

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level and GCE Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2013 series

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/23

Paper 2 (Data Response), maximum raw mark 50

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge is publishing the mark schemes for the October/November 2013 series for most IGCSE, GCE Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level components and some Ordinary Level components.

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1 (a) What is meant by the term *determinism*? [2]

Determinism is a term that describes a philosophical position which opposes the notion of individual free will and autonomy. In this view, the behaviour of the individual is seen as a reflection of wider social forces and pressures. Two marks for a clear and accurate definition, one mark for a partial definition, such as 'people have no free will' or 'the idea that social forces shape our behaviour'.

(b) Describe two reasons why a person's behaviour may be affected by the reactions of others. [4]

Reasons why a person's behaviour may be affected by the reactions of others include:

- the desire to please others and to conform to social expectations
- the need to form bonds with others and act cooperatively in many situations
- the importance of taking cues from others in the development of self-understanding
- the power relations with the other person may be such that their response to one's behaviour cannot be ignored
- fear of incurring negative sanctions if they act inappropriately
- to check that you are being understood by the other person.

One mark for the example plus one mark for development (2 × 2 marks).

(c) Explain how structural theories of society differ from interpretivist theories. [8]

0–4 A few simple points about sociological theory in general, or about a particular theory, with only tangential links to the question, would fit the lower half of the band. A basic account of the functionalist theory of society, or another structural theory, might merit 3 or 4 marks.

5–8 At this level, there must be an explicit attempt to distinguish structural theories from interpretivist theories. Lower in the band, this may occur simply through a juxtaposition of a structural theory with an interpretivist theory. Higher in the band, the differences between the two approaches will be explained directly.

An answer that addresses the question only in terms of describing the differences in thinking about methodology between positivists and interpretivists, could gain no more than 6 marks.

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(d) Assess the contribution of the interpretivist perspective to understanding the process of socialisation. [11]

0–4 A few simple observations about socialisation, with no clear links to the interpretivist account, would fit the lower part of the band. A few observations about interpretivism in general, with little or no reference to socialisation, might merit 3 or 4 marks.

5–8 A basic account of the processes of socialisation that includes some reference to the importance of social interaction, but with little or no reference to interpretivist theory, would trigger the lower part of the band. To go higher, the contribution of the interpretivist perspective to understanding socialisation must be explored explicitly, albeit that accounts in this band may be mainly or wholly descriptive.

A good descriptive account can gain up to 8 marks without including any assessment. To gain more than 8 marks there must be an assessment.

9–11 The interpretivist perspective on socialisation will be explained accurately at this level. There will also be an attempt to assess the interpretivist contribution to understanding the processes of socialisation. At the bottom of the band, the assessment may rely on a simple juxtaposition of the interpretivist perspective with another theory of socialisation, such as the functionalist or Marxist accounts. To go higher, the assessment of the interpretivist contribution must be direct and expressed in the form of clear, well-reasoned conclusions in response to the question.

2 (a) What is meant by the term *objective*? [2]

Objective in this context refers to research that has been carried out in a rigorous way with the researcher taking care not to let their values and personal beliefs influence the collection and interpretation of the data. Two marks for a clear and accurate definition, one mark for a partial definition, such as 'free from bias' or 'the researcher remains detached from the study'.

(b) Describe two reasons why the questions need to be worded carefully in structured interviews. [4]

Questions need to be carefully worded in structured interviews in order to avoid any ambiguity that might make it difficult to quantify and compare responses. Also, the reliability of the method depends, in part, on the questions being clearly understood by the interviewees in each case. Moreover, careful wording is necessary in order to avoid leading questions and bias that may unduly influence the responses.

One mark for the example plus one mark for development (2 × 2 marks).

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(c) Explain why it may be very difficult for the researcher to avoid influencing the answers when carrying out interviews. [8]

0–4 A few points about interviews that may have some implicit links to issues such as interviewer effect, would fit the lower part of the band. A narrow response that focuses on just one or two reasons why it may be difficult for the researcher to avoid influencing the answers when carrying out interviews, would merit 3 or 4 marks.

5–8 Three or four relevant reasons briefly stated would be sufficient to trigger the lower part of the band. To go higher, the range of relevant reasons covered would need to be wider, or else the depth of understanding demonstrated would be greater. Reasons why it may be difficult for sociologists to avoid influencing the answers when carrying out interviews include:

- lack of awareness of their own values and prejudices, and how they may show through in their interview questions and technique
- difficulty in remaining impartial and dispassionate in relation to the topic on which questions are being asked
- the interviewer may lack the skills/personal attributes required to help the respondents to relax and give uninhibited responses
- respondents may be influenced by characteristics of the researcher such as their age, class, ethnicity and gender
- the respondents may give the answers they think the researcher wants to hear.

(d) Assess the positivist arguments against the use of unstructured interviews in sociological research. [11]

0–4 A few isolated points about interviews in general, without any reference to strengths/limitations, might be worth 2 or 3 marks. An account of some practical strengths/limitations of interviews in general, without further development, would trigger the top of the band.

5–8 Lower in the band, answers are likely to concentrate wholly or mainly on the practical strengths/limitations of unstructured interviews. Answers that lack balance i.e. consider only strengths or only limitations, can achieve no more than 6 marks. Higher in the band, the answers will include more references to relevant theoretical issues and/or begin to assess the usefulness of unstructured interviews. Any assessment at this level is likely to be confined to juxtaposition, for example, by noting the strengths and limitations of structured interviews, as well as the pros and cons of unstructured interviews.

A good descriptive account can gain up to 8 marks without including any assessment. To gain more than 8 marks there must be an assessment.

9–11 At this level, we should expect answers to cover a good range of practical and theoretical points related to the strengths/limitations of unstructured interviews. There will also be a concerted attempt to explain and assess the positivist critique of unstructured interviews specifically. Answers that merit the top of the band may be distinguished by, for example, a sharp analysis of the differences between the various types of interviews and/or appropriate links to the positivist versus anti-positivist debates.

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3 (a) What is meant by the term *working class*? [2]

Working class is a description typically applied to manual workers and their families. Alternatively, it may be described as the class that must sell its labour-power in order to survive. Two marks for a clear and accurate definition; one mark for a partial definition, such as 'people at the bottom end of the class scale' or 'people who have to work for a living'.

(b) Describe two reasons why single-parent families are likely to have low incomes. [4]

Single parent families are likely to live on low incomes because there may only be one wage earner in the family. Also, the parent is often female and may experience gender discrimination in employment. Many single parent families are dependent on welfare benefits. One mark for the example plus one mark for development (2 x 2 marks).

(c) Explain the reasons why it may be difficult for people on low incomes to escape poverty. [8]

0–4 A few simple points about the nature of poverty, with no direct links to the question, would fit the lower part of the band. One or two basic reasons why people on low incomes may find it difficult to escape poverty, would merit 3 or 4 marks.

5–8 Reasons why people on low income may find it difficult to escape poverty include:

- locked into a cycle of debt
- long hours of work possibly and little opportunity for re-training or to search for a better job
- discrimination by employers and service providers against the poor
- deprivation in the area of education
- trapped in welfare dependency
- integrated into a 'culture of poverty'
- possible racial discrimination.

A few reasons explained in a basic way, would gain 5 or 6 marks. To go higher, the explanations either have to offer greater depth of understanding or the range of reasons covered will be broader. Candidates who distinguish well between cultural and structural constraints on the poor are likely to trigger the top half of the band.

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(d) Assess the usefulness of the concept of the underclass in understanding social divisions in modern industrial societies. [11]

0–4 A few points about social divisions or social inequality, with no direct links to the concept of an underclass, would be worth one or two marks. A basic attempt to define the notion of an underclass, with little or no further development, would merit 3 or 4 marks.

5–8 A slightly hazy discussion that conflates the underclass with the poor in general, would fit the lower part of the band. To go higher, the focus has to be very clearly on the concept of an underclass, with that concept defined accurately at a basic level.

A good descriptive account can gain up to 8 marks without including any assessment. To gain more than 8 marks there must be an assessment.

9–11 Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of how some sociologists have used the concept of an underclass in their analysis of social stratification. There will also be some attempt to assess the usefulness of the concept of an underclass. At the bottom of the band, the assessment may be confined to simple points; for instance, the point that the composition of the most disadvantaged stratum of society is too diverse and transient to be deemed a 'class'. To go higher in the band, a more sustained assessment will be required. This might cover points such as: members of the purported underclass (or many of them) are not as detached and isolated from the rest of society as the term may imply; the concept has been used as an umbrella term to attempt to link social problems such as the rise of lone parents, ethnic discrimination, relative poverty and increasing criminality that are in reality only tenuously linked. There are also many criticisms of the idea of a black underclass, including the accusation of racism, which could be made relevant to this question.