

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

Cambridge International Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2014 series

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/22

Paper 2 (Data Response), maximum raw mark 50

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Section A

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

- 1 1 mark for a partial definition, such as 'this is one of several perspectives used for studying society', or 'this refers to how people interact with each other in society'.
- 2 Interpretivism refers to that sociological perspective that focuses on the ways in which people give meaning to their own and others' actions. 2 marks for a clear, accurate definition

An example on its own will not be credited. If an example is used to support a definition, thereby demonstrating understanding of the term, this will be credited.

(b) Describe two advantages of using a focus group. [4]

2 marks available for each way. 1 mark for identification OR explanation only, 2 marks for identification AND explanation.

- 1 Advantages may include:
 - Interviewees may feel less intimidated by the presence of the interviewer;
 - They may feel more relaxed among other group members generating trust and rapport;
 - Interviewee may feel supported by the group;
 - The interviewee is not betraying the confidence of other group members by speaking about the group 'behind their back' in a personal interview.
 - The 'dynamic' created by a group may lead to more validity;
 - The researcher effect is reduced.

0 marks for simply asserting 'less time consuming', 'less costly'. However, 1 mark if the candidate is able to specify less time consuming/costly in relation to an alternative, such as individual interviews. A second mark could be rewarded for this type of answer if the candidate is able to explain why focus group interviews are less consuming or less costly relative to an alternative.

Any other reasonable response.

- 2 1 mark for the example plus 1 mark for development (2 × 2 marks).

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(c) Explain why a researcher may choose to use a semi-structured interview. [8]

0–4 These may include points such as:

- A researcher may wish to have elements of structured and unstructured interviews because this relates to their overall aims (e.g. factual and attitudinal);
- Gives a degree of control over proceedings;
- Enables a measure of comparability;
- Allows for unpredictable responses and the possibility of follow up questions, in other words they are flexible;
- Accords with the sociologist's theoretical perspective.

Lower in the band answers may be confined to explaining one or two features of semi-structured interviews.

Higher in the band, one or two reasons why a sociologist might choose semi-structured interviews simply stated may be worth 3 or 4 marks. There may be discussion on interviews in general without a focus on semi-structured interviews.

5–8 Lower in the band a range of relevant points will cover a greater depth of understanding although the range may lack breadth or sufficient explanation.

Higher in the band, candidates will clearly distinguish between the merits of interviews in general and semi-structured interviews in particular. The reasons given will be well-developed and show very good sociological understanding. There might be relevant links to positivist and interpretivist perspectives in high scoring answers.

A good list of undeveloped points may gain up to six marks. To go higher, there needs to be development of three or more points.

N.B. This question asks candidates to 'explain', therefore there is no requirement for assessment.

(d) Assess interpretivist arguments against the use of questionnaires. [11]

0–4 Answers at this level are likely to show only limited appreciation of the issues raised by the question.

Lower in the band, a few isolated points about the use of questionnaires, without any reference to interpretivism might be worth two or three marks.

Higher in the band, an answer might advance a couple of practical limitations of interviews noted, without further development.

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- 5–8 Lower in the band, answers are likely to concentrate wholly or mainly on the practical limitations of questionnaires.

Higher in the band, the answers will include more references to relevant theoretical issues and/or will make explicit comparisons between questionnaires and other methods, for example, interviews. Candidates who distinguish between the different types of questionnaires are also likely to trigger at least the top of this band, if not the higher. At this level, links to the interactionist perspective may be somewhat implicit or partial.

A descriptive answer cannot gain more than 8 marks.

- 9–11 At this level, we should expect answers to cover a good range of practical and theoretical points related to the strengths/limitations of questionnaires with a focus on the interpretivist position. There will also be a concerted attempt to assess the use of questionnaires.

Features that might help distinguish answers that merit the top of the band include, for example, linkage made between the critique of questionnaires and quantitative data generally and the interpretivist perspective. These should be explicit and well informed.

Section B

2 Explain and assess the similarities and differences between Marxist and functionalist models of how modern industrial societies work. [25]

Level 1

- 0–6 Lower half of the band an answer might be based on a few general observations about the nature of society with little or no discernible sociological knowledge.

Higher in the band the discussion will remain weak, but there may be a few elementary references to functionalist and Marxist theory.

Level 2

- 7–12 A simple explanatory account of the functionalist or Marxist model of society would merit the lower part of the band.

Higher in the band, the explanation of either model will be more developed. At this level, differences between the theories will lack development and responses are unlikely to reference similarities.

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Level 3

13–18 Lower in the band both theories will be addressed although the analysis may be rather limited. Both models will be outlined with references to relevant concepts such as value consensus and conflict, contrasted. The contributions of relevant sociologists, such as Durkheim, Parsons, as well as Althusser from the Marxist wing may figure in better planned answers.

Higher in the band, the analysis will be coherent and sustained, though it may lack depth. At this level, differences are likely to be well covered but the exploration of similarities such as macro and systems theories, structuralism and concepts like determinism may be less well developed.

There is no requirement for assessment at this level.

Level 4

19–25 Answers at this level must achieve three things:

First, there will be good sociological knowledge and understanding.

Second, the material used will be interpreted accurately and applied effectively to answering the question.

Third, there must also be some evidence of assessment.

Lower in the band, there will be a detailed and accurate understanding of both functionalist and Marxist models of society. The assessment will be explicit and detailed; it will also attempt to consider both the differences and similarities of each.

Higher in the band, answers may be distinguished by a sophisticated line of argument in response to the question or possibly by skill in contrasting each perspective with an evaluative approach.

There is likely to be a well formulated conclusion.

3 Explain and assess competing sociological theories of the processes that shape social identity. [25]

Level 1

0–6 Answers at this level are likely to be based on a few common sense observations with little or no sociological backing.

Lower in the band there may be a few basic comments about socialisation in general.

Higher in the band this may be linked to functionalism, though without appropriate detail and development.

Level 2

7–12 Lower in the band there may be an account of just one sociological theory of socialisation, such as the functionalist theory, would fit the lower part of the band and can score no more than 9 marks.

Higher in the band there would need to be a descriptive account of one or more other theories of social identity (e.g. functionalist, interactionist, Marxist, postmodernist). At this level the presentation of positions is likely to be juxtaposed.

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Level 3

13–18 Lower in the band answers may be confined to a basic account of different sociological perspectives (most likely functionalist and interactionist) on socialisation.

Higher in the band, a wider range of material on these themes will be covered and some answers may distinguish, for example, between different strands of interpretivism, or possibly an outline of postmodernist ideas.

There is no requirement for assessment at this level.

Level 4

19–25 Answers at this level must achieve three things:

First, there will be good sociological knowledge and understanding.

Second, the material used will be interpreted accurately and applied effectively to answering the question.

Third, there must also be some evidence of assessment.

At this level there will be a balanced and convincing account of different theories of socialisation, including those perspectives that emphasise the importance of viewing the individual as a creative social actor and those that follow a more deterministic line. These ideas will be fully explained, with a sustained level of analysis and assessment.

Lower in the band, the assessment may still rely mainly on juxtaposition of contrasting sociological theories; for example, structural versus action theories of human behaviour.

To go higher in the band, there must also be a more direct and rounded analysis of the process, perhaps by highlighting that neither of the major sociological positions are as dogmatic as their opponents would have it. Postmodernist ideas might also be used to support (or possibly to refine) the overall tone of the interpretivist perspective on the development of social identity.

There is likely to be a well formulated conclusion.