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Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

SOCIOLOGY **9699/24**

Paper 2 Theory and Methods **May/June 2021**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 50

Published

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 International will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

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Generic Marking Principles

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptors for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

Rules must be applied consistently, e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

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Social Science-Specific Marking Principles
(for point-based marking)

1 Components using point-based marking:

- Point marking is often used to reward knowledge, understanding and application of skills. We give credit where the candidate's answer shows relevant knowledge, understanding and application of skills in answering the question. We do not give credit where the answer shows confusion.

From this it follows that we:

a DO credit answers which are worded differently from the mark scheme if they clearly convey the same meaning (unless the mark scheme requires a specific term)
b DO credit alternative answers/examples which are not written in the mark scheme if they are correct
c DO credit answers where candidates give more than one correct answer in one prompt/numbered/scaffolded space where extended writing is required rather than list-type answers. For example, questions that require *n* reasons (e.g. State two reasons …).
d DO NOT credit answers simply for using a 'key term' unless that is all that is required. (Check for evidence it is understood and not used wrongly.)
e DO NOT credit answers which are obviously self-contradicting or trying to cover all possibilities
f DO NOT give further credit for what is effectively repetition of a correct point already credited unless the language itself is being tested. This applies equally to 'mirror statements' (i.e. polluted/not polluted).
g DO NOT require spellings to be correct, unless this is part of the test. However spellings of syllabus terms must allow for clear and unambiguous separation from other syllabus terms with which they may be confused (e.g. Corrasion/Corrosion)

2 Presentation of mark scheme:

- Slashes (/) or the word 'or' separate alternative ways of making the same point.
- Semi colons (;) bullet points (•) or figures in brackets (1) separate different points.
- Content in the answer column in brackets is for examiner information/context to clarify the marking but is not required to earn the mark (except Accounting syllabuses where they indicate negative numbers).

3 Calculation questions:

- The mark scheme will show the steps in the most likely correct method(s), the mark for each step, the correct answer(s) and the mark for each answer
- If working/explanation is considered essential for full credit, this will be indicated in the question paper and in the mark scheme. In all other instances, the correct answer to a calculation should be given full credit, even if no supporting working is shown.
- Where the candidate uses a valid method which is not covered by the mark scheme, award equivalent marks for reaching equivalent stages.
- Where an answer makes use of a candidate's own incorrect figure from previous working, the 'own figure rule' applies: full marks will be given if a correct and complete method is used. Further guidance will be included in the mark scheme where necessary and any exceptions to this general principle will be noted.

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4 Annotation:

- For point marking, ticks can be used to indicate correct answers and crosses can be used to indicate wrong answers. There is no direct relationship between ticks and marks. Ticks have no defined meaning for levels of response marking.
- For levels of response marking, the level awarded should be annotated on the script.
- Other annotations will be used by examiners as agreed during standardisation, and the meaning will be understood by all examiners who marked that paper.

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Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	**What is meant by the term social problems?** 1 mark for a partial one such as 'a crisis in society...' 2 marks for a clear and accurate definition. A social problem is an issue or form of behaviour that is seen as being harmful to society's well-being.	**2**
1(b)	**Describe two ways that research might be affected by how it is funded.** Points that can be included: • The funding body may require the use of certain methods – for example, much research comes from government which often requires quantitative data (gatekeeper effect) • The amount of money available will influence the scale of the research and types of method used, e.g. participant observation is expensive • Sample selection – funder's interest may affect the type of group subject to research – some more or less likely to be deemed worthy of study (powerful and less powerful groups). • Choice of topic – whether the research is of current interest might affect its commission, e.g. government sponsored research often linked to social problems. • Funder's interest may affect the objectivity of the research process – interpretation/presentation of results • Any other valid way. 1 mark for the example plus 1 mark for development. (2 × 2 marks).	**4**

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Question	Answer	Marks
1(c)	**Explain how the values of the sociologist may influence the research process.** **0–4** Lower in the band **(1–2)**, a few simple remarks about the research process without links to any debate or development might be worth 1 or 2 marks. Higher in the band **(3–4)**, there may be a basic attempt to address the question with at least one accurate point made though the response will not be well directed to the set question. Perhaps one area is referenced but the links to values will be not that well explained. **5–8** Lower in the band **(5–6)**, a sound account based on some sociological understanding of the way values affect the research process. There are likely to be two or more points made but these may not be fully accurate or not well developed. Higher in the band **(7–8)** there is likely to be clear and accurate reasons with explicit links to values and the research process and relevant concepts and evidence. The analysis here needs to be explicit and well informed. A range of points will be covered or fewer points in detail. For example, good responses may highlight that some methods are more susceptible than others to the intrusion of values, or they may illustrate these empirically. Another avenue would be to link the question to theory although there is no need to engage in debate. A good list of undeveloped points may gain up to six marks. To go higher, some of the points should be developed Areas of reference: • Interviewer bias – the responses of an interviewer may influence the interviewee • Collection of data – e.g. construction of question in an interview – those posed/excluded • Choice of research topic, e.g. sympathy for the poor may lead to an interest in researching poverty and the way the research is conducted. • Processing of data – Interpretation and presentation of findings may be influenced by beliefs – researcher imposition • Sociologists may sometimes be influenced by the common-sense ideas of their time, and this may then have a distorting influence on their research (Kuhn's paradigms) • Any other appropriate way. **Note:** This question asks candidates to 'explain', therefore there is no requirement for assessment.	**8**

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Question	Answer	Marks
1(d)	**Assess the view that the aim of sociological research should be to improve society.** **0–4** Answers at this level are likely to be assertive and show only limited appreciation of the issues raised by the question. Lower in the band **(1–2)** a simple answer about the purpose of sociological research unrelated to the question. Higher in the band **(3–4)**, one relevant developed or two undeveloped points. but with few or no direct links to the set question **5–8** Answers at this level show some sociological knowledge and understanding of the question. Lower in the band **(5–6)**, a basic description highlighting two relevant points with some development. For example, a list-like account supporting the view that is not particularly well applied to the question could also be worth five or six marks. There is likely to be a lack of development in the response. Higher in the band **(7–8)** there will be a sound attempt to explain the idea that sociological research should be used to improve society. Alternatively, answers might explore the position that it is not possible to conduct research objectively Answers may introduce links to theoretical strands but these may only be tacit and are not necessary to achieve 8 marks. **A descriptive answer cannot gain more than 8 marks.** **9–11** Answers at this level will demonstrate good sociological knowledge and understanding applied to the question and there will be some assessment. Lower in the band **(9–10 marks)**, the assessment may be limited in range or depth. It is likely to be achieved by outlining the importance attached to remaining objective in the pursuit of sociological knowledge. However, the assessment may not be fully developed or somewhat juxtaposed. Higher in the band **(11)**, the assessment may have more range or depth. For example, Weber's view on value neutrality could be introduced. **Evaluation points need not be wide ranging or in great depth for candidates to achieve full marks** Supporting the view: • Some sociologists (e.g. Becker) believe that research should be 'committed' and open in their sympathies, as do Marxists and feminists • It is impossible to fully separate values from research so sociologists should be clear about their views. • These sociologists (e.g. Gouldner) are critical of those they regard as 'pretending' they are value free and neutral e.g. Parsons, Merton.	**11**

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Question	Answer	Marks
1(d)	• The interpretivist position on the nature of objectivity and how values affect the selection of topics and execution of research • Weber's view that sociologists cannot be value free in selecting topics, and that their choice of topic (and methods) will reflect this but that they *can* be objective in their research (value neutral). This angle could feature as for or against the view. Against the view: • Positivist argument that via the hypothetico-deductive method objectivity can be achieved - in choice of method, execution of research and interpretation of results • It is important to resist the imposition of subjective elements like values that distort research. • Popper's view that value laden theories will eventually be falsified, • A realist or postmodern position	

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Question	Answer	Marks
2	**'Methods producing quantitative data are more useful than methods producing qualitative data.' Explain and assess this view.** **0–6** Answers at this level are likely to show only **limited appreciation** of the issues raised by the question. Lower in the band **(1–3)**, answers may be confined to one or two vague remarks based on assertion/common sense understanding about quantitative and qualitative methods with little or no linkage to the question. Higher in the level **(4–6 marks)**, a few simple points but with very little detail or development that is relevant to the question as set. For example a basic understanding about the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research methods, but with very little detail or development that is relevant to the question as set. **7–12** Answers at this level will show some **sociological knowledge** and understanding of the question. Lower in the band **(7–9 marks)**, the answer may be confined to a narrow range of underdeveloped points, lacking detail and possibly with some inaccuracies. For example, it may demonstrate an understanding of the distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods but will fail to address the specific issues raised by the question. Higher in the band **(10–12 marks)**, answers may either cover a narrow range of points in reasonable detail or cover a wider range of points in limited detail. Here there will be some attempt to explain why it might be thought that quantitative methods are more useful than qualitative ones. At this level, answers will be largely descriptive. **13–18** Answers at this level will show **good sociological knowledge and understanding**. The material used will be interpreted accurately and applied well to answering the question. There is no requirement for assessment at this level although it may be present. There is likely to be some attempt to explain the view in the question. Lower in the band **(13–15 marks)**, answers are likely to make use of concepts/theory but the range of knowledge demonstrated may be limited and the points covered may lack development. The answer is likely to delineate the strengths of quantitative methods relative to qualitative methods. Higher in the band **(16–18 marks)**, answers will use a wider range of relevant knowledge, supported by the use of concepts/theory where relevant and include some well-developed points. To reach this level answers are likely to include a clear explanation of relevant conceptual issues (objectivity, validity, reliability) alongside practical points. Links are likely to be made to positivism and interpretivism	**25**

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Question	Answer	Marks
2	Candidates will begin to address the specific wording of the question, though the analysis of the view may not be fully convincing. **There is no requirement for assessment at this level.** **19–25** Lower in the band **(19–21 marks)**, the assessment may be largely delivered through juxtaposition of contrasting arguments/theories. Alternatively, the assessment may be limited to just one or two evaluative points that are explicitly stated. However, the assessment at this level may lack depth and possibly contain some over-generalisation Higher in the band **(22–25 marks)**, responses are likely directly engage with the issues raised by the question. Here, answers are likely to address the wording of the question especially the idea of 'useful'. Very good answers will recognise that claims for one methodological approach being superior to another are problematical for several reasons. There is likely to be a well-formulated conclusion. Answers that discuss the use of only one specific quantitative research method may score no more than 10 marks Answers that focus on a range of particular quantitative methods but do not discuss the overall use of quantitative research can reach no higher than 15 marks. Answers at this level must achieve three things: • First, there will be good sociological knowledge and understanding of the underlying debate about the usage of quantitative and qualitative research methods. • Second, the material used will be interpreted accurately and applied effectively to answering the question. • Third, there must also be some evidence of assessment. At this level expect an accurate and detailed account. Supporting the view: • Produce numerical data enabling identification of patterns/ trends/ comparisons. • Methods used: surveys/questionnaire, structured interviews, content analysis, official statistics. • Reliability – easily replicated. • Objective and value-free • Large scale and representative samples • Generalisable • Practical advantages, e.g. time and expense.	

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Question	Answer	Marks
2	Against the view: • Qualitative methods more suitable for study of human behaviour than quantitative • They produce highly valid data that explores the subjective meanings actors hold from their point of view – interpretivist rationale. • Humans have free will and cannot be measured by quantitative means. • Quantitative methods not objective/value free • Resulting data lacks validity • Variables in the social world cannot be controlled.	

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Question	Answer	Marks
3	**'There is no comparison to be made between sociology and the natural sciences.' Explain and assess this view.** **0–6** Answers at this level are likely to be **assertive and focus on a few common sense observations** with little focus on the question. Lower in the band **(1–3),** answers make one or two vague points about the nature of scientific method with no links to the question. Higher in the band **(4–6)**, there may be a few simple points based on assertion/common sense understanding about scientific methods used in sociology but there will be very little detail or development that is relevant to the question as set. For example, a couple of remarks indirectly linked to positivism. **7–12** Answers at this level will show s**ome sociological knowledge and understanding** of the question. Lower in the level **(7–9 marks)**, a narrow range of underdeveloped points, possibly with some inaccuracies, for example, an outline of the positivist perspective. Answers may be rather list-like and are likely to focus on a basic account of the procedures of the natural sciences with perhaps some simple remarks about whether or not a scientific approach is the correct way to research human behaviour. Higher in the level **(10–12 marks)**, answers may either cover a narrow range of points in reasonable detail or cover a wider range of points in limited detail. However, answers will be largely descriptive. **13–18** Answers at this level will show **good sociological knowledge and understanding**. The material used will be interpreted accurately and applied effectively to answering the question. Lower in the band **(13–15 marks)**, answers are likely to make use of concepts/theory but the range of knowledge demonstrated may be limited and the points covered may lack development. For example, there may be an overview of the hypothetico-deductive method and/or references to specific procedures such as laboratory experiments and concepts like objectivity. Higher in the band **(16–18 marks)**, answers will use a wider range of knowledge, some well-developed points perhaps supported by the use of studies, concepts and theory. There is likely to be some attempt to explain the view in the question, most likely citing the interpretivist position and offering some explanation of why they think it is mistaken to adopt a scientific approach e.g. Schultz. The treatment of relevant theoretical issues is likely to be more detailed (e.g. validity, verstehen, and in-depth understanding).	**25**

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Question	Answer	Marks
3	At the top of the level, candidates will begin to address the specific wording of the question, though the analysis of the view may not be fully convincing. **There is no requirement for assessment at this level** **19–25** Lower in the level **(19–21 marks)**, the assessment may be largely delivered through juxtaposition of contrasting arguments and theories. Alternatively, the assessment may be limited to just one or two evaluative points that are explicitly stated. For example, a critique of the interpretivist approach via discussion of its own purported deficiencies Higher in the band **(22–25 marks)**, there will be sustained assessment and the points offered will be explicit and well-directed towards the question. Very good responses may engage in discussion about what scientific research actually entails and will use key thinkers to show this. There may be reference to the realist position as a means of assessment. High order responses may question what is meant by the term science. Answers at this level must achieve three things: • First, there will be good sociological knowledge and understanding of the underlying debate about the relationship between sociological enquiry and that of the natural sciences. • Second, the material used will be interpreted accurately and applied effectively to answering the question. • Third, there must also be some evidence of assessment. At this level expect an accurate and detailed account. There is likely to be a well-formulated conclusion. Supporting the view: • Interpretivist view: methods unsuitable for study of human behaviour • Humans have free will, act unpredictably on unobserved meanings which cannot be measured. • Scientific methods not as objective/value free as claimed • Resulting data lacks validity • Variables in the social world cannot be controlled • Practical problems • Issue may depend on how you define a scientific subject. • Some scientific methods may particular ethical implications, e.g. experiments	

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Question	Answer	Marks
3	Against the view: • Positivist view: objective, value-free and reliable • Produce numerical data enabling identification of patterns/ trends/ comparisons. • Large scale and representative samples • Generalisable • Examples of the use of scientific methods used in sociology: experiments, surveys/questionnaire, structured interviews, content analysis, official statistics.	