

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level

SOCIOLOGY

2251/01

Paper 1

October/November 2006

2 hours 30 minutes

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

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 Question 1 and **three** questions from Sections **B** to **D**.
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 **4** printed pages.



Section A: Research Methods

- 1 Questionnaires and structured interviews are quantitative research methods much loved by the positivists. Postal questionnaires containing 'closed' questions (that is questions requiring a 'yes' or 'no' answer) are ideal for scientific purposes. They are quick and cheap. The sample can be controlled to achieve representation, the data is easily collated, and the findings can be analysed statistically and generalised. There is no ambiguity in the data and therefore it is more straightforward to draw conclusions.

Another group known as interpretive sociologists are critical about the value of using questionnaires and structured interviews. They prefer qualitative research methods, such as unstructured interviews and participant observation studies. Both positivists and interpretive sociologists accuse each other of producing research data that is affected by bias and distortion. Positivists also claim that qualitative research lacks reliability, while interpretive sociologists respond by saying that quantitative research lacks validity.

(a) In sociological research, what is meant by the following terms:

- (i) structured interviews [2]
- (ii) representation [2]
- (iii) participant observation [2]

(b) Describe **two** methods for selecting a sample when carrying out a postal questionnaire. [4]

(c) Explain **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage of using 'open' questions in an interview. [4]

(d) Distinguish between the terms *reliability* and *validity*. [4]

(e) Describe two reasons why bias may occur when collecting data using a postal questionnaire. [4]

(f) Describe **two** advantages and **two** disadvantages of qualitative research. [8]

Section B: Culture and Socialisation

- 2 The values of the culture in which we live define our roles and the patterns of behaviour that go with these roles.
- (a) What is meant by the term *values*? [2]
 - (b) Describe **two** roles that a child might have. [4]
 - (c) Why might conflict arise between the different roles that a person has? [6]
 - (d) How far do people who live within a culture share the same values? [8]
- 3 Historical research in Europe suggests that it is only in recent centuries that childhood has come to be regarded as a distinct and separate stage of life. This implies that, far from being a naturally occurring phenomenon, childhood is socially constructed.
- (a) What is meant by the term *socially constructed*? [2]
 - (b) Describe **two** examples of how children are treated differently to adults in modern industrial societies. [4]
 - (c) Why has childhood come to be regarded as a distinct and separate stage of life in modern industrial societies? [6]
 - (d) To what extent does the experience of childhood vary depending on factors such as social class, gender and culture? [8]

Section C: Social Stratification

- 4 Despite all the talk about gender equality in employment today, women still tend to be disadvantaged in terms of earnings and job conditions.
- (a) What is meant by the term *gender equality*? [2]
 - (b) Describe **two** ways in which women are discriminated against in employment. [4]
 - (c) Why may an employer discriminate against female workers? [6]
 - (d) How far may the inequality experienced by women in paid employment be explained in terms of the position they occupy within the home? [8]
- 5 The discrimination experienced by some minority ethnic groups may in part be linked to the way that they are stereotyped by the majority population.
- (a) What is meant by the term *stereotype*? [2]
 - (b) Describe **two** examples of stereotypes that may be applied to minority ethnic groups. [4]
 - (c) In what ways may some ethnic minority groups be discriminated against? [6]
 - (d) What social factors are associated with the inequality experienced by some minority ethnic groups? [8]

Section D: Power and Politics

- 6 A distinction is often made between two main types of political system: democratic and authoritarian. Most modern industrial societies have democratic systems of government that are supposed to represent fairly the interests of all the citizens.
- (a) What is meant by the term *democracy*? [2]
 - (b) Describe **two** ways in which citizens are represented in democratic systems of government. [4]
 - (c) What are the main differences between authoritarian and democratic political systems? [6]
 - (d) To what extent do governments in modern industrial societies represent fairly the interests of all their citizens? [8]
- 7 To make sure that people obey the law the State may use coercion. But to maintain its authority the State must also persuade members of society that it is *right* to obey the law.
- (a) What is meant by the term *authority*? [2]
 - (b) Describe **two** forms of coercion that might be used by the State. [4]
 - (c) From what sources does the State obtain its authority in modern democratic societies? [6]
 - (d) What consequences might follow if the State were to introduce a law that a large number of the population considered to be unjust? [8]

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