

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

GCE Advanced Level and GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2006 question paper

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/02

Paper 2

Maximum mark 50

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were initially instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began. Any substantial changes to the mark scheme that arose from these discussions will be recorded in the published *Report on the Examination*.

All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes must be read in conjunction with the question papers and the *Report on the Examination*.

The minimum marks in these components needed for various grades were previously published with these mark schemes, but are now instead included in the Report on the Examination for this session.

- CIE will not enter into discussion or correspondence in connection with these mark schemes.

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- 1 The process by which individuals learn the culture of their society is known as socialisation. Primary socialisation, probably the most important part of the socialisation process, takes place during infancy, usually within the family. Socialisation is not, however, confined to childhood. It is a lifelong process. In modern industrial societies, other important agencies of socialisation include the educational system, the media, the occupational group and the peer group. Without socialisation, an individual would have little resemblance to any human being defined as normal by the standards of his or her society. Most societies have a range of sanctions that may be used to support the socialisation process and to deter deviant behaviour. This is known as social control.

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

A peer group is composed of individuals sharing similar age and social status, with which an individual mixes socially. An accurate definition along these lines would achieve full marks. A simple, partial definition – such as ‘a group of friends’ or ‘people of the same age’ – may be awarded one mark.

(b) Describe two sanctions that may be used to deter deviant behaviour. [4]

One mark for each sanction that is correctly identified (1 x 2) and one mark for describing adequately each example (1 x 2). Sanctions might include legal punishments and various examples of informal social control, such as ostracism, gossiping, personal abuse, etc.

(c) Explain how children learn to interact with other people during infancy. [8]

0-4 Answers that are confined to a few simple remarks about socialisation in general may fit the bottom of the band. A response that includes a few basic comments about the socialisation process in relation to children specifically would probably be worth a mark at or near the top of the band.

5-8 At this level the answer must focus on the specific ways that children learn to interact with other people during infancy. References to the important role of imitation, play and games in the way that infants learn to recognise socially acceptable behaviour, are likely to be a feature of good answers.

(d) “Sociologists have exaggerated the extent to which people conform to social norms and expectations in modern societies.” Assess this claim. [11]

0-4 A few basic points about socialisation, with little or no linkage to the question, are what we might expect in answers at this level.

5-8 Within this band the candidate will demonstrate some understanding of the issues raised by the question, although the response will be rather descriptive and perhaps confined to an account of the functionalist theory of socialisation. At the top of the band there will be some evidence of relevant assessment, albeit very limited in scope.

9-11 At this level it will be clear from the response that the candidate understands the issues underpinning the question and, in particular, the view that some (perhaps all) sociological theories of socialisation are over-deterministic. The functionalist and possibly the Marxist theories will be cited as examples of a tendency towards adopting a rather too deterministic view of social order. The interactionist contribution to the study of socialisation may be used to highlight the limitations of the functionalist and Marxist theories. References to substantive areas (crime, deviance, sub-cultures, rebellion, etc.) may be used to good effect in addressing the issues raised by the question, though it is not essential to go down this line in order to achieve top marks. The post-modernist critique of traditional sociology would provide another useful angle to explore in assessing the claim made in the essay question.

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- 2 Observation studies can be participant or non-participant, covert or overt. Participant observation involves a researcher joining a group and taking a full part in their lives. This approach allows the researcher to observe the 'natural' behaviour of the group members in their own environment. Those in favour of qualitative methods claim that studies based on participant observation are high in validity. They point out that the relatively small size of the study group, as well as the long periods spent with them, means that a considerable amount of highly detailed first-hand data can be gained. However, observational studies in general give rise to a number of practical and ethical problems.

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

Validity refers to the extent to which a research strategy reveals the truth about the subject under investigation. A definition along these lines would merit two marks. A more limited definition that is at least partially correct may be worth one mark.

(b) Describe two ethical problems associated with observational studies. [4]

One mark for each ethical problem identified (1 x 2) and one mark for describing adequately each example (1 x 2). Ethical problems associated with observational studies include issues of consent, privacy, researcher involvement, and possible psychological impact on those being studied.

(c) Explain what factors may influence whether a researcher uses *covert* or *overt* participant observation. [8]

0-4 A few basic observations about participant observation unrelated to the specific wording of the question would fit the bottom of the band. If the answer demonstrates a sound understanding of the differences between covert and overt participant observation, albeit without providing a strong analytical response to the question, a mark at the top of the band may be justified.

5-8 An answer that identifies a few relevant factors that may influence whether covert or overt participant observation is used would fit the lower part of the band. To reach the top of the band, either a wider range of factors would have to be covered or else the answer will be very well argued and/or illustrated (for example, with references to relevant studies).

(d) Assess the strengths and limitations of non-participant observation. [11]

0-4 An answer that comprises only a few general comments about observational research would fit the bottom of the band. A similarly general type of answer that focuses directly on non-participant observation may merit the top of the band.

5-8 A descriptive response that covers just a few strengths and/or limitations of non-participant observation would be worth five or six marks. To go higher in the band, it would be necessary to cover a wider range of strengths and limitations. There will be little or no evidence of assessment at this level.

9-11 A good range of strengths and limitations will be discussed and some attempt will be made to assess the issues raised by the question. The assessment may come through examining critically some or all of the supposed strengths and limitations of non-participant observation, and/or it could take the form of an overall evaluation of the usefulness of that research technique.

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- 3 Social mobility refers to the movement of individuals or groups between the different levels that make-up the system of social stratification. Social mobility may be upward or downward and may be short or long range – in modern industrial societies most movement is usually over short distances. Sociological studies of social mobility, have usually focused on the movement of individuals between occupations, either intergenerational or, less frequently, intragenerational mobility. Such studies regard occupation as the most reliable indicator of social class. There are, however, problems with using occupational scales to measure social mobility.**

(a) What is meant by the term *intergenerational mobility*?

[2]

Intergenerational mobility refers to movement up or down the social scale that occurs between members of the same family over different generations. A definition along these lines would be worth full marks. A more limited definition that is at least partially correct may be worth one mark.

(b) Describe two reasons why sociologists are interested in studying social mobility.

[4]

One mark for each relevant reason identified (1 x 2) and one mark for describing adequately each example (1 x 2). Reasons for studying social mobility include the following: (i) the rate of social mobility may have an important effect on class formation, so that if the rate of social mobility is low, class solidarity and cohesion may be high; (ii) a study of social mobility can provide an indication of the life chances of members of society; (iii) the stability and cohesion of society may be affected by the way people respond to the experience of social mobility; (iv) the degree of social mobility may be used as a measure of the extent to which government is successful in achieving the aim of creating an open, meritocratic society.

(c) Explain the problems associated with measuring social mobility.

[8]

- 0-4 A few general points about social mobility with no direct links to the question may be worth one or two marks. An answer that reflects at a basic level on one or two problems associated with measuring social mobility would merit the top of the band.
- 5-8 A number of problems will be identified and explained accurately. Several points that are fully explained would merit full marks. Problems of measuring social mobility include the following: (i) occupation is used as an indicator of social class and researchers use different criteria for ranking occupations; (ii) those whose main income is derived from sources other than occupations tend to be overlooked or assigned incorrectly in mobility studies; (iii) many studies of social mobility have not included data on women's mobility; (iv) the statistical significance of data from mobility studies can be calculated and interpreted in different ways; for example, controversy surrounds the use of absolute and relative mobility rates.

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(d) 'Evidence from social mobility studies suggests that class divisions are breaking down in modern societies.' Assess this statement. [11]

- 0-4 Answers about social mobility that have little or no bearing on the specific wording of the question may fit the bottom of the band. A few basic statements about evidence from mobility studies with little linkage to the question may merit the top of the band.
- 5-8 At this level we might expect a reasonably sound descriptive account of the evidence from social mobility studies (Glass, Goldthorpe, The Essex Study, etc.). At the top of the band there will be a limited attempt to link the material to the issue of whether class divisions are breaking down in modern societies.
- 9-11 A range of evidence from social mobility studies will be reviewed and a concerted attempt will be made to discuss the implications of the data for the debate about whether or not class divisions are breaking down. An answer that supports a one-sided answer is unlikely to get beyond the bottom of the band. A better answer would acknowledge the complexity of the issues and consider competing arguments, perhaps drawing on the distinction between relative and absolute mobility.