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UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
General Certificate of Education
Advanced Subsidiary Level and Advanced Level

**SOCIOLOGY** **9699/22**

Paper 2 Principles and Methods 2 **October/November 2009**

**1 hour 30 minutes**

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

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**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST**

If you have been given an Answer Booklet, follow the instructions on the front cover of the Booklet.
Write your Centre number, candidate number and name on all the work you hand in.
Write in dark blue or black pen.
You may use a soft pencil for any diagrams, graphs or rough working.
Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **two** questions.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.
The number of marks is given in brackets [ ] at the end of each question or part question.

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Answer **two** questions.

**1** Positivists believe that the study of society can, and should, be based on the same principles and procedures as the natural sciences. Through their research positivists seek to discover general laws that explain the causes and consequences of social phenomena, such as rates of crime and suicide. Positivists believe that human behaviour, like the subject matter of the natural sciences, can be directly observed and objectively measured. In this view, people react to external factors and their behaviour can be explained in terms of this reaction.

By contrast, sociologists who support the interpretivist perspective think that there are fundamental differences between human behaviour and the inanimate objects that are studied by the natural sciences. As a result, the methods and principles of the natural sciences are inappropriate to the study of humans. Unlike inanimate objects, humans have consciousness involving thoughts, feelings, intentions and self-awareness. As a consequence, interpretivists argue, people attach meaning to their actions. It is this process within the mind of the social actor that must be investigated in order to understand human behaviour. Interpretivists reject what they see as the *determinism* in the positivist view of human behaviour. The assumption made by positivists that the methods of the natural sciences are objective and value-free has also been questioned by the interpretivists.

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

**(b)** Describe **two** limitations of using laboratory research in sociology. [4]

**(c)** Explain why the assumption that the methods of the natural sciences are objective and value-free can be questioned. [8]

**(d)** Assess the interpretivist view that the methods and principles of the natural sciences are inappropriate to the study of human behaviour. [11]

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**2** The research methods most widely used by sociologists are questionnaires, interviews and observation. Other methods of sociological research include the use of experiments, case studies and life histories. Experiments are most favoured by sociologists within the positivist perspective. The type of experiments that are used in sociology are usually field experiments rather than the laboratory-based research that is carried out in the natural sciences. Case studies and life histories are used most by sociologists adopting an interpretive approach.

Sociological research may also involve the use of secondary data. Secondary data is information that already exists and has been gathered by other people or organisations. Official statistics provide an important source of secondary data for sociological investigation. Other sources of secondary data that sociologists have used in their studies include diaries, biographies, letters, historical documents, and sound and video recordings. One use for this type of data involves content analysis where the researcher studies the messages that are conveyed when people talk or write. However, special care needs to be taken when using secondary sources in sociological research as the data may contain bias and therefore lack *validity*.

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

**(b)** Describe **two** advantages of using secondary data in sociological research. [4]

**(c)** Explain why positivists might criticise the use of case studies and life histories in sociological research. [8]

**(d)** Assess the usefulness of official statistics as a source of secondary data in sociological research. [11]

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**[Turn over**

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**3** With the development of capitalism, Karl Marx believed that sections of the middle class would become absorbed into the working class. In the process, they would adopt working class norms and values. Marx also expected that the working class would become increasingly impoverished and, as a consequence, they would develop *class consciousness* and be more determined in their opposition to capitalism. To many commentators, however, industrialisation has not brought about the changes Marx anticipated. Since the mid-nineteenth century when Marx was writing, the middle class population has increased. Moreover, the working class has become relatively more, and not less, affluent. Indeed, it has been suggested that a process of embourgeoisement has taken place whereby more affluent sections of the working class take on the norms and values of the middle class

However, some sociologists dispute that embourgeoisement has happened and they point to evidence that shows continuing wide gaps in the distribution of income and wealth between lower paid workers and the managerial and property owning classes. They also claim that social class identity remains very important in modern industrial societies despite the growing influence of other types of identity based on ethnicity, gender, age and consumption patterns. Marx's concept of proletarianisation has been revised by sociologists such as Braverman to argue that the working class is actually expanding today through the addition of increasing numbers of de-skilled white-collar workers.

**(a)** What is meant by the term *class consciousness*? [2]

**(b)** Describe **two** examples of social class inequality. [4]

**(c)** Explain why some sociologists believe that a process of proletarianisation is occurring in modern industrial societies. [8]

**(d)** Assess the claim that social class identity remains important in modern industrial societies. [11]

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