However, they are not the easiest of research methods and are rarely quick to do. Preparation is vital, and the respondent needs to feel comfortable and be given time to develop their answers. The researcher needs to be alert to the responses so that interesting leads are identified and followed up. In fact, this type of method will test the researcher's skills to the limit. The researcher not only has to keep focused on the topic, but must also be aware of how the personal characteristics of the researcher, such as age and ethnicity, might affect the outcome of the research and lead to 'interviewer effect'. Sociologists who favour qualitative research tend to use in-depth interviews.

- (a) What is meant by the term *qualitative research*? [2]
- (b) Describe **two** ways in which the *personal characteristics* of the researcher might affect the respondent's answers in an in-depth interview. [4]
- (c) Explain why sociologists who favour qualitative research use in-depth interviews. [8]
- (d) 'The limitations of in-depth interviews far outweigh the advantages.' Assess this claim. [11]

- 3 Some people are better placed in society than others in terms of income, wealth and power. But this inequality is not randomly distributed between individuals, rather it is a feature of the social groups to which people belong. There are unequal groups that are defined by their relationship to each other in a hierarchy. So, for example, in a system of stratification based on social class we can identify a lower class, a middle class and an upper class. This pattern of class relationships tends to persist or repeat itself over time, so that the groups are likely to remain in their respective positions for at least several generations. Members of each group or stratum will have many common characteristics, including a shared culture and identity, common interests and similar life chances.
- (a) What is meant by the term *life chances*? [2]
- (b) Describe **two** ways in which some groups have more power than others. [4]
- (c) Explain why class groups tend to remain in their respective positions for at least several generations. [8]
- (d) 'Class differences are no longer relevant.' Assess this post-modernist claim. [11]

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