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Cambridge International AS & A Level

Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level

SOCIOLOGY **9699/23**

Paper 2 Theory and Methods **October/November 2015**

1 hour 30 minutes

No Additional Materials are required.

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READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

An answer booklet is provided inside this question paper. You should follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

Answer Question 1 and **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3.
The number of marks is given in brackets [ ] at the end of each question or part question.

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Section A

Answer question 1.

1 Quantitative data is usually presented in numerical form and taken from large-scale surveys. Typically, the methods used to collect quantitative data include questionnaires, structured interviews and secondary sources such as official statistics. There is considerable disagreement about which methods produce the best results in sociological research. A key strength of quantitative methods is that they allow the researcher to identify trends and patterns of behaviour and to make generalisations.

However, not all sociologists support the use of quantitative methods. Many, such as interpretivists, favour qualitative methods, such as unstructured interviews and observation techniques. Qualitative secondary data, such as diaries and historical documents, may also be used in sociological research. Interpretivists argue that qualitative methods reveal more about feelings and thoughts and therefore produce data that is high in validity. Feminists view this as particularly important and so they favour the use of unstructured interviews. A general criticism of qualitative methods is that they result in the collection of data that contains *researcher bias.*

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

(b) Describe **one** strength and **one** limitation of using official statistics in sociological research. [4]

(c) Explain why feminists favour the use of unstructured interviews. [8]

(d) Assess the strengths and limitations of using diaries and historical documents in sociological research. [11]

Section B

Answer **either** question 2 **or** question 3.

2 Explain and assess different theories of how social order is maintained in society. [25]

3 'In modern industrial societies individuals now have much more freedom to choose their own social identities.' Explain and assess this view. [25]

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