

MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2013 series

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/12

Paper 1 (Principles and Methods 1), 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

1 ‘Social reality is created through the interactions between individuals. There are no structural forces shaping human behaviour.’ Explain and assess this view. [25]

- 0–6** A few assertions about how society influences the individual might be worth 3 or 4 marks. A brief attempt to outline the concept of socialisation, with little or no further development, would merit 5 or 6 marks.
- 7–12** Answers that are confined to an account of the functionalist theory of socialisation would fit the lower part of the band. A basic description of one or more structural theory of society (Marxist or functionalist) would merit the top half of the band. Similarly, an attempt to explain the idea that human behaviour is shaped by structural forces (for example, through a discussion of Durkheim’s notion that society is an external reality shaping the individual) would also trigger the top of the band. At this level there may be little or no evidence of assessment.
- 13–18** To reach this band, answers must include an explanation of the idea that social reality is created through interactions between individuals. This is most likely to be delivered through a discussion of the interactionist contribution to sociological theory. Lower in the band, answers may be confined to a basic account of one or more interactionist theory of socialisation. Higher in the band, there may also be an attempt to explore alternative views of the relationship between the individual and society, with reference to structural theories likely to figure in particular. Contrasting structural and interactionist perspectives on socialisation would be one way of providing, through juxtaposition, an element of assessment. A more philosophical critique of determinism (for example, through reference to the ideas of Dennis Wrong) would be another way of assessing the view expressed in the question. The assessment at this level may lack depth and possibly contain some over-generalisation.
- 19–25** At this level there will be a thorough exploration of the view that social reality is created through interactions between individuals. Good knowledge of the interactionist perspective is likely to be a feature of answers that reach this band. Lower in the band, the assessment may occur mainly in the form of juxtaposing different sociological perspectives on the nature of social reality. To reach the top of the band, there must also be some direct engagement with the issues raised by the claim that there are no structural forces shaping human behaviour. This might include reflections on different strands of determinism in sociological theory e.g. Durkheimian and Parsonian functionalism, Marxist historical materialism, and structuralism. To reach the top of the band, look too for some element of sophistication, such as the ability to draw arguments together to reach an overall conclusion about the validity of an interactionist view of the relationship between individual and society.

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**2 'Marxist theories fail to explain the complex nature of modern industrial societies today.'
Explain and assess this view. [25]**

- 0–6** A few disjointed remarks about class relations today might be worth 3 or 4 marks. Some cursory attempt to explain Marx's theory of class, perhaps with some inaccuracy and omissions, would trigger the top of the band.
- 7–12** A basic account of Marxist theory, with no further development, would fit the lower part of the band. Higher in the band, we might expect that a discussion of Marxist ideas will be complemented by a simple attempt to identify some of the changes that have affected the social structure of industrial societies since the high point of classical Marxist theory in the early twentieth century. Alternatively, there may be little or no discussion of Marxist ideas directly, but instead the answer might include a more sustained descriptive account of the nature of modern industrial societies today. An answer of that type, if well done and with good links to the question implicit, could reach the top of the band. At this level, there may be little or no evidence of assessment.
- 13–18** Answers that reach this band will demonstrate a sound understanding of Marxist theory. Lower in the band, the discussion of Marxist theory may be delivered in general terms, without differentiating between different strands within the overall perspective. Higher in the band, different Marxist theories (Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Gramsci, Althusser, neo-Marxists) will be identified. To reach the top half of the band, there must also be some evidence of assessment through considering whether Marxist theories have any relevance for understanding the complex nature of modern industrial societies today. The issues covered might include, for example, references to changes in class boundaries, changes in the distribution of income and wealth, the creation of state welfare provision, the emergence of consumerism, the supposed fragmentation of the working class, and the increasing salience of sexual and ethnic divisions.
- 19–25** A clear and accurate understanding of Marxist theories will be evident in answers at this level. Candidates will also show a strong awareness of the senses in which modern industrial societies have changed since the period of classical Marxist theory in the early twentieth century. This will lead to a sustained assessment of the extent to which Marxist theories remain relevant today. To reach the top of the band, some element of sophistication in the analysis needs to be demonstrated. This might be achieved in various ways including, for example, by discussing the contribution of more recent Marxist thinkers and the extent to which their ideas help rescue Marx's original analysis of capitalism. Good use of post-modernist ideas to engage critically with Marxist theory would be another way of demonstrating the qualities required in a top mark answer to this question.

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Section B

3 'The extent to which participant observation studies produce data that is high in validity has been exaggerated.' Explain and assess this view. [25]

- 0–6** A simple attempt to define participant observation with no further development might be worth 3 or 4 marks. A few general remarks about strengths and/or limitations of participant observation, but with no reference to the issue of validity, could gain 5 or 6 marks.
- 7–12** A basic account on the strengths and/or limitations of participant observation, with little or no attempt to discuss the issue of validity, would fit the lower part of the band. A general discussion of participant observation that also happens to address the issue of validity directly, albeit in a limited form, would trigger the top of the band. At this level, there need be no attempt to assess the view on which the question is based.
- 13–18** A requirement to reach this band is that answers demonstrate a sound understanding of the concept of validity and its importance for those who favour the use of participant observation in sociological research. A sound account of the strengths and limitations of participant observation, with some links to the concept of validity (perhaps indirect), would fit the lower part of the band. Higher in the band, there must also be an attempt to assess the claim the extent to which participant observation studies produce data that is high in validity has been exaggerated. At this level, however, the assessment may be elementary and possibly confined to a simple account of the positivist critique of participant observation. The use of examples from research studies is not essential, though references to studies might help to illustrate key points and thereby strengthen the quality of the answer.
- 19–25** Answers at this level will demonstrate a clear understanding of the different views that might be expressed about the relationship between participant observation and the concept of validity. There will also be sustained assessment of the claim that the extent to which participant observation studies produce data that is high in validity has been exaggerated. Lower in the band, the assessment may lack balance and/or rely mainly on a statement of contrasting theoretical perspectives (positivist and interpretivist) on the value of participant observation. Higher in the band, the assessment will be well focused on the concept of validity and there may be a detailed analysis of the strengths and limitations of participant observation as a method of delivering validity in sociological research.

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4 'Research findings in sociology will always be influenced by the values of the researcher.'
Explain and assess this view. [25]

- 0–6** A few isolated remarks about research methods with no reference to values or bias might be worth 3 or 4 marks. A very brief and elementary discussion of the way that values might influence sociological research would trigger the top of the band.
- 7–12** A general account of the strengths and limitations of different research methods, with little or no explicit discussion of values, would fit the lower part of the band. To go higher, there needs to be some attempt to explain how the values of the researcher might influence the choice of research topic and/or the processes of sociological enquiry. However, at this level there may be little or no attempt to assess the claim that all sociological studies are affected by the values of the researcher.
- 13–18** A minimum requirement for accessing this band is that candidates identify different ways in which the values of the researcher might influence the research process. One way of satisfying this requirement would be to consider a range of objectivity and freedom from researcher bias/influence is difficult to achieve. Lower in the band, the answers are likely to be mainly or wholly descriptive. Higher in the band, there will be an attempt to grapple with the notion that all sociological studies are affected by the values of the researcher. However, the assessment may lack depth and rely over-much on a statement of different theoretical positions on the relationship between values and sociological research.
- 19–25** The ways in which the values of the researcher might influence the process of sociological enquiry will be well illustrated at this level. Different research methods will be discussed and conclusions will be reached about how far the selection and/or implementation of each method is subject to influence by the values of the researcher. The assessment will be sustained and demonstrate a sound understanding of the different theoretical positions on the role of values in sociology. Higher in the band, a clear and plausible conclusion will emerge about whether it is inevitable that sociological studies are affected by the values of the researcher.

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Section C

- 5 ‘The extent of social mobility in modern industrial societies has been exaggerated.’
Explain and assess this view. [25]**

- 0–6** A few assertions about social mobility broadly directed towards the question might be worth 2 or 3 marks. A basic attempt to explain the concept of social mobility would go higher in the band. Some broadly sociological observations about social class, without direct links to the issue of social mobility, might also merit the top part of the band.
- 7–12** Lower in the band answers may be confined to a basic account of the meritocracy thesis or the functionalist perspective on social stratification. A basic account of the meritocracy thesis that also acknowledges some of the arguments and/or evidence that may be advanced against that theory would trigger the top part of the band. Some discussion of social mobility studies tacked on to an answer that relies mainly on a descriptive account of different theories of social stratification, would also warrant a mark higher in the band. Answers at this level are likely to be mainly or wholly descriptive.
- 13–18** Answers that merit this band will focus directly on evidence and studies that reveal the extent of social mobility in modern industrial societies. A basic account of a limited range of research findings on the subject of social mobility would fit the lower part of the band. A sustained review of evidence from social mobility studies will trigger the top half of the band. Higher in the band, there will also be some attempt to assess the view on which the question is based. However, the assessment at this level may lack depth and any conclusion reached is likely to over-simplify the issues.
- 19–25** Answers at this level will provide a detailed analysis of the extent of social mobility in modern industrial societies. This is likely to include references to both relevant empirical material and theoretical positions, such as those associated with Marxist analysis and the meritocracy thesis. There will be a sustained assessment of the extent to which social mobility in modern industrial societies has been exaggerated. Lower in the band, the assessment may rely on the juxtaposition of different theories/study results. Higher in the band, the assessment will be more refined and there will be direct engagement with the strengths and limitations of the different theories and studies discussed.

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6 'Patriarchy is the main factor explaining why women fill so few of the top jobs in industry and the professions.' Explain and assess this view. [25]

- 0–6** A few simple points 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 in employment, 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 employment opportunities of females. A basic account of two or more sociological explanations of gender inequality in employment, 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 in employment. Lower in the band, answers may be confined to a broadly accurate account of a number of theories or explanations of gender inequality in employment, including the contribution of feminist theorists who have emphasised the importance of patriarchy as an explanatory tool. Better answers at this level will focus more directly on the factors that may be preventing many women from achieving top jobs in industry and the professions. 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 employment opportunities 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 why women fill so few of the top jobs in industry and the professions. Lower in the band, the assessment may rely mainly on the juxtaposition of different theoretical perspectives on gender inequality in employment. To go higher in the band, however, there must be 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 gender 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.