

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

## **MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2008 question paper**

### **9699 SOCIOLOGY**

**9699/01**

Paper 1 (Essay), 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.

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.

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

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### Section A

**1 'Social order exists because people are afraid to disobey the rules of society.' Explain and assess this claim.**

- 0–6 A few vague remarks about socialisation would trigger the middle of the band. Some general observations about the nature of social order, with little or no sociological underpinning, might be worth 5 or 6 marks.
- 7–12 The wording of the question implies that social order may in some way be based on coercion or fear. However, answers in the lower part of this band will fail to make that connection. Instead, we may find responses that are confined to a descriptive account of the functionalist theory of value consensus. Higher in the band, the idea of coercion may be hit upon indirectly by candidates who provide a general summary of the Marxist perspective on social order. The answers will be largely descriptive at this level.
- 13–18 Answers that distinguish between conflict and consensus theories of social order by, for example, contrasting the functionalist and Marxist accounts, would trigger the lower part of the band. To go higher, the answer will either provide a sound assessment of the functionalist/Marxist theories of social order, or adopt a more analytical approach to the wording of the question by reflecting on why people may be afraid to disobey the rules of society. The latter approach might take the candidate into debates about the nature of social control and the mechanisms through which conformity is encouraged and imposed.
- 19–25 An accurate and detailed evaluative account of different theories of social order (and this is likely to cover at least three sociological perspectives) would merit a mark lower in the band. Further marks at this level should be reserved for candidates who focus explicitly on the question of why people might be afraid to disobey the rules of society. Candidates could achieve much credit in this respect by utilising the distinction between formal and informal mechanisms of social control. A well-informed exploration of the relevance of the concept of ideology to the question posed would be another way of demonstrating higher level analytical skills. The ideas of Foucault would fit nicely the areas of enquiry initiated by the question, or the concept of hegemony could be used to illustrate the relevance of cultural Marxism as a bridge between functionalist and orthodox Marxist accounts of social order.

**2 'Marxist theory no longer has any relevance for understanding modern industrial societies.' Explain and assess this view.**

- 0–6 Answers at this level may be confined to a few vague comments about Marxist theory with little relevance to the question. Responses that comment on changes in industrial societies without any mention of Marxist theory might be worth 5 or 6 marks.
- 7–12 A simple summary of Marxist theory, possibly with some omissions and/or inaccuracy, would creep into the lower part of the band. If the account of Marxist theory is more developed, a mark higher in the band would be merited. There is no requirement at this level to distinguish between different strands of Marxist theory. Nor at the bottom of the band is there need to provide an assessment of Marxist theory. At the top of the band there will be some limited attempt to assess Marxist theory, though the points made may be quite abstract and general.

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- 13–18 Answers at this level will address directly the issue of how relevant Marxist theory is for understanding modern industrial societies. Lower in the band the bulk of the answer will consist of a descriptive account of Marxist theory. The evaluative content at this level will be somewhat limited in range and depth. Higher in the band, candidates are likely to distinguish between different strands of Marxist theory and the assessment will be more detailed, without necessarily being particularly incisive or original.
- 19–25 Answers at this level will demonstrate a clear grasp of the reasons why it might be claimed that Marxist theory no longer has any relevance for understanding modern industrial societies. This is most likely to be conveyed through identifying social changes that have occurred since Marx's time and noting that such changes, arguably, challenge the underlying assumptions of Marxist theory. In a similar vein, postmodernist ideas could be used to highlight the purported redundancy of the Marxian worldview. Answers at the top of the band are likely to include a balanced assessment of Marxist theory. For example, a good response might note that there have been various revisions to Marx's original theory by later Marxists, which to some extent provide a stronger defence against the claim that the Marxian perspective no longer has any relevance for understanding modern industrial societies. Very good use of postmodernist ideas to challenge Marxist theory might be another way of demonstrating the sophistication required to justify top marks.

### Section B

#### 3 'The data collected using interviews is socially constructed and for that reason it has little value in sociological research.' Explain and assess this view.

- 0–6 Answers at this level are likely to be confined to a few general observations about the use of interviews in sociological research. Any attempt to distinguish between different types of interviews (structured, semi-structured, unstructured, etc.) would trigger the top of the band.
- 7–12 An answer that fails to distinguish between different types of interview technique could still be worth a mark in the lower part of the band if it identifies a few benefits and/or limitations of using interviews in sociological research. To go higher in the band, the distinction between formal and informal interviews has to figure in the answer at some point. Any attempt to explain the idea that research data may be socially constructed is likely to be very limited at this level and answers can still reach the top of the band without addressing this part of the question.
- 13–18 At this level, there will be an attempt to explain the reference to social construction in the question, though the explanation offered may be somewhat limited in answers that merit the lower part of the band. Higher in the band there will be some attempt to evaluate the usefulness of interviews that makes explicit reference to the issue of the data collected being socially constructed. The assessment, however, will lack depth and sophistication.
- 19–25 The idea of research data being socially constructed will be explained accurately at this level and this will include references to relevant aspects on the interview process such as the selection of questions, the interpretation of answers, and the influence of the researcher on the respondent. Answers at this level are also likely to make good use of the distinction between formal and informal interviews. Higher in the band the assessment will be sharply focused on the claim that the usefulness of interviews is undermined by the data collected being socially constructed. Well-informed answers that attempt to defend and/or criticise the view expressed in the question are likely to merit very high marks.

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**4 'Money and time available are the main factors that influence a sociologist's choice of research methods.' Explain and assess this claim.**

- 0–6 A few observations about research methods with no obvious links to the question set may be worth 3 or 4 marks. An answer that is confined to a simple account of how choice of research methods may be influenced by money and time available would merit the top of the band.
- 7–12 A list-like account of some factors that influence choice of research methods would fit the lower part of the band. A more detailed descriptive response that covers a range of relevant factors would go higher in the band. To reach the top of the band there needs to be some mention of theoretical factors. An answer that simply recounts the strengths and limitations of different research methods with little or no linkage to the question should be confined to the lower part of the band.
- 13–18 At this level there will be a clear account of how money and time available may influence the choice of research methods. This will be combined with a discussion of some other factors that would be considered when selecting research methods e.g. theoretical factors, ethical issues, aims and/or values of the researcher, opportunities, etc. Higher in the band there will be a clear attempt to evaluate the relative importance of money and time as influences on the choice of research methods.
- 19–25 Answers at this level will identify a good range of practical and theoretical factors that influence choice of research methods. The more sophisticated the discussion of theoretical factors the higher in the band the answer is likely to reach. The assessment will be explicit and sustained. A good response will weigh the relative importance of pragmatic considerations versus theoretical perspectives as influences on the choice of research methods and reach balanced and well reasoned conclusions.

**Section C**

**5 'Poor people remain in poverty because they lack the right attitudes and values to succeed in society.' Explain and assess this claim.**

- 0–6 The claim in the question links to New Right thinking about the causes of poverty and, more broadly, echoes the various cultural approaches to understanding why poverty persists. However, answers that merit this band are unlikely to pick up on these connections. Instead, the best that can be expected is a response that includes a few general observations about the nature of poverty. A very simple attempt to explain why poor people remain in poverty that has little or no sociological underpinning might be worth 5 or 6 marks.
- 7–12 A basic account of one theory of poverty (e.g. functionalist, Marxist, Lewis, etc.) that somewhat skirts around the question, would fit the lower part of the band. A descriptive account of two or more relevant theories would merit a mark in the higher part of the band. Conversely, an answer that explains in reasonable detail the sociological background to the claim on which the question is based, but goes no further, would also be worth a mark towards the top of the band.
- 13–18 At this level there will be an attempt to explain the notion that in some way poor people themselves are responsible for their poverty, albeit that the explanation may be somewhat limited lower in the band. Answers will also demonstrate knowledge of related and/or contrasting explanations of poverty. Higher in the band there will be some assessment of New Right/cultural explanations of poverty that goes beyond mere juxtaposition with structural theories. However, the analysis certainly doesn't need to be particularly sophisticated to merit the top of the band.

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19–25 Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the differences between cultural and structural explanations of poverty. The claim that poor people remain in poverty because they lack the right attitudes and values to succeed in society will be confronted directly and the deeper the analysis goes in that respect the higher the mark to be awarded. Higher in the band look for some additional indication of sophistication, such as a clear understanding that New Right thinking underpins the claim in the question, or good use of post-modernist contributions to the debate about poverty, or awareness of how issues of gender and ethnicity can be integrated in the answer.

**6 'The competition for jobs and housing between immigrant groups is the main reason why conflict exists between ethnic groups in modern industrial societies.' Explain and assess this claim.**

0–6 The issues raised by the question will be bypassed by answers at this level. A few general comments about racism or ethnic conflict, with little or no sociological underpinning, may be worth 5 or 6 marks.

7–12 A simple summary of one or two theories of racism/ethnic conflict, with little direct linkage to the question, would trigger the lower part of the band. A more sustained descriptive account of these theories, perhaps with more attempt to link the material to the question set, would go higher in the band. Conversely, a mark of 11 or 12 would be justified for a response that lacks references to relevant sociological theories, but which nevertheless explains well why competition for jobs and housing may give rise to ethnic conflict.

13–18 Answers at this level will demonstrate a sound understanding of how ethnic conflict may result from economic pressures. This may be conveyed through, for example, an account of neo-Marxist explanations of racial discrimination, nationalism, and ethnic division. Higher in the band, there will be an attempt to discuss alternative explanations, including theories that emphasise the importance of cultural and historical factors in accounting for ethnic conflict. However, the assessment at this level may be largely through juxtaposition of different explanations rather than explicit evaluation.

19–25 Answers at this level are likely to focus directly on the wording of the question and the issues it raises about economic competition between immigrant groups and host communities. Links between these issues and specific sociological theories of racism and ethnic conflict will be made explicit and developed within an appropriate analytical framework. Lower in the band the answers will be based predominantly on contrasting the different sociological theories. Higher in the band there will be some more independent analysis. This may take the form of, for example, questioning the tendency in many sociological theories to over-generalise about the nature of race relations and ethnic conflict.