

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
GCE Ordinary Level

MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2008 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

Sociologists who wish to collect qualitative data often use unstructured or informal interviews. This type of interview usually consists of a list of topics the interviewer wishes to discuss. The interviewer will ask a number of open-ended questions which may stimulate discussions or further questions. The interviewer will carry out the interview in a relaxed manner in order to put the interviewee at ease.

This form of interview is said to have greater validity than more formal interviews as it can produce data that has greater depth. However, critics of this approach say that it can lead to interviewer bias. Observation is another approach used by sociologists to collect qualitative data.

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

(i) unstructured interviews [2]

An open ended discussion between a respondent and the interviewer. The interviewee will be free to discuss any areas within the framework of the research. 2 marks for a clear definition along these lines. 1 mark for a partial explanation showing some understanding of the term.

(ii) validity [2]

Validity is concerned with whether the findings of the research actually provide a true picture of what is being studied. 2 marks for an accurate definition along these lines. 1 mark for a partial definition which shows some understanding of the term.

(iii) interviewer bias. [2]

Interview bias is concerned with the answers given in an interview which are influenced by the presence or behaviour of the interviewer. 2 marks for a clear and accurate definition along these lines. 1 mark for a partial definition which shows some understanding of the term.

(b) Describe two problems that can occur when conducting unstructured interviews. [4]

Likely issues to be discussed are: the interviewer effect; time consuming because a rapport has to be developed; cost; need to train interviewers in dealing with sensitive areas; problems of reliability. 1 mark for identification and 1 mark for a brief explanation of the point being made.

(c) Describe one advantage and one disadvantage of using observation as a means of collecting data. [4]

Advantages likely to be discussed are: provides a first hand knowledge of the group being studied; observation takes place over a longer period of time than other methods therefore the researcher can get a valid account of the group's behaviour. Disadvantages are likely to include: time consuming; expensive; difficult to make generalisations, danger of the researcher becoming too involved. Any other reasonable response. 1 mark for identification a further mark for a brief explanation of the point.

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(d) Suggest two advantages of using unstructured interviews in sociological research.

Advantages may include: the use of interviews to gain more detailed data. Such interviews may have more accuracy because of the relationship established with the interviewee. New research directions may emerge as the interviewee may reveal data not considered by the researcher. Any other reasonable answer. 1 mark for identification, a further mark for a brief development of the point.

(e) (i) Distinguish between *covert* and *overt* forms of observation. [2]

Covert observation refers to viewing the target group without the group's knowledge. Overt observation refers to the situation where the observed group are aware that they are being observed. 1 mark for each correct definition.

(ii) Distinguish between *participant* and *non-participant* forms of observation. [2]

Participant observation refers to the type of research where the observer engages in the activities of the group. Non participant observation refers to the type of research where the observer does not become involved with the group in question, but studies them without any intervention. 1 mark for each correct definition.

(f) Identify and explain two advantages and two disadvantages of using covert participant observation in sociological research. [8]

Advantages are likely to include: being involved in the research enables them to gain a real insight into the working and perceptions of the group; covert participant observation may be the only method to research certain subjects, such research is flexible and therefore new research directions may emerge. The disadvantages are likely to include: the failure of the group to accept the researcher thus damaging the validity of the study; observer may start to become too close to their subjects and therefore write up their research too subjectively; expensive and time consuming. 1 mark for identifying a point and a further mark for development.

Section B: Culture and Socialisation

2 Children as they grow up in a particular society learn its norms and values.

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

Social rules which define correct behaviour in a society or group. Credit should be given to answers that refer to normal behaviour, or acceptable behaviour. 2 marks for a clear and accurate definition. 1 mark for a partial explanation showing some understanding of the term.

(b) Describe two ways children learn to interact with other members of society. [4]

Likely answers are to focus on: parents, school, peer group, and media. 1 mark for identifying a way. A further mark for briefly developing the point.

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(c) Explain why childhood is seen as a distinct stage in life in modern industrial societies.

Level 1: Answers at this level are unlikely to focus on the question and are likely to make general comments about the features of childhood.

Level 2: At this level there will be a clear attempt to focus the answer on the question. Likely issues to be raised are: childhood seen as a distinct phase because of greater wealth of industrial societies, which enables the provision of free education, and freedom from the necessity of paid employment. At the top of the band answers may draw a contrast with pre-industrial and/or developing societies. They may also make reference to the growth of children's legal rights.

4–6

(d) To what extent is human behaviour shaped by socialisation?

[8]

Level 1: At this level answers will make a few general remarks about socialisation with little attempt to focus on the question.

0–3

Level 2: There will be some attempt to address the question at this level. Answers are likely to give accounts of the agencies of socialisation with varying degrees of detail. There will perhaps be little attempt to look at the 'nature' side of the debate.

4–6

Level 3: At this level there will be a clear attempt to address the question. Answers will attempt to examine the interplay of inherited factors and the importance of socialisation. References to examples of feral children may be used to show the important effects of socialisation.

7–8

3 People living in a society may have a very different set of customs and beliefs to those living in other societies. Such cultural differences illustrate how societies develop their own unique cultures.

(a) What is meant by the term *cultural differences*?

[2]

The ways in terms of customs, norms, values etc. differ from society to society. 2 marks for a clear and accurate definition. 1 mark for a partial attempt showing some understanding of the term.

(b) Describe two features of a society's culture.

[4]

Likely answers may focus on: language, customs, values, art and literature etc. 1 mark for identifying the way. A further mark for briefly describing the point.

(c) Explain how the elderly are likely to be treated differently in a modern industrial society compared to more traditional societies.

[6]

Level 1: Answers at this level will lack focus on the question and perhaps refer to one or two examples of how the elderly are treated.

0–3

Level 2: Answers at this level will show an understanding of the ways the elderly are treated both in industrial and traditional societies. There will be a direct attempt to answer the question higher in the band. Likely answers will focus on: the provision of social services and pensions for the elderly; a legal retirement age. Answers at the top of the band are likely to contrast industrial society with traditional societies which are likely to provide less state support, but have stronger familial links and supporting networks.

4–6

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(d) To what extent do people in the same culture share the same values?

Level 1: At this level answers are likely to make a few general comments about culture with little or no attempt to address the question. 0

Level 2: At this level answers may outline a number of ways people may share the same culture providing examples, but the question of the extent of the way people share values may be relatively neglected. 4–6

Level 3: At this level there will be a clear attempt to assess the ways individuals share values. Examples of religious, ethnic, political differences will be used to support arguments. 7–8

Section C: Social Stratification and Inequality

4 A person's social class is influenced by a number of factors. One of the most important influences is occupation.

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

An open system where broad groups of people share similar economic positions, such as occupation and wealth. 2 marks for a clear and accurate definition which focuses on 'similar,' economic interests'. 1 mark for a partial definition showing some understanding of the term.

(b) Describe two ways a middle class background may affect a person's work opportunities. [4]

Likely answers may focus on: parent career expectations for their children, higher levels of education which in turn leads to careers; parents providing sufficient funds to stay on in education or training; middle class contacts which may help with promotion or finding employment. 1 mark for identifying 1 way. A further mark for a brief explanation of the point.

(c) Explain why middle class occupations, such as doctors and lawyers, tend to earn more than working class occupations in modern industrial societies. [6]

Level 1: Answers at this level are likely to give a few general, descriptive comments about the differences in pay between professional salaries and other forms of employment, but there will be little attempt to answer the question. 0–3

Level 2: There will be a clear attempt to answer the question. Answers are likely to focus on issues such as: higher levels of training, longer periods of training leading to a relatively short supply of such professionals; the ability of professional organisations to organise themselves effectively to improve pay and conditions. Answers that mention a range of factors should reach the top of the band. 4–6

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- (d) To what extent does social class background still influence an individual's opportunities in life?

Level 1: Answers at this level will be very basic, perhaps making a few general points about the lifestyle of one particular class. There will be little attempt to answer the question. 0–3

Level 2: There will be some attempt to address the question, but issues are likely to be limited in their scope and depth. Likely issues to be discussed: education, health, and work opportunities. Answers towards the top of the band should attempt to provide examples of these issues. 4–6

Level 3: A range of issues will be explored and there will be a concerted attempt to answer the question. There will be an attempt to provide evaluation. 7–8

- 5 Despite the existence of equal rights legislation (laws) in modern industrial societies, many ethnic minorities still experience discrimination in areas such as employment and housing.

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

Discrimination refers to the ways a racial group may be treated unfairly by the rest of society in areas such as: education; work, equality before the law etc. 2 marks for a clear and accurate definition. 1 mark for a partial definition showing some understanding of the term.

- (b) Describe two types of discrimination ethnic minorities may experience at work. [4]

Likely answers may focus on: difficulty in entering into certain professions; lack of promotion prospects, poorer pay; discrimination in selection process for available jobs. 1 mark for identifying the way. A further mark for a brief description of the point.

- (c) Explain why ethnic minorities may have experienced less discrimination in modern industrial societies in recent years. [6]

Level 1: At this level there will be a few general comments about improved conditions for ethnic minorities but there will be little or, lower in the band, no attempt to provide examples and answer the question. 0–3

Level 2: At this level there will be a direct attempt to focus on the question. Likely answers may focus on: changes to the law to combat discrimination, changing attitudes of employers towards racism, skill shortages have ensured that ethnic minorities are encouraged to undertake certain jobs. At the top of the band specific examples will be provided to illustrate points. 4–6

- (d) To what extent do ethnic minorities remain disadvantaged throughout their lives? [8]

Level 1: At this level there is likely to be a few general comments about disadvantage. 0–3

Level 2: There will be an attempt to address the question. Answers are likely to focus on: work, health, education, treatment by the criminal justice system etc. Answers will provide a range of issues or focus on a few in some detail. 4–6

Level 3: A range of issues will be discussed and there will be an attempt to evaluate the issues in the question. 7–8

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Section D: Power and Authority

6 In many societies elite groups hold political power.

(a) What does the term *elite groups* mean?

[2]

A social group that holds power and influence in society. 2 marks for an accurate and clear definition. 1 mark for a definition showing partial understanding of the term.

(b) Describe two features of a dictatorship.

[4]

Answers are likely to include: one party state, no free elections, censorship of the media, little or no democratic representation or influence on law-making. Any other reasonable response. 1 mark for identifying a feature. A further mark for a brief explanation of the point.

(c) Explain how an individual can influence government decision-making in democratic societies.

[6]

Level 1: At this level answers are likely to contain a few general points about democratic societies. There will be little or no attempt to answer the question directly. 0–3

Level 2: there will some attempt to answer the question directly. Likely areas for answers to focus on are: pressure groups; elections, lobbying representatives, mobilising the media etc. A number of issues will be examined and relevant examples will be included at the top of the band. 4–6

(d) To what extent do elite groups dominate government decision-making in democratic societies?

[8]

Level 1: A few general comments will characterise answers at this level, with little or no direct reference to the question. 0–3

Level 2: At this level there will be some attempt to focus on the role of elites in decision-making, but answers will lack depth and/or breadth. Likely answers will focus on issues such as: elites may be members of the political class, have great influence with the media, pressure groups and dominate the civil service or bureaucracy. 4–6

Level 3: Answers at this level may be theoretically informed with references possibly to Marxist or elite theories. At the top of the band there will be an attempt to sustain a balanced discussion with reference perhaps to pluralist theories. 7–8

7 The mass media appear to have a great deal of influence in democratic elections through news reporting and opinion polls.

(a) What is meant by the term *democratic election*?

[2]

A means of the people choosing competing groups of politicians who organise themselves into political parties. The parties often represent different interests in society. 2 marks for a clear definition which includes some of these features. 1 mark for a definition which shows a partial understanding.

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- (b) Describe two factors other than the mass media that may influence the elections.

Likely answers may focus on: the popularity of the government, the image of leaders and various policies, social class, background etc. 1 mark for each factor and a further mark for some attempt to develop the point.

- (c) Explain how news reporting and opinion polls may influence the way people vote at election times. [6]

Level 1: At this level there will be a few general remarks about the media and/or opinion polls. Answers are likely to be descriptive and lack focus on the question. 0–3

Level 2: There will be an attempt to answer the question and at the top of the band answers will focus on both opinion polls **and** the mass media. If one of the issues outlined in the question is discussed a maximum of 5 marks can be obtained. Likely issues raised may be: the media informs about current party positions, projects images of party leaders and outlines the record of the government in office. Opinion polls may affect voting behaviour by encouraging tactical voting, discourage voters if they think one party will win easily and may encourage a 'bandwagon effect'. It is not expected candidates will discuss all of these issues for maximum marks. 4–6

- (d) To what extent does a person's social class affect their voting behaviour? [8]

Level 1: A few general remarks about voting behaviour in general with little or no reference to the question will be characteristic of answers at this level. 0–3

Level 2: At this level answers may describe the factors affecting voting behaviour in general, e.g. class, party programme, party images, record of the government, but there will be little focus on class de-alignment. 4–6

Level 3: The issue of decline in class voting will be a strong feature of answers at this level. At the top of the band answers may make a clear attempt to assess the issues raised in the question, perhaps discussing the continued importance of class in affecting voting behaviour owing to the changes to the class structure. 7–8