

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

MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2012 question paper
for the guidance of teachers

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/13

Paper 1 (Principles and Methods 1), 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.

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Section A: The Sociological Perspective

1 "It is impossible to explain how social order is maintained without understanding the role of ideology." Explain and assess this claim.

0–6 A few assertions about the nature of social order, with little sociological provenance, might be worth three or four marks. A cursory attempt to define the concept of ideology, with no further development, would trigger the top of the band.

7–12 Answers that are confined to a basic account of one sociological theory of social order, without any explicit reference to ideology, would merit the lower part of the band. A basic account of the Marxist theory of social order, with some limited reference to the role of ideology, would trigger the higher part of the band.

Answers at this level may be mainly or wholly descriptive.

13–18 A sound account of the Marxist theory of social order, with clear references to the role of ideology, would fit the lower part of the band. Likewise, an answer that identifies a range of factors that may be involved in producing social order, including appropriate references to ideology, would also trigger the lower part of the band. To go higher, there must be some attempt to assess the importance of ideology as a factor in explaining how social order is maintained. The assessment may lack depth at this level and is likely to be confined to the juxtaposition of different theories of social order, such as the functionalist and the Marxist.

19–25 Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the claims made by sociologists about the role of ideology in maintaining social order. This is likely to include references to Marxist theory. The ability to distinguish between different strands of Marxist theory (cultural versus structural Marxist views about ideology, for example) is likely to be a feature of answers that merit the top part of the band. To merit this band, there will also be a sustained and well-informed assessment of the claim on which the question is based. Lower in the band, the assessment may rely mainly on the juxtaposition of different theories of social order. To go higher in the band, however, the assessment must include additional elements that constitute a more direct analysis of the importance of ideology in maintaining social order. This might include, for example, distinguishing between different definitions of ideology or recognising that ideological factors are linked in complex ways to other aspects of society that play a part in maintaining social order.

2 Assess sociological attempts to explain why the social identities of young people may differ from those of older age groups.

0–6 A few simple comments about social identity in general may be worth three or four marks. Answers that are confined to an account of the socialisation process in relation to children, with no direct links to the question, would trigger the top half of the band.

7–12 Answers at this level might cover some broadly relevant material about, for example, youth cultures or older age groups, without applying the knowledge well to the specific wording of the question. A basic, general knowledge type account of some of the factors influencing the behaviour of young people would fit the lower part of the band. Higher in the band, the material used will be more identifiably sociological in nature and might include references to theories/studies of youth culture or debates about aging and the treatment of the elderly. There may be little or no evidence of assessment at this level.

13–18 A sound account of different theories and/or studies of youth culture would fit the lower part of the band. To go higher, the focus would need to be not just on the social identities associated with young people, but also on how they differ from the social identities of older age

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groups. In addition, to reach the top half of the band there must be some evidence of relevant assessment in relation to the question. However, at this level the assessment may be limited in range and will almost certainly lack depth.

19–25 Answers at this level will provide a good account of some of the sociological explanations for why the social identities of young people may differ from those of older age groups. Material on youth culture may form a major part of the answer, but this material will be applied intelligently to show why there may be differences in identity between young people and older age groups. There will also be a sustained and well informed assessment of the explanations offered. Lower in the band, the assessment may be left somewhat implicit in the contrasts made between different explanations. Higher in the band, the assessment will include some explicit discussion of which theories best explain the differences in social identities between youth and older age groups. Candidates who recognise that there may also be similarities between the social identities of younger and older age groups, will be demonstrating sound analytical skills and should be rewarded accordingly.

Section B: Sociological Methods

3 Assess the strengths and limitations of quantitative research methods.

0–6 A few disjointed remarks about research methods in general might be worth 3 or 4 marks. A brief but broadly accurate attempt to identify some quantitative research methods would trigger the top of the band. One or two simple points about the strengths and/or limitations of a particular quantitative method, with no further development, would also fit the top of the band.

7–12 A descriptive account of different quantitative methods with no clear references to strengths or limitations, would fit the bottom of the band. A basic account of some strengths and limitations of quantitative research, perhaps focused mainly on practical issues, would trigger the top of the band. Answers that consider only the strengths or the limitations of quantitative research methods could also reach the top of this band, if very well done. However, 12 marks is the ceiling for this type of one-sided response to the question.

13–18 Answers that discuss the strengths and limitations of quantitative research in general i.e. without referring to specific quantitative methods, could reach the lower part of this band. To go higher, answers must include references to particular research methods. To reach the top half of the band, the discussion of the strengths and limitations of quantitative research methods must also cover both practical and theoretical points. Higher in the band there will be some evidence of assessment, though this may be largely implicit i.e. it will appear in the candidate's summary of the strengths and limitations associated with quantitative research. The assessment may also be delivered through the juxtaposition of the positivist and interpretivist perspectives on research methods.

19–25 At this level, candidates will demonstrate a good understanding of the strengths and limitations of quantitative research methods, covering both practical and theoretical issues in reasonable detail. Particular research methods will be identified and discussed in the context of the question and references to appropriate studies, though not essential, may help to distinguish answers that are worthy of this band. There will also be a sustained and well informed assessment of the value of quantitative research methods. Lower in the band, the assessment need go no further than a defence of the positivist or interpretivist views of quantitative research methods. Higher in the band, the assessment will be supported by a more direct analysis of the value of quantitative research methods. This might include, for example, a discussion of research aims and values, reflections on the influence of topic on the choice of research methods, and issues of what constitutes good sociological research. Reward candidates who use references to

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relevant studies to show the type of context in which quantitative research methods might be a particularly appropriate choice.

4 Assess the arguments for using non-participant observation rather than participant observation in sociological research.

0–6 Answers that are limited to explaining what participant observation entails would merit three or four marks. A few simple points about the nature of objectivity would trigger the higher part of the band.

7–12 A basic account of participant observation as a research method, with little or no attempt to address the specific issues raised by the question, would merit the lower part of the band. Higher in the band, there will also be an attempt, albeit limited, to explain why it may be difficult to remain objective when carrying out participant observation.

13–18 Answers will demonstrate a sound understanding of participant observation and there will also be explicit reference to the problems involved in maintaining objectivity with this method. Higher in the band, there will be an attempt to assess the view expressed in the question, though this may lack detail and sophistication.

19–25 Building on a good understanding of participant observation, the view that it is difficult to remain objective when carrying out participant observation will be explained in detail. There will also be a well focused assessment of the issues raised by the question. This may occur within the context of a general assessment of participant observation, though links with debates about objectivity should be made explicitly. Higher in the band, some extra sophistication will be demonstrated by, for example, demonstrating the relevance of the distinction between covert and overt participant observation for the question or questioning the value of pursuing objectivity in sociological research.

Section C: Social Differentiation and Stratification

5 "Gender socialisation is the main factor explaining why males earn more than females in modern industrial societies." Explain and assess this view.

0–6 A few simple observations about the nature of gender inequality in employment may be worth three or four marks. Some poorly articulated points about feminist theory in general, with only indirect links to the question, would trigger the top of the band.

7–12 Lower in the band, answers may be confined to a basic account of a single sociological explanation of gender inequality in employment. Higher in the band, a wider range of explanations will be considered at a basic level. Any references to the importance of gender socialisation may be implicit at this level. A sound account of feminist theory that is not particularly well linked to the topic of gender inequality in employment could gain up to ten marks, but no higher. Within this band, answers may be mainly or wholly descriptive.

13–18 Answers at this level must include an explicit discussion of the relevance of gender socialisation as a factor that may help explain gender inequality in the workplace. Lower in the band, responses may provide a sound account of only a limited range of sociological explanations of gender inequality in employment. Higher in the band, a wider range of relevant material will be considered and there will also be an attempt to assess the view expressed in the question. The assessment at this level may lack depth and is likely to be confined to a simple juxtaposition of different explanations for gender inequality in employment.

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19–25 A good account of a range of explanations of gender inequality in employment will be offered at this level, and this may include references to different strands of feminist theory. There will also be a sustained and well informed assessment of the view that the impact of gender socialisation on the career ambitions of females may be the key factor explaining gender inequality in employment. Lower in the band, the assessment may rely mainly on basic contrasts between different sociological explanations of gender inequality. To go higher in the band, however, the assessment must include a more direct analysis of the issues raised by the question. This might include, for example, questioning over-deterministic views of the influence of gender socialisation or noting that changes have occurred in the gender socialisation of children that may have an impact on how females define their career ambitions. Evidence from relevant studies might also be used to good effect in answers that provide a sustained and sophisticated assessment of the view expressed in the question.

6 "The working class that Marx wrote about no longer exists in modern industrial societies." Explain and assess this claim.

0–6 Answers that are confined to a few simple observations about social class may fit the lower half of the band. If there is also some rudimentary comment about Marxist theory, a mark at the top of the band may be justified.

7–12 A basic account of the Marxist theory of class would merit the lower part of the band. If this were supplemented by a discussion of at least one other theory of class, a mark at the top of the band may be justified. Likewise, a basic account of the embourgeoisement thesis would also trigger the top half of the band. Answers at this level may be mainly or wholly descriptive.

13–18 Answers at this level will address directly the idea that the working class has in some ways changed fundamentally since Marx was writing in the nineteenth century. Lower in the band, the discussion may be confined to a sound account of a limited range of relevant material. An answer that contrasts the embourgeoisement thesis with the arguments about proletarianisation would be an example of this. Higher in the band, a wider range of relevant material will be considered. In addition to the debate about embourgeoisement, this might include the notions of class de-fragmentation, the 'new working class', the emergence of an underclass, the impact of consumerism, and the breakdown of traditional class identities. Changes in the political behaviour of the working class might also be considered. Higher in the band, there will also be some attempt to assess the view on which the question is based, though the analysis may lack depth at this level.

19–25 Answers at this level will provide a good account of a range of changes that may have affected the working class since Marx was writing. There will also be a sustained and well informed assessment of the view that the working class is fundamentally different today from the nineteenth century. Lower in the band, the assessment may rely mainly on the juxtaposition of different views about the nature of the working class today. To go higher in the band, however, the assessment must also respond in a more direct way to the claim that the working class that Marx described no longer exists. For example, a good answer might note that Marx's description of the working class was very abstract and possibly somewhat idealised. Another useful line of analysis would be to challenge the notion that class identity has become much less relevant in modern industrial societies or to challenge the claim that the working class are no longer subject to such acute extremes of social inequality.