
SOCIOLOGY

9699/23

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.

- 1 Observation studies allow researchers to collect in-depth data. These studies can be carried out on a participant or non-participant basis. Participant observation involves a researcher becoming a member of a group and taking a full part in their social activities, often over a long period of time. This approach allows the researcher to observe the behaviour of group members in their own environment. Before starting the study, the researcher must decide whether to use covert or *overt observation*.

Those in favour of qualitative methods claim that participant observation produces data that is high in validity. They point out that studying a small group over a long period of time means that highly detailed first hand data can be gained. An example of this approach is Patrick's study of a Glasgow gang in the 1960s. Despite their strengths, observational studies also involve a number of practical and ethical problems.

- (a) What is meant by the term *overt observation*? [2]
- (b) Describe **two** practical problems with observational research. [4]
- (c) Explain why it might be important to observe people in their own environment. [8]
- (d) Assess the view that ethical issues are the main problem with using covert participant observation. [11]

Section B

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

- 2 'The main weakness of Marxist theory is that it exaggerates the amount of conflict in society.' Explain and assess this view. [25]
- 3 'Sociological research should aim to find solutions to society's problems.' Explain and assess this view. [25]

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