CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level and GCE Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2012 series

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/22   Paper 2 (Data Response), 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, 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.

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International Examinations

1   Functionalists and conflict theorists hold contrasting views on the process of social change. Functionalists argue that the survival of any society depends on meeting a set of needs, or what Talcott Parsons refers to as functional prerequisites. Each part of society has an important function to play in ensuring that the functional prerequisites are met. When a pattern of activity, or an institution, is no longer useful in helping society to operate smoothly, it becomes 'dysfunctional' and will gradually be replaced by a more effective alternative. Functionalists believe that rapid social change is likely to have negative consequences for society and may lead to a state of anomie.

The normal state of society, in the functionalist view, is based on harmony and consensus. Society works like a powerful machine to counteract any forces that would undermine *social stability*. For functionalists, social change is a gradual process that is driven by the needs of society rather than by the interests of any particular group or social class. A very different view of social change emerges in conflict theory. Here social change is viewed as an inevitable process that is driven by the competition between different groups for access to scarce resources, such as power, wealth and status. Conflict theorists argue that, rather than evolving gradually, social change is likely to be a more explosive process that is brought about through intense political struggles and possibly even revolutions.

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

Social stability refers to a state of balance or equilibrium whereby normalised social activities and institutional arrangements are enacted without tension or the undue intervention of enforcement agencies. Two marks for a clear and accurate definition; one mark for a partial definition, such as 'a society where there is not much conflict' or 'a society where there isn't any need for sudden, dramatic social changes'.

(b) Describe two functional prerequisites.   [4]

Parsons identified four functional prerequisites: adaptation to the physical environment, pattern maintenance, integration and goal attainment. Also award practical examples of each of these four prerequisites; for instance, reward 'the need to organise the production of the means of physical survival' or 'the need for people to get on and work together'. One mark for the example plus one mark for development (2 x 2 marks).

(c) Explain why functionalists believe that rapid social change is likely to have negative consequences for society.   [8]

0–4   A few simple points about functionalist theory or about social change, with only tenuous links to the question, would be worth 1 or 2 marks. A basic account of what is meant by anomie, with some implicit links to the question, would fit the top half of the band.

5–8   A sound account of why functionalists believe that rapid social change is likely to have negative consequences, would trigger the lower part of the band. To go higher, the explanation offered needs to be more conceptually refined or cover a wider range of relevant functionalist ideas. The negative consequences functionalist theorists have linked to rapid social change include: the breakdown of social order, loss of social integration, anomie, economic dislocation, and weakening of the collective conscience.

(d) Assess the view that conflict theories underestimate the amount of consensus in society. **[11]**

0–4 A few simple observations about conflict or consensus in society, with little sociological insight and only weak links to the question, would be worth 1 or 2 marks. Answers that offer a basic explanation of what is meant by conflict theory, with little or no further development in relation to the question, would fit the higher part of the band.

5–8 A sound account of the way that conflict theory (or theories) views social order, with no further links to the question, would fit the lower part of the band. Answers that contrast the conflict theory perspective on social order with that of the functionalists, would trigger the top half of the band. Any assessment at this level will be weak and is likely to rely on juxtaposition of different theories of social order.

9–11 Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of why the functionalist notion of consensus in society is rejected by conflict theorists. There will also be an attempt to assess the extent to which conflict theorists may have underestimated the amount of consensus in society. Lower in the band, the assessment may still rely mainly on the juxtaposition of 'conflict' versus 'consensus' perspectives on social order. To reach the top of the band, however, there must also be some attempt to articulate an overall conclusion about how far conflict theorists may have underestimated the extent of consensus or normative integration in society.

2 **In sociological research, it is generally too expensive or time consuming to question very large numbers of people. In order to make the numbers manageable, it is necessary to select some individuals for questioning rather than others. This is known as sampling. The aim of sampling is to ensure that the numbers selected are large enough to fairly represent the group but also to be reasonably easy and economic to manage. Various forms of sampling techniques may be used to select the sample. These techniques are used with an appropriate *sampling frame* to select respondents in the numbers required for the research.**

The success of social surveys depends heavily on the accuracy of the sampling process. Social surveys are large-scale studies that seek to collect information which can be expressed in numerical form. The aim is to ensure that the data gathered is representative and can be generalised to the wider population from which the study group is drawn. Positivists favour this type of research, though interpretivists argue that the results from social surveys lack depth and fail to reflect the complex reality that shapes human behaviour.

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

A sampling frame is the source from which the details of the population to be studied is drawn. Two marks for a clear and accurate definition; one mark for a partial definition, such as 'the people who are to be studied' or 'a list of people with similar characteristics'.

(b) Describe two sampling techniques. **[4]**

Reward references to probability and non-probability sampling. More likely examples will be specific methods such as stratified, multi-stage, cluster, quota, snowball. One mark for the example plus one mark for development (2 x 2 marks).

(c) Explain why the success of social surveys depends heavily on the accuracy of the sampling process. **[8]**

0–4 A few simple points about social surveys, with no direct reference to the sampling process, would be worth 1 or 2 marks. Answers that discuss the sampling process in sociological research, but with only weak links to social surveys, would fit the higher part of the band.

5–8 A sound account of why the sampling process is important to the success of a research study, with some basic links to social surveys specifically, would trigger the lower part of the band. To go higher, the analysis needs to be focused directly on social surveys and the explanation offered will demonstrate good understanding of why the sampling process is so important to that particular form of sociological research.

(d) Assess the strengths and limitations of social surveys. **[11]**

0–4 A basic attempt to define the nature of social surveys, with no further development in relation to the question, would be worth 1 or 2 marks. A few simple points about questionnaires, or about the use of statistical data in sociological research, may be worth 3 or 4 marks.

5–8 Lower in the band, answers are likely to confuse social surveys with questionnaires. A sound account of the strengths and limitations of questionnaires would be worth 5 or 6 marks. Higher in the band, there will be a more accurate understanding of what a social survey involves. A sound account of the strengths and limitations of large-scale quantitative research, perhaps stronger on practical points than on theory, would fit the top half of the band. Answers that focus on contrasting quantitative versus qualitative research (i.e. with links to social surveys left somewhat implicit) will be addressing the question to some extent and can reach up to a maximum of 8 marks.

9–11 Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the strengths and limitations of social surveys. Both theoretical and practical points will be covered. Lower in the band, the assessment is likely to be somewhat implicit and will be delivered through the way in which the different strengths and limitations are described. To reach the top of the band, however, there must also be some attempt to draw an overall conclusion about the value of using social surveys in sociological research.

3   Functionalists argue that some positions in a modern industrial society are more important than others because they are vital to the continuation of society. Not everyone in society has the talent or ability to fill these top positions. Holders of the top positions also require high-level skills and qualifications in order to perform their roles effectively. They must make personal sacrifices in undergoing lengthy periods of education and training. Functionalists claim that talented people will only be persuaded to make these sacrifices if they can expect to receive high pay and status at the end of it. This leads to the conclusion that a system of inequality, or unequal rewards and prestige, is functional for society because it ensures that the most important jobs are filled by the most talented and qualified people.

Conflict theorists reject the idea that differences in pay and status in society can be explained in terms of the requirement to attract talented people to fill the most important jobs. They claim that differences in pay are more likely to reflect differences in the power and market situation of the groups concerned. Conflict theorists also question whether social inequality is beneficial or 'functional' for society. The benefits that privileged groups gain from a system of unequal rewards may be paid for by the sacrifice and hard work of those who occupy lower positions. This can result in the less advantaged groups feeling a sense of *alienation* and opposition to the better off groups in society.

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

Alienation is often used to describe the sense of meaninglessness, powerlessness, isolation and self-estrangement many individuals feel in society. Two marks for a clear and accurate definition; one mark for a partial definition, such as 'a sense of estrangement' or 'feeling uninvolved in society'.

(b) Describe <u>two</u> factors, apart from pay, that influence how much prestige is associated with a particular occupation.   [4]

Relevant factors include: qualifications and training required for the job; private versus public sector occupation; characterisation within the media possibly; the 'celebrity' culture of certain occupations; manual versus non-manual work distinction; power. One mark for the example plus one mark for development (2 x 2 marks).

(c) Explain how differences in pay may reflect differences in the power and market situation of the groups concerned.   [8]

0–4   A few simple points about the determinants of pay rates, with limited sociological insight and only tenuous links to the question, would be worth 1 or 2 marks. A basic example of how pay rates may reflect differences in power and/or market situation, would fit the top half of the band. Determinants of pay rates include qualifications, skill levels, trade union activity, gender and ethnicity, social networks.

5–8   Answers that demonstrate a sound understanding of the Weberian notion of 'market situation' and its relevance for understanding differences in pay rates, would merit the lower part of the band. A good understanding of the relevant Weberian analysis would go higher. Likewise, answers that separate the concepts of power and market situation, explaining how each may influence pay rates, would be worth 7 or 8 marks. While the concept of market situation is associated with the Weberian strand of conflict theory, the notion of power is more often used by theorists in the feminist and Marxist traditions in analysing the dynamics of the labour market.

(d) Assess the view that social inequality is functional for society. [11]

0–4   A few simple points about social inequality would be worth 1 or 2 marks. An attempt to explain the functionalist idea that certain social arrangements may be functional, with no direct reference to social inequality, would fit the higher part of the band.

5–8   A basic account of the functionalist view of social inequality, perhaps based on the ideas of Davis and Moore, would fit the lower part of the band. A more detailed or subtle account of the functionalist theory could reach the top half of the band. Any assessment at this level will be rather limited and may be confined to juxtaposing different ideas about the purported functions of social inequality.

9–11 Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the functionalist view of social inequality. There will also be an attempt to assess the idea that social inequality is functional for society. Lower in the band, the assessment may rely heavily on contrasts between functionalist theories and conflict theories. To reach the top of the band, however, some of the assessment needs to be more directly analytical. For example, the teleology inherent in functionalist thinking might be questioned or the idea that societies have 'needs' could be challenged.