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UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level and GCE Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2009 question paper for the guidance of teachers

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/11 Paper 11 (Essay), maximum raw mark 50

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Section A: The Sociological Perspective

1 "The functionalist concept of socialisation is too deterministic. Interactionists provide a better understanding of the process of socialisation." Explain and assess this view.

0–6 A few basic comments about socialisation in general might be worth 3 or 4 marks. Some attempt to define the functionalist concept of socialisation, or to identify characteristics of the interactionist view of socialisation, albeit in a very simple and partial way, would trigger the top of the band. Answers that are confined to a descriptive account of the cases of so-called feral children can go no higher than the top of this band.

7–12 A basic account of the functionalist concept of socialisation, with no further development, would fit the lower part of the band. An answer that is confined to discussing functionalism, but which also includes an acceptable explanation of why the functionalist concept of socialisation might be seen as too deterministic, would merit the top part of the band. A basic descriptive account of the functionalist and interactionist perspectives on socialisation, which perhaps fails directly to address the analytical issues raised by the question, could also reach the top of the band. At this level, there may be little or no attempt to assess the view that the functionalist concept is too deterministic and interactionists provide a better understanding of the process of socialisation.

13–18 Lower in the band, the answer may be confined mainly to an accurate descriptive account of the functionalist and interactionist perspectives on socialisation. However, there will also be at least a rudimentary attempt to address the issue of determinism and to explain why the interactionists possibly provide a better understanding of the process of socialisation. Higher in the band, the assessment will be more developed, though key analytical points might emerge implicitly i.e. through juxtaposition of views, as opposed to being stated directly. Though it is not essential, we might expect that higher in the band answers will include references to specific theorists and the contributions each has made to the development of the functionalist and/or interactionist understanding of the process of socialisation.

19–25 Answers at this level will demonstrate a clear and accurate understanding of the differences between the functionalist and interactionist perspectives on socialisation. The issue of determinism will be addressed directly and coherent points will be made about why the functionalist theory of socialisation might be seen as too deterministic. Lower in the band, the discussion of the interactionist perspective may lack some detail and might be confined mainly to exposing the limitations of the functionalist concept of socialisation. Higher in the band, a fuller picture will emerge of the contribution that interactionists have made to understanding the process of socialisation. This might include, for example, detailed references to the ideas of thinkers such as James, Mead, Cooley, Becker and Goffman. To trigger this band, there must also be a concerted attempt to support or challenge the view that interactionism provides a better understanding of the process of socialisation. Higher in the band, the assessment will be marked by some element of sophistication, such as the ability to recognise limitations in the interactionist perspective or the use of examples from studies to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the different view of socialisation.

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2 "Durkheim's notion that social order is based on common values and shared interests is mistaken. It is through ideology and the exercise of power that social order is maintained." Explain and assess this view.

0–6 A few assertions about the nature of social order, with little sociological provenance, might be worth 3 or 4 marks. A cursory attempt to define the functionalist concept of social order, with or without reference to Durkheim, could trigger the top of the band. Likewise, a few simple points about the Marxist view of social order, with no further development, would be worth 5 or 6 marks.

7–12 Answers that are confined to a basic account of Durkheim's view of social order, which would likely include reference to mechanical/organic solidarity and the collective conscience, could be worth up to ten marks. To go higher, there also needs to be some relevant commentary, which could be quite brief, on the Marxist notion that ideology and power are central to the production of social order. At this level, there need be little or no attempt to assess the strengths and limitations of these contrasting perspectives on social order.

13–18 A sound account of Durkheim's theory of social order is a requirement for answers that trigger this band. There will also be a clear attempt to explain the role that ideology and power might play in the production of social order. Lower in the band, however, the discussion of the Marxist view of social order might be rather general and lack sharpness in its treatment of the concepts of ideology and power. Lower in the band too, we should expect only a brief and rudimentary attempt to assess the Durkheimian and/or Marxist views of social order. Higher in the band, the assessment will be more developed and a sharper understanding of the differences between the two perspectives will emerge.

19–25 Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of both the Durkheimian and the Marxist views of social order. Discussion of different strands of Marxist theory might be one feature that distinguishes answers meriting the top of the band. There will also be a sustained and well-informed attempt to assess the respective strengths and limitations of these contrasting theories of social order. At the top of the band, we might expect to see an overall conclusion emerging about which, if either, view of social order is most convincing and why. References to other theories of social order (feminist, interactionist, post-modernist) could be a way of demonstrating higher level understanding if they are linked well to the assessment of the Durkheimian and Marxist perspectives.

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Section B: Sociological Methods

3 "Quantitative research methods have more limitations than strengths." Explain and assess this view.

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, though, the answer must include references to particular research methods. At this level, the discussion of the strengths and limitations of quantitative research methods will cover both practical and theoretical points. Lower in the band, though, the treatment of theory may be rather basic and lack development. In answers at the top of the band, we should expect to see well-made links to theoretical perspectives and/or references to relevant concepts such as validity, reliability, objectivity, and the representative nature of large-scale research. Within this band, assessment may be largely implicit i.e. it will appear in the statement of strengths and limitations associated with quantitative research and/or in 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 an explicit attempt to assess the view that quantitative research methods have more limitations than strengths. The assessment of this view may be somewhat basic lower in the band, but will be more developed and thoughtful in answers that merit the higher marks.

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4 "Official statistics have more strengths and fewer limitations than other sources of secondary data." Explain and assess this view.

0–6 A basic attempt to define secondary data, with little or no reference to official statistics, might be worth 3 or 4 marks. Likewise, a simple description of official statistics, with no further development, would fit the middle of the band. The top of the band could be triggered by a disjointed response that just happens to identify one or two simple points about the strengths and/or limitations of official statistics as a source of secondary data.

7–12 Answers that focus only on the strengths (or the limitations) of official statistics would fit the lower part of the band. To go higher, both the strengths and the limitations need to be addressed, though not necessarily with equal attention. A sound run through of some strengths and limitations of official statistics, perhaps highlighting mainly practical points, could reach the top of the band. At this level, there need be no attempt to assess the view expressed in the question, nor is it essential that other sources of secondary data be discussed.

13–18 An answer that describes a fair range of strengths and limitations associated with official statistics, with some coverage of theoretical issues as well as practical points, could score up to 16 marks. To go higher, there also needs to be some overall assessment of the usefulness of official statistics as a source of secondary data. One way to achieve this would be by comparing official statistics with other sources of secondary data that might be used in sociological research. An alternative would be to discuss the usefulness of official statistics within the context of the wider debate between positivists and interpretivists. Another way of demonstrating assessment skills in relation to this question would be to evaluate whether the strengths of official statistics outweigh the limitations, or vice versa. We should expect though that the assessment, at this level, may be somewhat lacking in depth and insight.

19–25 Answers that trigger this band will cover a wide range of strengths and limitations associated with the use of official statistics in sociological research. While practical points will be covered, we might expect equal or greater emphasis to be given to theoretical issues. References to appropriate studies, while not essential, would be a further way of demonstrating the level of sophistication required to trigger this band. There will also be a sustained attempt to assess the usefulness of official statistics as a source of secondary data. This will include some comparison with other sources of secondary data, though this need not be an extensive part of the answer and may, for example, be dealt with through contrasting the merits of quantitative and qualitative sources of secondary data. To reach the top of the band, clear and incisive conclusions need to emerge about whether it is correct to claim that official statistics have more strengths and fewer limitations than other sources of secondary data. The persuasiveness of the arguments offered on this issue will be the main factor differentiating answers within this band.

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Section C: Social Differentiation and Stratification

5 "Class divisions in industrial societies have changed in many key respects since the nineteenth century." Explain and assess this view.

0–6 A few assertions about the nature of class divisions today, with no clear reference to the question, might be worth 3 or 4 marks. An answer that consists of a few brief references to some key changes in class divisions since the nineteenth century, would trigger the top of the band. A simple account of Marx's theory, with little or no further development, would also be worth 5 or 6 marks.

7–12 A basic account of several changes in class divisions since the nineteenth century, with little or no reference to sociological concepts and research findings, would fit the lower part of the band. Likewise, a sound account of Marx's theory of class, with no further development, would also be worth up to 9 marks. To go higher, the changes in class divisions referred to in the question need to be identified with the backing of appropriate sociological sources. Hence, for example, candidates might refer to the embourgeoisement, proletarianisation and underclass theories and/or they might discuss the ideas of Parkin, Dahrendorf, and Goldthorpe, among other sociologists who have reassessed Marx's theory of class in the light of changes in the social structure since the nineteenth century. At this level, however, answers are likely to be primarily descriptive and there may be little or no assessment of the view that class divisions have changed radically since Marx's time.

13–18 Answers at this level will provide a clear and accurate account of some of the relevant sociological debates about the changes that have affected the class structure since the nineteenth century. Lower in the band, there may be only a brief attempt to assess the view that class divisions are very different today to the nineteenth century. Higher in the band, however, the answer will be more balanced between explanation and assessment. Assessment might take the form of questioning how far posited changes such as, for example, embourgoisement and the emergence of a separate underclass, have actually occurred. How far such changes have fundamentally altered the class structure might also be questioned. Likewise, the assessment could be delivered through a discussion of the relevance of Marx's two class model of society in the light of recent social changes. While there will be a sustained assessment higher in the band, the analysis may lack depth and fail to develop plausible overall conclusions to the question.

19–25 Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the sociological background to the idea that class divisions have changed in many key respects since the nineteenth century. References to appropriate theories and/or evidence will be used effectively to discuss the nature and extent of changes in the class structure. The assessment will be sustained and well-informed. Higher in the band, there will be clear recognition that there are different views about the significance of the changes that have affected the class structure since Marx's time. However, there may also be an attempt to draw overall conclusions about how far, if at all, class divisions are different today to the nineteenth century. The sophistication of the analysis will be the main factor differentiating answers that merit the top part of the band.

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6 "A culture exists among the poor that makes attempts to abolish poverty more difficult." Explain and assess this claim.

0–6 Answers at this level are unlikely to recognise that the wording of the question is an invitation to discuss Lewis' 'culture of poverty' thesis. A few assertions about the nature of poverty might be worth 3 or 4 marks. Some disjointed references to an explanation or theory of poverty, other than Lewis' work, would trigger the top of the band.

7–12 Some plausible comments about why it is difficult to eradicate poverty, with little or no reference to identifiable sociological sources, could merit 7 or 8 marks. To go higher, there needs to be some use of appropriate sociological explanations of poverty. A sound account of the 'culture of poverty' thesis, for example, would fit the top of the band. A weaker summary of Lewis' ideas could also reach the top of the band if it were complemented by some basic references to one or more other explanations of poverty. Attempts to answer the question wholly in terms of Marx's theory of class could achieve up to 10 marks, if done very well, but that would be the ceiling for this type of tangential response. At this level, there need be little or no assessment of the view expressed in the question.

13–18 To reach this level, answers must include some reference to cultural explanations of poverty (though not necessarily to the 'culture of poverty' thesis specifically). Lower in the band, there will be a concerted attempt to explain the existence of poverty using appropriate sociological sources. A good account of one cultural explanation (e.g. Lewis, functionalist, New Right, etc.), with no further development other than some basic assessment, might be worth up to 15 marks. Likewise, a more basic account of two or more sociological explanations of poverty, with some limited assessment, could also score up to 15 marks. Answers lower in the band will be mainly descriptive. To go higher, the answer needs to be more balanced between explanation and assessment of the view expressed in the question. At the top of the band there will be a concerted attempt to assess the notion that a culture exists among the poor that hinders attempts to eradicate poverty. However, the assessment at this level may lack some depth and could be confined mainly to a contrasting (or juxtaposition) of cultural and structural explanations of poverty.

19–25 Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of cultural explanations of poverty. Other explanations of poverty will also be considered and there will be some, implicit or explicit, recognition of the divergence between cultural and structural accounts. The assessment will be sustained and well-informed. It will go beyond mere juxtaposition of contrasting perspectives, to analyse directly the extent to which a culture(s) exists among the poor that hinders attempts to eradicate poverty. Lower in the band, the assessment may be a little narrow in scope. For example, the assessment might be confined to a detailing of the limitations of cultural explanations of poverty. Higher in the band, the analysis may be wider ranging and include, for example, a thoroughgoing review of the strengths and limitations of both cultural and structural explanations of poverty. Another way of triggering the top of the band in terms of assessment would be to question the value of mono-causal explanations of poverty by, for instance, pointing out that there are many groups in poverty and the circumstances of each, to some extent, is different.

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