

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
GCE Ordinary Level

MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2007 question paper

2251 SOCIOLOGY

2251/01

Paper 1, maximum raw mark 90

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.

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 discussions or correspondence in connection with these mark schemes.

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Section A: Research Methods

Interviewing is a common technique used by sociologists to gather data. Interviews may be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. They usually take place on a one-to-one basis between the researcher and the respondent, but group interviews are an alternative. Those sociologists who prefer to collect quantitative data are more likely to use structured interviews. With this type of interview the researcher takes special care to draw up a carefully worded set of questions. They also try to standardise their performance as interviewers so that they behave in exactly the same way with each respondent. The purpose of all this care is to make sure that nothing 'irrelevant' in the wording of the questions or the performance of the interviewer will influence the answers. In this way it is hoped that the data collected will be free from any researcher bias.

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

(i) quantitative data [2]

Evidence collected from researcher that is easily transformed into statistics.

(ii) respondent [2]

The person who is the subject of the interview.

(iii) researcher bias [2]

The subjective influence of the researcher that affects the way data is gathered and the responses received from the respondents.

For these questions, two marks for a clear and accurate definition; one mark for a flawed attempt that contains some understanding of what the term means.

(b) Describe two ways in which unstructured interviews differ from structured interviews. [4]

Differences include the fact that unstructured interviews contain no set order of questions, they encourage respondents to raise issues and expand their answers, they seek qualitative rather than quantitative data, and the process followed may differ with each interview.

0–2 An accurate understanding of one difference, or a limited understanding of two differences.

3–4 The candidate demonstrates an accurate understanding of two differences.

(c) Describe two reasons why it may be difficult for an interviewer to behave in exactly the same way with each respondent. [4]

Relevant reasons include: the way different interviewees will respond is unpredictable; some interviewees may require more help and support than others in answering the questions; the interviewers may not be that experienced or well trained.

0–2 An accurate understanding of one reason, or a limited understanding of two reasons.

3–4 The candidate demonstrates an accurate understanding of two reasons.

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(d) Describe two advantages of using group interviews in sociological research.

Advantages include: the group may act as a stimulus for individual responses; saves interviewing people individually; the behaviour of the group can be observed at the same time; members of the group may help each other in answering the questions; it may be less intimidating for people to be interviewed in a group situation.

0–2 An accurate understanding of one advantage, or a limited understanding of two advantages.

3–4 The candidate demonstrates an accurate understanding of two advantages.

(e) Describe two ways in which the personal characteristics of the interviewer may influence the answers given by the respondent. [4]

Ways in which the personal characteristics of the interviewer may influence the answers provided by the respondent include: dress, tone of voice, sex, age, mannerisms, ability to put the respondent at ease, etc.

0–2 An accurate understanding of one example, or a limited understanding of two examples.

3–4 The candidate demonstrates an accurate understanding of two examples.

(f) Describe two strengths and two limitations of structured interviews. [8]

Strengths include: easy to replicate and hence high in reliability; answers easily converted into quantitative data, showing patterns and correlations; in theory, minimises researcher bias in the interview situation; simple to process the data using computers.

Limitations include: data lacks depth and may be low in validity; the respondents may respond better to (prefer) a more relaxed form of interviewing; useful data may be overlooked if it fails to fit the interview schedule.

Essentially, up to two marks for each strength or limitation that is accurately described, so 4 x 2 marks.

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Section B: Culture and Socialisation

- 2 Sociologists are critical of attempts to explain social behaviour in terms of instinct or 'nature'. They suggest that it is through interaction with other people that we learn how we are expected to behave in society.

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

Interaction refers to face-to-face exchanges where people have an effect on each other. A clear definition along these lines = 2 marks; an incomplete definition showing some understanding = 1 mark.

(b) Describe *two* ways in which an infant learns how to play with other children. [4]

Imitation, role-play, parental guidance, instruction from older siblings are among many of the ways in which an infant may learn about how to play with other children. One mark for a relevant example and one mark for a clear and accurate description of the example (2 x 2).

(c) Explain why sociologists are critical of attempts to explain social behaviour in terms of instinct or 'nature'. [6]

0–3 A few isolated comments about the importance of socialisation with little or no direct link to the question as set may be worth up to 3 marks.

4–6 A better answer will seek to justify why sociologists consider that socialisation is the key to understanding social behaviour. For example, there may be references to the cases of feral children and to cross-cultural variations in behaviour patterns. The more explicit the explanation the higher in the band the answer should be placed.

(d) To what extent do social influences constrain people's behaviour? [8]

0–4 Answers that are confined to a few simple assertions about the extent to which people follow social rules may merit 2 or 3 marks. A response that tries to answer the question by describing the process of socialisation may be worth 3 or 4 marks.

5–8 Answers lower in the band may show a detailed understanding of socialisation. Higher in the band answers will demonstrate a basic awareness that the question addresses the debate between structuralist and interactionist perspectives on the relationship between the individual and society, albeit that the perspectives may not be named as such by the candidates. At the top of the band the assessment will be explicit and sustained.

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- 3 Social control in traditional societies is achieved mainly through informal processes. In modern industrial societies there is a greater need for formal social controls, mainly in the form of the police and the legal system.

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

Social control refers to the mechanisms used to persuade people to accept the generally agreed standards of behaviour, beliefs, conduct and morals of a society. A clear definition along these lines = 2 marks; an incomplete definition showing some understanding = 1 mark.

(b) Describe *two* sources of informal social control. [4]

Peer pressure, gossiping, ridicule, scandal are some of the sources of informal social control. One mark for a relevant example and one mark for a clear and accurate description of the example (2 x 2).

(c) Explain why there is a greater need for formal social controls in modern industrial societies. [6]

0–3 A basic description of the mechanisms of formal social control with only indirect links to the question may be worth 2 or 3 marks.

4–6 Lower in the band there will be a sociologically creditable attempt to explain why formal social controls are required in modern industrial societies, though the account may lack some clarity and development. To reach the top of the band, the explanation must be well informed and well expressed. Answers are likely to focus on the greater complexity and less cohesive nature of modern industrial societies as the background to why laws and other formal social controls are needed.

(d) To what extent do some groups benefit more than others from the existence of social control? [8]

0–4 A few general points based on commonsense rather than sociological insight may be worth 1 or 2 marks. A better answer at this level may identify one or more groups who benefit particularly from the existence of social control, but with little development of the argument.

5–8 Answers at this level will consider several groups (rich, powerful, men, majority ethnic groups, etc) who may benefit disproportionately from the rules of society. At the top of the band this may be linked to relevant sociological perspectives, such as the pluralist, Marxist, feminist and elite theories.

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Section C: Social Stratification

- 4 The system of stratification based on social class is a product of industrial capitalism. Other systems of stratification existed in earlier societies.

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

Stratification refers to the structured differences in wealth, power and status between groups in society. A clear definition along these lines = 2 marks; an incomplete definition showing some understanding = 1 mark.

(b) Describe two other forms of stratification apart from that based on social class. [4]

Examples include: caste, estate, slavery – accept also gender, age and race/ethnicity. One mark for a relevant example and one mark for a clear and accurate description of the example (2 x 2).

(c) Explain the Marxist view that the working class are exploited under capitalism. [6]

0–3 A few reflections on the exploitation of the working class with little or no linkage to Marxist theory would be worth up to 3 marks.

4–6 A basic account of the Marxist theory that lacks some development and/or clarity would fit the bottom of the band. Higher in the band the explanation will be coherent and sustained.

(d) To what extent have social class divisions changed since the nineteenth century? [8]

0–4 A few basic points about the nature of class divisions in modern industrial societies with little or no reference to the question of change may be worth 3 or 4 marks.

5–8 Answers at this level will focus on possible changes in the nature of class divisions since the nineteenth century, and this could include material on embourgeoisement, proletarianisation and deskilling, the growth of the middle class, class fragmentation and the emergence of a welfare-dependent underclass. At the top of the band the assessment will be explicit and sustained.

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- 5 Much of the discrimination that people from ethnic minority groups experience is based on the prejudice that they are seen as 'not properly members' of the country in which they live.

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

People who share a similar culture that is distinct from that of the dominant or largest grouping in society may be known as an ethnic minority. A clear definition along these lines = 2 marks; an incomplete definition showing some understanding = 1 mark.

(b) Describe *two* forms of discrimination that people from ethnic minority groups may experience. [4]

There are many possible examples, including discrimination in the areas of housing, education, welfare, health, employment, and politics. One mark for a relevant example and one mark for a clear and accurate description of the example (2 x 2).

(c) Explain why people from ethnic minority groups may be viewed as 'not properly members' of the country in which they live. [6]

0–3 A few simple points about racial prejudice poorly linked to the question may be worth up to 3 marks.

4–6 At this level the explanation will focus on why some ethnic minority groups may be seen as not truly members of the country in which they live. Reasons include the perception that they do not participate fully in what is taken to be the national culture of the country, suspicions about national loyalties, fear of economic competition (e.g. for jobs, housing, etc), racial stereotypes and various historical factors. At the top of the band the explanation will be well articulated and sociologically well informed.

(d) How far is the experience of discrimination the same for all ethnic minority groups? [8]

0–4 A few vague comments about racial discrimination may be worth 1 or 2 marks. To go higher there must be an answer to the question as set, though at this level the arguments may lack detail and coherence.

5–8 Answers at this level will demonstrate a basic understanding that some ethnic minority groups may be more exposed to discrimination than others. Examples may be used to advance the argument. At the top of the band the assessment will be explicit and sustained.

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Section D: Power and Authority

- 6 Some states exclude large proportions of their populations from political influence; they may use violence to suppress opposition to the ruling elite.

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

The term ruling elite refers to a tightly knit group of people who enjoy considerable privileges and power through their control of the state. A clear definition along these lines = 2 marks; an incomplete definition showing some understanding = 1 mark.

(b) Describe *two* ways in which violence may be used by the state to suppress political opposition. [4]

Examples include torture, imprisonment without trial, use of the army against civilians, genocide, etc. One mark for a relevant example and one mark for a clear and accurate description of the example (2 x 2).

(c) Explain why some states exclude large proportions of their populations from political influence. [6]

0–3 A few vague points that are broadly relevant to the question may be offered at this level.

4–6 Here explanations will be sociologically informed and, at the top of the band, detailed and convincing.

(d) How far is it true that even in democratic political systems the state is controlled by elite groups? [8]

0–4 Answers will lack a sustained argument at this level. A few points about elite groups and how they may monopolise power may be worth up to 4 marks.

5–8 A descriptive account of elite theory on power would be worth 5 or 6 marks. To go higher there must also be an explicit attempt to assess how far elite groups control democratic states. This is likely to focus on alternative perspectives on power.

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- 7 Elections are the main means through which people are able to exercise political influence in modern industrial societies.

(a) What is meant by the term *political influence*? [4]

Political influence is the ability to gain representation and make an impact on the decision making process in society. A clear definition along these lines = 2 marks; an incomplete definition showing some understanding = 1 mark.

(b) Describe *two* ways in which people may take part in political activity other than by voting in elections. [4]

Examples include joining political parties, supporting pressure groups, going on marches, signing petitions, etc. One mark for a relevant example and one mark for a clear and accurate description of the example (2 x 2).

(c) Explain why elections are an important part of a democratic political system. [6]

0–3 A few simple points about democracy and/or elections that are unconnected and fail to address the issues raised by the question directly may be worth 2 or 3 marks.

4–6 A basic and perhaps rather narrow account of why elections are an important part of a democratic political system would merit the bottom of the band. A more developed explanation covering a wider range of points would be worth 5 or 6 marks.

(d) To what extent are elections an effective way of ensuring that the government remains accountable to the people in democratic political systems? [8]

0–4 Candidates who express a view on the issues raised by the question, but one that is based primarily on assertion, may merit 2 or 3 marks. A response to the question that has sociological backing, but is rather one-dimensional could achieve 4 marks.

5–8 A descriptive account of the strengths and/or limitations of elections as a way of maintaining government accountability to the people would be worth 5 or 6 marks. To go higher, the answer would need to include also an explicit and sustained assessment of the contribution that elections make to the question of government accountability in a democracy.