

MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2006 question paper

2251 SOCIOLOGY

2251/01

Paper 1, maximum raw mark 90

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, 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.

The grade thresholds for various grades are published in the report on the examination for most IGCSE, GCE Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level syllabuses.

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Section A: Research Methods

Questionnaires and structured interviews are quantitative research techniques much loved by the positivists. Postal questionnaires containing 'closed' questions (that is questions requiring a 'yes' or 'no' answer) are ideal for scientific purposes. They are quick and cheap. The sample can be controlled to ensure representation, the data is easily collated, and the findings can be analysed statistically and generalised. There is no ambiguity in the data and therefore it is more straightforward to draw conclusions.

Another group known as interpretive sociologists are rather critical about the value of using questionnaires and structured interviews. They prefer qualitative research methods, such as unstructured interviews and participant observation studies. Both positivists and interpretive sociologists accuse each other of producing research data that is affected by bias and distortion. Positivists also claim that qualitative research lacks reliability, while interpretive sociologists respond by saying that quantitative research lacks validity.

1 (a) In sociological research, what is meant by the following terms:

(i) structured interviews

[2]

Interviews based on pre-set questions = 2 marks. An answer that demonstrates partial understanding = 1 mark.

(ii) representation

[2]

The ability to reproduce accurately in a sample the qualities of the wider study group = 2 marks. An answer that demonstrates partial understanding = 1 mark.

(iii) participant observation

[2]

A technique for gathering data that involves the researcher taking part in the activities of the group under study = 2 marks. An answer that demonstrates partial understanding = 1 mark.

(b) Describe two methods for selecting a sample when carrying out a postal questionnaire.

[4]

Accept any appropriate sampling method. One mark for each method identified (1 x 2) and one mark for describing accurately each example (1 x 2).

(c) Explain one advantage and one disadvantage of using open questions in an interview.

[4]

Advantages include the ability of the respondent to answer in his/her own words; more depth to the answers; answers may throw up new leads for the researcher. Disadvantages include: difficult to collate the answers and analyse statistically; irrelevant material may be collected. One mark for each advantage/disadvantage identified (1 x 2) and one mark for describing accurately each example (1 x 2).

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(d) Distinguish between the terms *reliability* and *validity*. [4]

One term well defined would be worth 2 marks. Both terms accurately defined would be worth 4 marks.

(e) Describe two reasons why bias may occur when collecting data using a postal questionnaire. [4]

Bias may occur because of the way the questions are worded, the low response rate of postal questionnaires, the difficulty of checking the authenticity of the answers, etc. One mark for each reason identified (1 x 2) and one mark for describing accurately each example (1 x 2).

(f) Describe two advantages and two disadvantages of qualitative research. [8]

Advantages include the depth and detail of information, high validity, the opportunity to study people in their natural surroundings, authenticity of data collected. Disadvantages include: low reliability, time consuming, possible lack of objectivity. One mark for each advantage/disadvantage identified (2 x 2) and one mark for describing accurately each example (2 x 2).

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Section B: Culture and Socialisation

2 The values of the culture in which we live define our roles and the patterns of behaviour that go with these roles.

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

Values may be defined as the beliefs and goals held to be important in society. A clear and accurate definition along these lines would be worth two marks, with one mark for evidence of partial understanding.

(b) Describe two roles that a child might have. **[4]**

Examples might include the roles of son/daughter, sibling, pupil, grandchild etc. One mark for identifying each role (1 x 2) and one mark for describing accurately each example (1 x 2).

(c) Why might conflict arise between the different roles that a person has? **[6]**

Level 1: A few simple observations along broadly the right lines, but with little sociological provenance, would be worth one or two marks. A better-informed answer that is rather narrow in the range of points covered may merit the top of the band. 0 - 3

Level 2: Appropriate sociological knowledge will be deployed in answering the question. This may include, for example, references to status conflict, different social expectations, role distance, and the concepts of inequality and power. 4 - 6

(d) How far do people who live within a culture share the same values? **[8]**

Level 1: Answers at this level will demonstrate only limited understanding of the question at best. 0 - 3

Level 2: A basic account of the notion of value consensus, whether that term is used explicitly or not, may be worth a mark at the bottom of the band. A better answer at this level would highlight the possibility of conflict over values, perhaps through referring to sub-cultures and studies of deviance. 4 - 6

Level 3: Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the issues raised by the question. Examples of where disagreements about values may arise will be discussed and the notion of value consensus will be critically examined. At the top of the band, the contrast between consensus and conflict perspectives in sociology may feature as a key part of the answer. 7 - 8

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3 Historical research in Europe suggests that it is only in recent centuries that childhood has come to be regarded as a distinct and separate stage of life. This implies that far from being a naturally occurring phenomenon, childhood is socially constructed.

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

Socially constructed may be said to refer to the process by which social roles are produced through interaction and negotiation between actors. A clear and accurate definition along these lines would be worth two marks, with one mark for evidence of partial understanding.

(b) Describe two examples of how children are treated differently to adults in modern industrial societies. [4]

One mark for identifying each example (1 x 2) and one mark for describing accurately each example (1 x 2).

(c) Why has childhood come to be regarded as a distinct and separate stage of life in modern industrial societies? [6]

Level 1: A commonsense answer that is broadly along the right lines would merit a few marks. 0 - 3

Level 2: Answers at this level are likely to display some understanding of Aries' analysis, whether or not the references to his work are explicit. The influence of child protection legislation in particular would be a fruitful area to cover in answering the question. Clear and accurate contrasts with pre-industrial society are likely to be a feature of answers at the top of this band. 4 - 6

(d) To what extent does the experience of childhood vary depending on factors such as social class, gender and culture? [8]

Level 1: A few poorly framed comments about childhood in general would fit this band. 0 - 3

Level 2: An attempt will be made to answer the question as set, but the response will rest on a rather limited range of material. At the top of the band, there may be at least one or two clear examples offered of how the experience of childhood may vary between social groups. 4 - 6

Level 3: The point that experiences of childhood may vary from one group to another will be well illustrated. At the top of the band, there will also be some attempt to assess the extent to which experiences of childhood vary, although the conclusions reached may be rather basic. 7 - 8

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Section C: Social Stratification

4 Despite all the talk about gender equality in employment today, women still tend to be disadvantaged in terms of earning and job conditions.

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

Gender equality refers to the equal treatment of men and women in terms of access to and enjoyment of various benefits and rewards in society. A clear and accurate definition along these lines would be worth two marks, with one mark for evidence of partial understanding.

(b) Describe two ways in which women are discriminated against in employment. [4]

Relative to male employees, women may experience: low wages, poor job conditions; less job security and greater likelihood of unemployment and redundancy; segregation into a narrow range of work tasks based on stereotypes of traditional female roles; less chance of promotion. One mark for each relevant point (1 x 2), plus one mark for describing each example accurately (1 x 2).

(c) Why may an employer discriminate against female workers? [6]

Reasons why an employer may discriminate against female employees include: personal prejudice; economic advantages linked to the exploitation of female workers; fear of adverse reaction from male employees or male dominated trade unions.

Level 1: One or two basic points about gender inequality in employment may fit the lower part of the band. A few simple points about why an employer may discriminate against female employees may merit the top of the band. 0 - 3

Level 2: Several appropriate reasons will be considered and there will be clear evidence of sociological knowledge and understanding. 4 - 6

(d) How far may the inequality experienced by women in paid employment be explained in terms of the position they occupy within the home? [8]

Level 1: A few commonsense observations about women's position within the home, or about the nature of the inequality they experience at work, would fit this band. There will be little or no engagement with the specific wording of the question at this level. 0 - 3

Level 2: A few basic comments about the links between home and work in relation to gender inequality would trigger this band. The analysis will be fairly limited at this level. 4 - 6

Level 3: Answers will demonstrate a good understanding of the links between inequality in the home and inequality in the workplace. At the top of the band, there may be some use of relevant theories, particularly the feminist perspective. 7 - 8

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5 The discrimination experienced by some minority ethnic groups may in part be linked to the way that they are stereotyped by the majority population.

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

A stereotype is a fixed, narrow conception of an individual or group, usually prejudicial and generally resistant to easy change. A clear and accurate definition along these lines would be worth two marks, with one mark for evidence of partial understanding.

(b) Describe two examples of stereotypes that may be applied to minority ethnic groups. [4]

Negative connotations are often applied, such as: lazy; culturally inferior; a threat to social order; criminals and parasites; an economic burden on the rest of society; less moral; etc. One mark for each relevant point (1 x 2), and one mark for accurately describing each example (1 x 2).

(c) In what ways may some ethnic minority groups be discriminated against? [6]

Level 1: Answers at this level will be poorly organised, with vague references only to the forms of discrimination experienced by minority ethnic groups. 0 - 3

Level 2: A number of examples of discrimination will be considered, such as those that occur within employment, housing, education, welfare, and the media. The range of examples used and/or the amount of relevant details will determine where the answer comes within the band. 4 - 6

(d) What social factors are most important in explaining the inequality experienced by some minority ethnic groups? [8]

Level 1: A few simple observations about the nature of ethnic inequality would fit this band. 0 - 3

Level 2: One or two relevant social factors will be identified and a basic account of how they lead to ethnic inequality will follow. 4 - 6

Level 3: Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of a range of relevant factors. At the top of the band there may be links to appropriate theories, such as the Marxist or Weberian accounts of ethnic inequality. 7 - 8

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Section D: Power and Politics

6 A distinction is often made between two main types of political system: democratic and authoritarian. Most modern industrial societies have democratic systems of government that are supposed to represent fairly the interests of all the citizens.

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

Democracy may be defined as a political system in which citizens are able to choose their government through free and fair elections. A clear and accurate definition along these lines would be worth two marks, with one mark for evidence of partial understanding.

(b) Describe two ways in which citizens are represented in democratic systems of government? [4]

Ways in which citizens are represented include, for example, through elected politicians and governments; through pressure group activity; through the courts and legal process; possibly through the media, as an informal means of representation. One mark for each relevant way (1 x 2), and one mark for each example appropriately developed.

(c) What are the main differences between authoritarian and democratic political systems? [6]

Level 1: One or two differences may be identified, but in a very basic way. 0 - 3

Level 2: Several differences will be identified and explained accurately. The main differences are in terms of accountability, representation, use of coercion, respect for rights and liberty, independence of the judiciary, and freedom of expression. 4 - 6

(d) To what extent do governments in modern industrial societies represent fairly the interests of all their citizens? [8]

A range of possible answers here. Classical theories of democracy would suggest that all groups are represented equally, though there are many counter arguments that access to government depends heavily on how much power and status an individual or group possesses.

Level 1: A scant response with a few isolated points about democracy would fit this band. 0 - 3

Level 2: There will be an attempt to address the issues raised by the question, but the range of points covered will be limited and the analysis will be rather basic at best. 4 - 6

Level 3: Answers at this level will recognise that there are different views about the extent to which governments in modern industrial societies fairly represent the interests of all their citizens. At the top of the band, the analysis will be well formed and support a clear, well-reasoned conclusion. 7 - 8

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7 To ensure that people abide by the law the State may use coercion. But to maintain its authority the State must also persuade members of society that it is right to obey the law.

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

Authority may be defined as power in a society that is accepted as legitimate (fair or just). A clear and accurate definition along these lines would be worth two marks, with one mark for evidence of partial understanding.

(b) Describe two forms of coercion that might be used by the State. [4]

Examples of State coercion include arrest, fines, imprisonment, surveillance, use of police and military force, economic sanctions, and possibly torture in extreme cases. One mark for identifying each form of coercion (1 x 2) and one mark for describing accurately each example (1 x 2).

(c) From what sources does the State obtain its authority in modern democratic societies? [6]

Level 1: A few general observations along broadly the right lines, but with little or no recognisable sociological underpinning, would fit this band. 0 - 3

Level 2: At this level the answer may use, implicitly or explicitly, Weber's three types of authority: charismatic, bureaucratic and rational. The importance of accountability and political participation in helping to achieve legitimacy for the State in modern democratic society may be emphasised, especially in answers at the top of the band. 4 - 6

(d) What consequences might follow if the State were to introduce a law that a large number of the population considered to be unjust? [8]

Level 1: A few simple observations about what consequences might follow, with little justification or explanation, would fit this band. 0 - 3

Level 2: Some relevant consequences would be identified at this level, but possibly within a narrow range and/or lacking depth of understanding. The analysis may be rather simple and demonstrate only limited grasp of the complexities of the modern democratic political system. 4 - 6

Level 3: Answers will demonstrate a good understanding of a range of consequences, possibly ordered around relevant concepts such as civil disobedience and loss of authority. Issues of responsibility and accountability may also be pursued. At the top of the band especially, there will be recognition of the complexity of balancing power and responsibility in the modern State. 7 - 8