

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

GCE O Level

MARK SCHEME for the November 2005 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 initially instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began. Any substantial changes to the mark scheme that arose from these discussions will be recorded in the published *Report on the Examination*.

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*.

- CIE will not enter into discussion or correspondence in connection with these mark schemes.

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Question 1

Sources of information that the sociologist has not collected for him/herself are known as secondary sources. The UK Census – a national survey of the population conducted every ten years by the government – is an example of a secondary source. This, along with regular studies such as the *National Household Survey* keep the government (and sociologists) up to date with changing social trends in Britain and allow social policy to be planned. However, sociologists take care not to use government statistics uncritically.

Other secondary sources include, for example, newspaper reports, letters, diaries, and autobiographies produced by individuals. The secondary sources used by sociologists may be contemporary or historical, and the data available from them may be primarily quantitative or qualitative. When sociologists refer to existing sociological studies by other writers in their own research, these become secondary sources.

Sociologists find secondary sources very useful but they have to be treated with great caution. Their reliability and validity are open to question, and often they do not provide the exact information required by a sociologist for their research.

(a) What is meant by the following terms:

- (i) Social trends [2]
- (ii) Quantitative data [2]
- (iii) Validity [2]

Two marks for a clear, accurate definition and one mark for a worthy but flawed effort.

- (i) Social trends – a notable pattern of change displayed by a social indicator or index.
- (ii) Quantitative data – information that is expressed in numerical or statistical form.
- (iii) Validity – the property of being a true reflection of attitudes, behaviour, or characteristics.

(b) Suggest **two** advantages for a sociologist of using data from a government census. [4]

One mark for each advantage plus one mark for development (2 x 2 marks). Advantages include: cheap source of data; national coverage so representative and statistically significant; reliable data and possibly high in validity; readily accessible.

(c) Give **three** reasons why sociologists are careful not to use government statistics uncritically. [6]

One mark for each reason and one mark for development (3 x 2 marks). Reasons include: government statistics are collected for non-sociological purposes; they may contain bias; they are socially constructed, as in the case of suicide statistics; they may be out of date; the research may be unreliable.

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- (d) Suggest **three** reasons why newspaper reports may contain bias. [3]

One mark for each reason and one mark for development (3 x 2 marks). Reasons for bias include: poor journalism; need to sell papers leading to sensationalism and distortion; editorial direction and/or values of the owners; government censorship; lack of access to relevant sources of information.

- (e) Suggest **two** advantages and **two** limitations of using historical documents as a secondary source in sociological research. [8]

One mark for each advantage/limitation and one mark for development (4 x 2 marks). Advantages include: access to events in the past; cheap and can be easily accessible; useful for drawing historical comparisons; helpful in identifying social changes; they can give a picture of how people felt and lived at a particular time. Disadvantages include: content may reflect the bias of the writer; the authenticity may be difficult to establish; may be taken out of context or misinterpreted from a contemporary perspective; not always available or appropriate for a particular study; quantitative sources may be based on unreliable methods.

Culture and Socialisation

Question 2

People who are not socialised into the norms and values of society are almost unrecognisable as humans in their behaviour.

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

Two marks for a clear, accurate definition and one mark for a worthy but flawed effort. Norms are socially expected patterns of behaviour.

- (b) Describe **two** examples of how people learn the norms and values of society. [4]

One mark for each example identified and one mark for development. (2 x 2). Any examples that demonstrate a sound understanding of the socialisation process should be rewarded.

- (c) Explain why the values that people hold may vary from one group to another. [6]

0-3 Answers at this level will be characterised by a limited grasp of the question, though evidence that the candidates understands how values may vary from one group to another, such as examples, may merit 2 or 3 marks with no further development.

4-6 At this level there will be a clear attempt to explain why values may vary, perhaps through reference to sub-cultures and/or the influence of social class, ethnicity and age. A sound, well-reasoned explanation, perhaps with one or two examples, is likely to be worth full marks.

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- (d) To what extent is socialisation more important than instinct in shaping human behaviour? [8]
- 0-4 A few simple points about the nature of socialisation only may be worth 3 or 4 marks.
- 5-8 A better answer would compare socialisation with instinct as different ways of explaining human behaviour. If this were combined with some assessment of the importance of socialisation, perhaps through reference to feral children or cross-cultural variations in behaviour, the top of the band would be justified.

Question 3

In most societies, there are certain types of behaviour that are regarded as appropriate for one gender and inappropriate for the other.

- (a) What is meant by the term *gender*? [2]
- Two marks for a clear, accurate definition and one mark for a worthy but flawed effort. Gender refers to the social expectations (or roles) associated with males and females respectively.
- (b) Describe **two** examples of appropriate gender behaviour in your society. [4]
- One mark for each example identified and one mark for development. (2 x 2). Reward all reasonable examples.
- (c) Explain how gender roles are learned. [6]
- 0-3 Some general observations about socialisation without reference to gender specifically may merit 2 or 3 marks. Similarly, a very limited attempt to provide an example of how gender roles are learned might reach the top of the band.
- 4-6 A few examples of how gender roles are learned, perhaps in relation to the family and/or education, would trigger this band. The more clearly explained the examples and/or the wider range they cover, the higher in the band the answer should be placed.
- (d) What pressures encourage people to conform to their gender roles? [8]
- 0-4 There will be few, if any, references to relevant social pressures at this level. If one or two relevant points were hinted at, a mark of 3 or 4 would be justified.
- 5-8 Some relevant pressures would be identified using appropriate sociological terminology, such as the peer group, media images, parental reaction, economic factors, etc. Two or three relevant social pressures well explained would probably merit 7 or 8 marks.

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Social Stratification and Inequality

Question 4

Max Weber suggested that there are three factors that divide people in modern societies: power, status and economic factors.

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

Two marks for a clear, accurate definition and one mark for a worthy but flawed effort. Status refers to the amount of prestige we give to a person based on such characteristics as occupation, accent, education, etc.

- (b) Describe **two** ways that economic factors may divide people in modern societies. [4]

One mark for each example identified and one mark for development. (2 x 2). Divisions based on income and wealth are the most obvious examples, but others would include: housing, position in the division of labour/occupation, control of household finance, consumption patterns, etc.

- (c) Explain how the working class differs from the middle class. [6]

0-3 One or two commonsense observations broadly relevant to the question may merit 2 or 3 marks.

4-6 A sound understanding of the differences between the two classes would be demonstrated at this level. Answers that identify both economic and cultural differences are likely to merit the top of the band.

- (d) To what extent are class divisions disappearing in modern societies? [8]

0-4 A few isolated points about social class, with little or no connection to the analytical issues raised by the question, may justify 2 or 3 marks. A very elementary attempt to assess whether class divisions are disappearing may be worth 4 marks.

5-8 Answers at this level will address the question as set. References to embourgeoisement and proletarianisation may feature prominently, though at the top of the band we may also see use of more contemporary material.

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Question 5

The main difference between caste and class societies is that in a class-based society there is social mobility.

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

Two marks for a clear, accurate definition and one mark for a worthy but flawed effort. Social mobility means the movement of people up and down the social scale.

- (b) Describe **two** ways in which a person can achieve a higher social position. [4]

One mark for each example identified and one mark for development. (2 x 2).

Any means of achieving upward social mobility, such as job promotion or entrepreneurial success, is acceptable.

- (c) Explain the main features of the caste system. [6]

0-3 A basic explanation of what is meant by caste with no further development may merit 2 or 3 marks.

4-6 Several features of the caste system will be identified and, if they were clearly and accurately explained, the top of the band would be triggered. Features of the caste system include: absence of social mobility; rules against marriage outside of one's caste; status hierarchy; each caste is associated with a form of work; underpinned by religious beliefs; the various castes are rigidly separated; formally legalised.

- (d) Assess how much social mobility there is in modern societies. [8]

0-4 A few basic comments about the nature of social mobility, but not directly addressing the issues raised by the question may be worth 2 or 3 marks. Some isolated observations about the extent of social mobility, but with very little detail or range may score up to 4 marks.

5-8 A sound account of the extent of social mobility in modern societies, perhaps supported by reference to relevant studies and/or concepts, would certainly trigger this band. Answers that distinguish different types of social mobility and/or refer to relevant empirical data are likely to feature at the top of the band.

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Power and Authority

Question 6

Most political systems can be described as either democratic or authoritarian.

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

Two marks for a clear, accurate definition and one mark for a worthy but flawed effort. Democracy is a type of political system in which the people make their own decisions, either directly or indirectly through elected representatives.

- (b) Describe **two** features of an authoritarian political system. [4]

One mark for each feature identified and one mark for development. (2 x 2). Features may include: only one viewpoint allowed; no independent judiciary; few, if any, civil liberties; the press is usually government controlled; no true, free elections.

- (c) Explain the part that a free press and television play in a democracy. [6]

0-3 An answer that demonstrates some understanding of what is meant by a free press/television and/or democracy, but fails to make relevant connections between the two, may merit 2 or 3 marks.

4-6 At this level answers will address the question as set, perhaps noting the importance of the free flow of information and a plurality of views in a democracy. Issues of censorship may also be discussed.

- (d) To what extent do some people have more power than others in modern democratic societies? [8]

0-4 A few commonsense observations about the nature and/or distribution of power with little or no clear understanding of the requirements of the question may merit 3 or 4 marks.

5-8 Answers at this level will demonstrate some awareness of relevant sociological debates about the distribution of power in modern societies. Well-made references to pluralist, Marxist and elite theory are likely to be a distinguishing feature of answers at the top of the band.

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Question 7

Class and family background are two elements in the process of political socialisation that have an important influence on the way people vote.

- (a) What is meant by the term *political socialisation*? [2]

Two marks for a clear, accurate definition and one mark for a worthy but flawed effort. Political socialisation is where people learn the values of and beliefs sympathetic to one political party or one political system.

- (b) Describe **two** factors apart from class and family background that may influence the way people vote. [4]

One mark for each factor identified and one mark for development. (2 x 2). Appropriate influences include, for example, the media, religion, age, issues, party images, geographic location, gender, and ethnic group.

- (c) Explain the role of political parties in elections. [6]

0-3 A few basic observations about political parties and/or elections, without answering the question directly, might justify 2 or 3 marks.

4-6 A sound explanation of the role of political parties in elections would trigger this band. The wider ranging and/or more detailed the explanation, the higher in the band the answer should be placed.

- (d) Assess the extent to which social class is still an important influence on voting behaviour. [8]

0-4 An answer that identifies a few factors that may influence voting behaviour without addressing the analytical issues raised by the question, may justify 3 or 4 marks.

5-8 Answers at this level will demonstrate awareness of the sociological debate about the importance of class as an influence on voting behaviour today. At the top of the band, competing views on the issue may be summarised.