

**UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS**  
GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level and GCE Advanced Level

**MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2011 question paper**  
**for the guidance of teachers**

**9699 SOCIOLOGY**

**9699/22**

Paper 2 (Principles and Methods 2), 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 must be read in conjunction with the question papers and the report on the examination.

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- 1 Sociologists claim that socialisation is more important than biological instinct in explaining human behaviour. They point out that learning plays an essential part in creating social beings and that this takes place primarily through interaction with others. Individuals begin at an early age to become aware of the existence of others and to take this knowledge into account as they form their own identities. The family plays a vital role in this process. For example, it is usually through interaction with other family members that a child first becomes aware of his or her gender identity and learns to recognise the norms and values that define how people of each gender are expected to behave in society.

A range of rewards and sanctions may be used to encourage social conformity. While bad behaviour is punished, good behaviour helps the individual to achieve the things that are seen as desirable in society, such as a good job or high *status*. Functionalists believe that socialisation, together with the system of rewards and sanctions that support it, is essential in achieving a peaceful and stable society. However, conflict theorists question the extent to which modern industrial societies are peaceful and stable.

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

Status refers to the value, in terms of honour and prestige, that is associated with a particular social position. Two marks for a clear and accurate definition; one mark for a partial definition, such as 'a person's position in society'.

- (b) Describe two rewards that may be used to encourage social conformity. [4]

The sanctions mentioned may be financial or non-financial. One mark for the example and one mark for the development (2 x 2 marks).

- (c) Explain why conflict theorists question the extent to which modern industrial societies are peaceful and stable. [8]

0–4 A few general observations about social stability and/or conflict may be worth 2 or 3 marks. A basic attempt to explain the main features of conflict theory, with no strong links to the issues of social stability/harmony, would trigger the top of the band.

5–8 A sound account of why the extent to which modern industrial societies are peaceful and stable can be questioned, that has broad links to conflict theory in general, would fit the lower part of the band. To reach the top of the band, answers also need to demonstrate some awareness of particular conflict theories (Marxist, feminist, Weberian) in the context of the question. In other words, the candidate must show some understanding that there are differences, as well as similarities, in the way that different conflict theories view social order/stability/harmony.

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**(d) 'Sociologists have exaggerated the importance of socialisation in shaping human behaviour.' Assess this claim. [11]**

- 0–4 Answers at this level are likely to show only a limited appreciation of the issues raised by the question. Some loosely relevant assertions about the nature of human behaviour may be worth 2 or 3 marks. A few descriptive comments about the concept of socialisation based on a simple sociological understanding would trigger the top of the band.
- 5–8 Answers that are limited solely or mainly to a sound account of the functionalist theory of socialisation would merit the lower part of this band. Higher in the band other theories of socialisation may feature alongside or in place of the functionalist theory. Answers may tend to assume that socialisation is a key factor in shaping human behaviour rather than attempting to demonstrate this point explicitly and/or to challenge it in some way. If there is any assessment at this level, it is likely to be implicit and may be carried through a simple account of the cases of so-called feral children.
- 9–11 Answers will demonstrate a good understanding of the concept of socialisation and will also attempt to assess its importance in shaping human behaviour. Lower in the band the assessment may be confined to a few arguments and/or some evidence supporting the idea that socialisation is a major factor shaping human behaviour. Feral children may figure in this, as may examples of cross-cultural and/or historical diversity in forms of human behaviour. Durkheim's theory of suicide may also be used, as Durkheim intended it, to demonstrate the importance of social forces in shaping human behaviour. At the top of the band, the assessment may also reveal an understanding of the grounds on which it may be said that some sociologists have exaggerated the importance of socialisation. This may take the form of a critique of structural theories with their tendency to be over-deterministic or possibly links with non-sociological accounts of human behaviour, such as those in biology and psychology, may be developed. A post-modernist critique of the concept of socialisation may also figure and could certainly be made very relevant.

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- 2 A participant observation study involves a researcher becoming a part of a group or community in order to achieve a detailed understanding of its way of life. Gaining access to the group in order to begin the research can be problematic. Some researchers choose to reveal their identity to some or all of the people they are studying. This is known as overt participant observation. In covert participant observation the research is carried out secretly, with the researcher concealing his or her identity from the group.

Once access has been gained, the extent to which the participant observer might influence the group or activity being studied has to be considered. This is particularly a problem with overt participant observation, as people are likely to behave differently if they know they are being observed. But even if the researcher carries out the investigation secretly, the presence of another person may still affect the behaviour of the group. There is also a risk with participant observation that the researcher becomes so integrated in the group that they lose objectivity. This is known as 'going native'. The *validity* of the research findings would be reduced in this way. There are also a number of ethical and practical problems associated with participant observation studies.

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

Validity concerns whether a research method gives a true picture of what it claims to have recorded and depicts social reality accurately. Two marks for a clear and accurate definition; one mark for a partial definition, such as 'the research study is true' or 'there is no bias'.

- (b) Describe two reasons why people may behave differently if they know they are being observed. [4]

Reasons why people may behave differently if they know they are being observed include: suspicion about why they are being observed; embarrassment; desire to conceal what they may see as private matters from the observer; they may think it amusing to mislead the observer or they may wish to disrupt the study for other reasons; they are trying to be helpful by behaving in a way they think the observer wants them to act. One mark for an appropriate reason and one mark for the development (2 x 2 marks).

- (c) Explain why an observer may find it difficult to gain access to a group in order to begin research. [8]

Difficulties in gaining access to a group may include: the group not wanting to be studied; difficulty making contact with a suitable sample; age, gender or class differences between the researcher and the group make it difficult to undertake covert observation effectively; some members of the group may resent the presence of a researcher; there may be legal and/or ethical constraints preventing the researcher fully participating in group activities.

0–4 Answers that wrongly focus on the difficulties of carrying out research once access to the group has been achieved would fit the lower part of the band. A few undeveloped points about why it may be difficult to gain entry to a group would be worth 3 or 4 marks.

5–8 Lower in the band, answers may cover a good range of possible difficulties a researcher may face in gaining access to a study group, but there will be a lack of detail in the discussion of each point. Alternatively, for 5 or 6 marks, the answer may focus on just one or two difficulties that are well explained. Higher in the band, answers will demonstrate both range and depth.

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**(d) Assess the strengths and limitations of overt participant observation.** [11]

0–4 Very short or largely irrelevant answers will trigger the lower part of the band. Answers that demonstrate some understanding of the features of overt participant observation, without mentioning strengths and limitations, may be worth 3 or 4 marks.

5–8 An account of the strengths and limitations of participant observation in general, with little or no reference to the overt approach specifically, could gain a maximum of 5 marks. A basic account of the strengths and limitations of overt participant observation, perhaps focusing more on practical issues rather than theory, would trigger the lower part of the band. Higher in the band, we might expect the answers to include some consideration of relevant theoretical issues, perhaps through references to concepts such as objectivity, validity and reliability.

9–11 To trigger this band there must be a good account of the strengths and limitations of overt participant observation, which includes coverage of some relevant theoretical as well as practical issues. There will also be an assessment of the value of overt participant observation. Lower in the band the assessment may be largely implicit; for example, it may be conveyed through juxtaposing the strengths and limitations of overt with covert participant observation. Higher in the band, the assessment will be more penetrating and candidates will engage in an explicit discussion of whether the strengths of overt participant observation outweigh the limitations.

- 3 Sociological studies have shown that *gender inequality* remains widespread, particularly in the area of employment. Women generally earn less than men and are more likely to be employed on a part-time or temporary basis only. Women are also concentrated into lower-paid occupations such as cleaning and catering, clerical work, shop assistants and repetitive assembly work. In the UK in 2008 women's full-time earnings were 79% of men's. This is an improvement on the situation in 1978 when the equivalent figure was 65%.**

**In addition, more women experience downward social mobility than upward, while for men the opposite is true. Men fill most of the top jobs in management and the professions. Hence, women are largely excluded from the positions in society that carry most power and this may be one of the reasons why they continue to experience inequality in employment and in the wider society.**

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

Gender inequality refers to differences in the opportunities and rewards that society distributes between males and females respectively. A clear and accurate definition along these lines would gain two marks; one mark for a partial definition, such as 'one sex being treated unfairly' or 'men and women have different opportunities in life'.

**(b) Describe two reasons why women are more likely than men to experience downward social mobility.** [4]

Reasons why women are more likely than men to experience downward social mobility include: greater likelihood of loss of status through divorce or through marrying a male from a lower class who is also the main wage earner for the family; higher exposure to the risk of unemployment or retrenchment at work; difficulty in resuming career after childbirth; fewer opportunities to gain and maintain well-paid jobs. One mark for each reason and one mark for the development (2 x 2 marks).

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**(c) Explain why so few women occupy positions of power in management and the professions. [8]**

- 0–4 Lower in the band answers will be distinguished by the lack of relevant content and possible reliance on a few assertions in place of relevant sociological reasoning. Better answers in the band will identify a few appropriate reasons why men fill most of the top jobs, but the points will lack development and/or theoretical grasp.
- 5–8 The explanations offered will be developed and well informed. At the lower end of the band there may be reliance on some general theories and explanations of gender inequality, such as those within the Marxist and feminist traditions. Higher in the band answers will include material that addresses specifically the issue of access to top jobs, such as: discussion of possible male bias and self-recruitment; different attitudes to employment and career success between the gender groups; and the cultures of leadership in contemporary industrial societies that may reflect patriarchal influences, thereby making it easier for men to succeed to positions of power and feel more comfortable in such roles.

**(d) Assess the claim that it is the ruling class who benefit most from gender inequality in employment. [11]**

- 0–4 Answers at this level may be restricted to a few observations about the nature and extent of gender inequality. Higher in the band there may be a few poorly-articulated points about who benefits from gender inequality, but there will be few if any links to appropriate sociological evidence and arguments.
- 5–8 A basic account of the feminist or the Marxist perspective on gender inequality in employment may be worth 5 or 6 marks. A sound account of more than one explanation or theory of gender inequality could reach the top of the band, as long as it includes some focus on the idea of the ruling class benefiting from gender inequality. At this level, there may be little or no assessment of the claim on which the question is based.
- 9–11 Different theories and explanations of gender inequality in employment will be addressed in an accurate and well-informed way in answers that reach this band. There will also be an attempt to assess the claim that it is the ruling class who benefit most from gender inequality in employment. Lower in the band the assessment may take the form primarily of juxtaposing Marxist explanations with other perspectives on gender inequality. To go higher, the assessment must be more explicit so that clear and well-constructed conclusions emerge in relation to the specific wording of the question.