

MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2012 series

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/13

Paper 1 (Essay), 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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Section A: The Sociological Perspective

- 1 “Some theories of socialisation are too deterministic to be useful in understanding how people learn to be effective members of society.” Explain and assess this view. [25]
- (0–6) A few simple observations about socialisation, with little or no unpicking of the question, would fit this band. Some evidence of sociological knowledge within this type of answer would trigger the top of the band.
- (7–12) Theories of socialisation that have been criticised for being too deterministic include the functionalist, Marxist and feminist accounts. A basic summary of one of these theories, with little or no direct linkage to the question, would merit the lower part of the band. Answers that focus on describing cases of so-called feral children would be worth no more than eight marks. An explicit attempt to describe what is meant by the reference to 'too deterministic' in the question through links to an appropriate theory of socialisation, such as the functionalist, would trigger the top half of the band. At this level there may be little or no attempt to assess the view on which the question is based.
- (13–18) Answers at this level will provide a clear explanation of what is meant by the notion that some theories of socialisation are too deterministic. Lower in the band, the response may be limited to a sound descriptive account of one or more of the theories of socialisation that have been criticised for being too deterministic. The same approach may be evident in answers that reach the top half of the band, but here there will also be an attempt to assess the view expressed in the question. However, the assessment may lack depth and is likely to be confined to a simple juxtaposition of structural theories of socialisation and interpretivist accounts.
- (19–25) Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of different theories of socialisation and recognise the significance for the question of the distinction between structural and interpretivist accounts. There will also be a sustained and well-informed assessment of the view that some theories of socialisation are too deterministic to be useful in understanding how people learn to be effective members of society. Lower in the band, the assessment may be delivered mainly through juxtaposition of contrasting theories of socialisation. To go higher in the band, however, there will also be a more direct analysis of the concept of determinism and its value (or limitations) in understanding human behaviour. This might include pursuing points such as, for example, the idea that traditional theories of socialisation may not be quite as deterministic as critics have claimed, or highlighting the potential weaknesses in more 'voluntaristic' accounts of how humans learn to interact in society. Wrong's concept of 'over-socialised man' might also be used to extend the assessment and good use could be made of post-modernist writings on free will and choice in contemporary society.

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2 "There is much in Weber's sociological writings that remains useful in understanding societies today." Explain and assess this view.

- (0–6) A few simple comments about contemporary society may be worth three or four marks. Some reference to Weber's ideas with very limited detail or development could reach the top of the band.
- (7–12) A basic account of a single theme in Weber's writings, such as his theory of bureaucracy or his ideas about stratification, would merit the lower part of the band. Higher in the band, there will be a basic account of a wider range of themes from Weber's writings, though there may be little or no attempt to link the material to the issue of understanding society today. Answers at this level may be mainly or wholly descriptive.
- (13–18) A sound account of some themes from Weber's writings fit the lower part of the band. To go higher in the band, there must be some attempt to link the discussion of Weber's ideas to the issue of understanding society today. Higher in the band, there will also be an attempt to assess the view expressed in the question. However, the assessment may lack depth at this level and is likely to rely on drawing contrasts (juxtaposition) with the ideas of other key thinkers.
- (19–25) Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of a range of key themes in Weber's writings. The material will be well linked to the issue of understanding society today. There will also be a sustained and well-informed assessment of the idea that Weber's ideas remain very relevant for understanding contemporary societies. Lower in the band, the assessment may rely on a few general criticisms of Weber's ideas or take the form of a juxtaposition with the ideas of thinkers from other sociological perspectives. To go higher in the band, however, the assessment will focus more directly on the value of Weber's writings *for understanding society today*. This might be delivered through, for example, references to the work of more recent sociologists who have undertaken studies based on Weber's ideas. Empirical material from other sources might also be used to good effect in debating the relevance of Weber's idea today. Alternatively, the assessment may be constructed in more theoretical terms such as, for example, through contrasting post-modernist views of contemporary societies with Weber's ideas and speculation about how modern societies were likely to develop.

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Section B: Sociological Methods

**3 "A value-free sociology is impossible to achieve and would be undesirable anyway."
Explain and assess this view.**

- (0–6) An answer that contains just a few general points about sociological research, with no direct links to the question, would fit the lower part of the band. Higher in the band, there may be a few appropriate references to objectivity and the role of values in sociological research, but the answer will lack overall coherence and detail.
- (7–12) Lower in the band, answers may be confined to a basic account of what is meant by value-freedom in the context of sociological research. To go higher in the band, however, there must be some attempt to explore different sociological views about the role of values in sociological research. A basic account of the positivist or interpretivist perspective on this issue could reach the top of the band. Likewise, a broadly accurate summary of the ideas of one or two sociologists (Weber, Becker, Berger, Gouldner, C. Wright Mills) who have written about values in sociology could also trigger the top half of the band. Answers at this level may be mainly or wholly descriptive.
- (13–18) A sound account of the positivist and interpretivist perspectives on the role of values in sociological research would fit the lower part of the band. A sound account of the relevant ideas of several of the key thinkers (Weber, Becker, Berger, Gouldner, C. Wright Mills) who have written about values in sociology, would also merit the lower part of the band. To go higher in the band, there must be some attempt to assess the view that a value-free sociology is impossible to achieve. However, the assessment may lack depth at this level and is likely to be confined to a simple juxtaposition of the positivist and interpretivist perspectives.
- (19–26) At this level, there will be a good account of the debates in sociology about the role of values. There will also be a sustained and well-informed assessment of the view expressed in the question. Lower in the band, the assessment may rely mainly on the juxtaposition of contrasting perspectives and ideas. The focus of the assessment lower in the band may also be on the idea that a value-free sociology is impossible and there need be no consideration of the reference in the question to value-freedom being undesirable. To go higher in the band, however, both sides of the claim expressed in the question must be considered, though not necessarily with equal emphasis. The assessment at the top of the band will rely less on juxtaposition and will offer well supported arguments about the role of values in sociological research.

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- 4 "Structured interviews have more strengths and fewer limitations than other interview used in sociological research." Explain and assess this view.
- (0–6) Answers at this level may be characterised by a few elementary observations about interviews in general. Mention of a couple of relevant strengths and/or limitations of interviews in general would justify a mark at the top of the band.
- (7–12) Lower in the band, some relevant strengths and/or limitations will be described, though the account may fail to differentiate between different types of interview. Higher in the band, reference will be made to the strengths and limitations of structured interviews specifically, though the discussion may focus mainly on practical issues rather than theory. Answers at this level may be mainly or wholly descriptive.
- (13–18) Answers at this level will provide a sound account of the strengths and limitations of structured interviews. Lower in the band, the treatment of theory may be less well developed than the treatment of practical issues. Higher in the band, there will be a more accurate and detailed consideration of some of the theoretical issues concerning the use of structured interviews in sociological research. To reach the top half of the band, there must also be some assessment of the view on which the question is based. However, the assessment may lack depth at this level and is likely to be confined to a simple juxtaposition of the strengths and limitations of the different types of interview.
- (19–27) At this level answers will provide a good account of the practical and theoretical strengths and limitations of structured interviews. There will also be a sustained and well-informed assessment of the value of structured interviews relative to other types of interview. Lower in the band, the assessment is likely to rely mainly on contrasts between structured and unstructured interviews. Relevant links may be made to the positivist versus interpretivist debates on research methods. Higher in the band, the assessment will also include a more direct response to the claim that structured interviews have more strengths and fewer limitations than other types of interview. This might include, for example, a discussion of research aims and values, reflections on the relationship between the researcher and the respondent, and issues of what constitutes good sociological research. Reward candidates who use references to relevant studies to show the type of context in which structured interviews might be a particularly appropriate choice of research method.

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Section C: Social Differentiation and Stratification

5 “The concept of patriarchy has little value in understanding the life chances of females today.” Explain and assess this claim. [25]

- (0–6) A few simple points about life chances in general or about gender inequality would be worth three or four marks. An attempt to explain what is meant by 'patriarchy', with no further development, could reach the top of the band.
- (7–12) A basic account of one sociological explanation of gender inequality, with no direct reference to patriarchy, would fit the lower part of the band. To go higher in the band, there must be some focus on patriarchy and its possible impact on the life chances of females. A basic account of two or more sociological explanations of gender inequality, which includes some reference to patriarchy, could reach the top of the band. Answers at this level may be mainly or wholly descriptive.
- (13–18) Answers at this level will demonstrate a sound understanding of the concept of patriarchy and its use in explaining gender inequality. Lower in the band, answers may be confined to a broadly accurate account of a number of theories or explanations of gender inequality, including the contribution of feminist theorists who have emphasised the importance of patriarchy as an explanatory tool. Higher in the band, there will also be some attempt to assess the claim on which the question is based. However, the assessment may lack depth and is likely to be confined to a juxtaposition of different theories/explanations of gender inequality.
- (19–25) Answers at this level will demonstrate a clear and accurate understanding of the concept of patriarchy and the way it has been used by some feminist theorists to understand the factors affecting the life chances of females. It is likely that responses at this level will also show awareness of other strands of feminist theory together with attempts to explain gender inequality that derive from contrasting sociological perspectives e.g. Marxist, functionalist, post-modernist. There will be also a sustained and well-informed assessment of the usefulness of the concept of patriarchy in understanding the life chances of females. Lower in the band, the assessment may rely mainly on the juxtaposition of different theoretical perspectives on gender inequality. To go higher in the band, however, there must some attempt to provide a more direct analysis of the claim on which the question is based. This might be achieved by, for example, questioning whether a single, over-arching explanation of sexual inequality is appropriate, or by a well-honed dissection of the philosophical and/or substantive limitations of the concept of patriarchy. Empirical evidence might also be used to challenge (or support) some of the assumptions in the different sociological explanations of gender inequality.

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6 "Marxist explanations of ethnic inequality have many limitations and few strengths." Explain and assess this claim.

- (0–6) A few simple points about the nature of ethnic inequality may be worth three or four marks. A weak attempt to outline one cause of ethnic inequality would trigger the top of the band.
- (7–12) Lower in the band answers may focus mainly on describing the inequality experienced by many ethnic minority groups, though there will also be some attempt (largely unsuccessful) to identify relevant causes. Higher in the band, one or more sociological explanations of ethnic inequality will be described with a degree of accuracy, though there need be no references to Marxist theory specifically. Answers at this level may be mainly or wholly descriptive.
- (13–18) At this level, there will be an explicit discussion of some Marxist explanations of ethnic inequality. Lower in the band, the material covered may be lacking in range and/or detail. Some of the nuances of the Marxist perspective on ethnic inequality may be overlooked. Higher in the band, the discussion will be better informed and may cover a wider range of Marxist contributions to the debate about the nature of ethnic inequality. To reach the top half of the band, there will also be an attempt to assess the value of Marxist explanations of ethnic inequality. However, the assessment may lack depth at this level and is likely to rely on some implicit contrasts with other, non-Marxist perspectives on ethnic inequality.
- (19–25) Answers at this level will provide a good account of a range of Marxist explanations of ethnic inequality. There will also be a sustained and well-informed assessment of the strengths and limitations of these explanations. Lower in the band, the assessment may be limited mainly to contrasting structural and cultural accounts of the causes of ethnic inequality. To go higher in the band, however, there will also be a more direct analysis of the value of Marxist accounts of ethnic inequality. This might include, for example, a discussion of the limitations of economic determinism, or use of empirical evidence to highlight some of the strengths and/or limitations of the Marxist approach to understanding ethnic inequality. Post-modernist ideas might also be used to debate some of the issues raised by the question.