
SOCIOLOGY

9699/21

Paper 2 Theory and Methods

May/June 2017

1 hour 30 minutes

No Additional Materials are required.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

An answer booklet is provided inside this question paper. You should follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

Answer Question 1 and **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.



This document consists of **2** printed pages, **2** blank pages and **1** insert.

Section A

Answer Question 1.

Participant observation is a method where researchers join the group being studied. This method not only allows the sociologist to observe people in their natural setting, but also to understand and feel things from their point of view. One issue to address is whether the research will use overt or *covert observation*. A key strength of participant observation is that it allows the sociologist to achieve a rich and detailed picture of the study group and obtain data that is high in validity.

Interpretivists are most likely to support the use of observation, which can be participant or non-participant. On the other hand, those who favour a positivist approach are critical of observation. They point to a number of ethical, practical and theoretical problems with observational methods.

- 1 (a) What is meant by the term *covert observation*? [2]
- (b) Describe **two** ethical issues with participant observation. [4]
- (c) Explain why interpretivists support the use of participant observation. [8]
- (d) Assess the strengths and limitations of non-participant observation. [11]

Section B

Answer **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3.

- 2 'Marxist theory continues to offer the most convincing account of how society works.' Explain and assess this view. [25]
- 3 'The aim of sociological research should be to help disadvantaged groups in society.' Explain and assess this view. [25]

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