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SOCIOLOGY **9699/23**

Paper 2 Theory and Methods **May/June 2016**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 50

Published

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Section A

1 There are two types of explanation of social order. One focuses on the role of shared norms and values in maintaining cohesion in society. Parsons, for example, argued that social order is created through the process of socialisation whereby people come to internalise the same views about what is acceptable behaviour. It follows that social order largely depends on people fulfilling the roles they have learnt to play in a given situation. For example, teachers and pupils, or workers and managers, are expected to behave in accordance with these roles.

Another explanation of social order suggests that weaker social groups are pressured into accepting the rules of society by the powerful. In this view, society is based on conflict rather than consensus. For Marxists, in particular, the state plays a key role in maintaining social control through the exercise of force and the influence of ruling class *ideology*.

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

1 One mark for a partial understanding of the concept e.g. 'ideology refers to the beliefs people have' or 'ideology includes the ideas we have about the world'.

2 Two marks for a clear and accurate definition. A set of ideas or beliefs that represents the outlook and interests of a social group.

(b) Describe two reasons why workers generally conform to their expected roles. [4]

1 The reasons offered are likely to include relevant sanctions/reward that encourages workers to conform to their expected roles. These sanctions/rewards may link to the following points.

- Result of the process of socialisation
- Respect for hierarchy/manager/employer's status
- Fear of losing employment
- Desire to appear hardworking, respectable
- Desire to be seen as a role model for family members
- Any other reasonable response

2 One mark for the example plus one mark for development (2 × 2 marks)

(c) Explain the Marxist view of how the state maintains social control. [8]

0–4 Answers at this level are likely to show only limited appreciation of the issues raised by the question and make little use of relevant sociological concepts and theories.

Lower in the band, a few rudimentary points about social control, with little or no reference to the state.

Higher in the band, the focus of the answer would have to be more explicitly directed towards the Marxist view of the role of the state in managing conflict.

5–8 Answers at this level will show some sociological knowledge and understanding of the question.

Lower in the band [5–6] the answer will demonstrate some knowledge of the relevant sociological material on the Marxist view of the role of the state. The ideas of Althusser [ISA] Gramsci [hegemony] may appear implicitly or explicitly. Formal and informal mechanisms of social control might be explained.

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Higher in the band, there will be a clear account of the Marxist view of how the state may contribute to the maintenance of social order. The explanation will be developed and well informed, either covering a range of points or fewer points in detail.

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.

(d) Assess the view that the functionalist theory of social order overestimates the amount of consensus in society. [11]

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

Lower in the band, a few simple observations about consensus in society, with little sociological insight and only weak links to the question.

Higher in the band [3–4], an answer might contain one or two basic points agreeing with the question. Answers that offer a basic explanation of functionalism, with little development in relation to the question, would fit the higher part of the band.

5–8 Answers at this level show some sociological knowledge and understanding of the question.

This may well include reference to concepts like: value consensus, moral codes, mechanical/organic solidarity or the collective conscience.

Lower in the band, a simplistic list of points supporting the proposition could gain 5 or 6 marks. A sound account of functionalist theory [e.g. Durkheim's view that there needs to be basic agreement on values for society to exist] that is not very well applied to the question could also gain these marks.

Higher in the band, a more detailed account that contrasts the functionalist theory on social order perhaps with that of the conflict perspective or particular theories, would trigger the top half of the band. However, the analysis at this level will not be fully developed.

A descriptive answer cannot gain more than 8 marks.

9–11 Answers at this level will demonstrate good sociological knowledge and understanding applied to the question and there will be some assessment of why the functionalist notion of consensus in society is rejected by conflict theorists.

Lower in the band [9–10], the assessment may be based on a simple juxtaposition of 'conflict' versus 'consensus' perspectives on social order.

Higher in the band, the wording of the question will be directly addressed and the proposition will be evaluated explicitly.

Some candidates may cite empirical evidence to support the notion of overestimation. There may be some overall conclusion about the view that functionalists overestimate consensus.

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Section B

2 'Individual behaviour is too unpredictable for it to be studied scientifically.' Explain and assess this claim. [25]

Level 1 0–6 Answers at this level are likely to be assertive and focus on a few common sense observations.

Lower in the band, answers may be confined to one or two simple points based on assertion/common sense understanding. For example, a few vague remarks linking sociology and science, with little development or linkage to the question.

Higher in the band [4–6], there may be a wider range of simple points, though the answer will lack detail and focus.

Level 2 7–12 Answers at this level will show some sociological knowledge and understanding of the question.

Lower in the band [7–9], the answer may be confined to a narrow range of points, lacking detail and possibly with some inaccuracies. Responses here are likely to demonstrate a basic awareness of the main features of the debate about the status of sociology and the links between the subject and the logic and methods of the natural sciences. However, the wording of the question may be addressed only indirectly through a general account of the positivist perspective.

Higher in the band [10–12], answers may either cover a narrow range of points in reasonable detail or cover a wider range of points in limited detail. For example, there will be a fairly clear account of the positivist position and at least a rudimentary attempt to contrast it with alternative perspectives, most likely the contribution of those in the interactionist tradition. However, answers will be largely descriptive at this level.

Level 3 13–18 Answers at this level will show good sociological knowledge and understanding. The material used will be interpreted accurately and applied effectively to answering the question.

Lower in the band [13–15], answers are likely to make use of concepts/theory but the range of knowledge demonstrated may be limited and the points covered may lack development. Expect to see a sound account of the positivist versus anti-positivist debate, but with limited analytical depth.

Higher in the band [16–18], answers will use a wider range of knowledge, supported by the use of concepts/theory where relevant and include some well developed points. Here, answers are likely to adopt a more analytical approach by considering whether human behaviour is unpredictable and, if it is to some degree, then what are the implications of this for the debate about the claims of sociology to be a science. However, this aspect of the answer may lack development and sophistication at this level.

There is no requirement for assessment at this level.

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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; and
- **third**, there must also be some evidence of assessment.

Lower in the band [19–20], the assessment may be largely delivered through juxtaposition of contrasting arguments/theories but the discussion of the positivist versus anti-positivist debate will be detailed and well informed. Alternatively, the assessment may be limited to just one or two evaluative points that are explicitly stated. The answer will also address the specific issues raised by the question by focusing, at least in part, on the supposed unpredictability of human behaviour and its implications for sociology.

Higher in the band [22–25], there will be sustained assessment and the points offered will be explicit and well-directed towards the question. For example, evaluation may be demonstrated by questioning the nature of scientific method and distinguishing between the issues of whether sociology can and should emulate the methods of the natural sciences.

There is likely to be a well formulated conclusion.

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3 'Qualitative research methods should not be used in sociological research because they lack reliability'. Explain and assess this view. [25]

Level 1 0–6 Answers at this level are likely to be assertive and focus on a few common sense observations.

Lower in the band, answers may be confined to one or two simple points based of assertion/common sense understanding. For example, on qualitative methods in general, or about specific qualitative methods but with no links to reliability.

Higher in the band, there may be a very basic understanding that the question is focusing on what is meant by 'reliability', but with no further development.

Level 2 7–12 Answers at this level will show some sociological knowledge and understanding of the question.

Lower in the band [7–9], the answer may be confined to a narrow range of points, lacking detail and possible with some inaccuracies. Responses here are likely to be a basic account of qualitative research, with only implicit or weak links to reliability.

Higher in the band [10–12], answers may either cover a narrow range of points in reasonable detail or cover a wider range of points in limited detail. For example, there may be a slightly more developed account of the idea that qualitative methods produce data that is low in reliability, but at this level the response is likely to provide a straightforward endorsement of the proposition. At least one type of method should be referred to, albeit not in much detail. However, answers will be largely descriptive at this level.

Level 3 13–18 Answers at this level will show good sociological knowledge and understanding. The material used will be interpreted accurately and applied effectively to answering the question.

Lower in the band [13–15], answers are likely to make use of concepts/theory but the range of knowledge demonstrated may be limited and the points covered may lack development. Expect to see a sound descriptive account of qualitative research in general but with rather tentative links to the question

Higher in the band [16–18], answers will use a wider range of knowledge, supported by the use of concepts/theory where relevant and include some well-developed points and a sharper understanding of the question. To reach the top half of the band, the analysis should introduce validity as a concept and answers must include references to particular research methods. However, within this band the analysis will be fairly limited.

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; and
- **third**, there must also be some evidence of assessment.

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Lower in the band [19–21], The assessment may be largely delivered through juxtaposition of contrasting arguments/theories. Alternatively, the assessment may be limited to just one or two evaluative points that are explicitly stated. There will be a detailed account of the relationship between qualitative research and reliability. There will also be a clear attempt to assess the extent to which qualitative methods produce data that is unreliable. This will include some questioning of the assumption that this is always the case i.e. reliability v validity and/or positivist and interpretivist perspectives.

Higher in the band [22–25], there will be sustained assessment and the points offered will be explicit and well-directed towards the question leading to an overall conclusion. The assessment will be supported by a more direct analysis of the value of qualitative research methods and of what constitutes 'good' sociological research. This may lead some candidates to even question the extent to which those who conduct qualitative research are at all concerned to achieve reliable outcomes. Another possible assessment route might be to outline those 'qualitative' methods that arguably lead to a measure of reliability in the data produced e.g. semi-structured interviews, structured observations. There may be a discussion of research aims and values, and reflections on the influence of topic on the choice of research methods.

There is likely to be a well formulated conclusion.

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