
SOCIOLOGY

9699/21

Paper 2 Theory and Methods

October/November 2016

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 Some sociologists believe that one of the purposes of research is to make the world a better place. This is why many have conducted research into issues such as the extent of poverty and educational opportunities of working class children. Therefore, the choice of research topics requires a *value judgement* that some aspect of social life is undesirable, and research that may lead to improvement in a given area can only be regarded as a good thing. It follows from this that these sociologists are concerned about how their research data is used and whose interests it serves.

However, other sociologists regard this view as mistaken. They say that any research carried out should be value-free and scientific. That is to say, there should be a clear separation between facts and a researcher's opinion so that the outcome of sociological research is neutral in value. The findings produced are not the concern of the sociologist, as it is for others to decide how research is used and whether or not it is acted upon in ways that may help people in society.

- (a) What is meant by the term *value judgement*? [2]
- (b) Describe **two** factors that may influence a sociologist's choice of research method. [4]
- (c) Explain how the values of the researcher may lead to research findings that contain bias. [8]
- (d) Assess the argument that sociological research should be value-free. [11]

Section B

Answer **either** question 2 **or** question 3.

- 2 Explain and assess the strengths and limitations of the different types of interview used by sociologists. [25]
- 3 'Interpretivists provide the most convincing account of how people perform social roles.' Explain and assess this view. [25]

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