UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

International General Certificate of Secondary Education

MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2011 question paper

for the guidance of teachers

0495 SOCIOLOGY

0495/11 Paper 1, maximum raw mark 90

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

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UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

Section A: Research Methods

1 Participant observation is a research strategy that aims to gain a close and detailed understanding of a particular area of study. This method usually involves the study of a small group where the researcher becomes involved with the people in their natural environment. This research may be covert or overt. Covert participant observation is regarded as less ethically acceptable than overt observation.

With both types of participant observation, there is a risk that the researcher may identify too closely with the group they are studying and stop viewing their behaviour with objectivity. Because this research approach produces qualitative data, it is difficult to compare one piece of research with another. The researcher may also experience difficulties in recording accurately what they observe when studying the group.

Non-Participant observation is another method used to study group activities. It is seen as more ethically acceptable than covert participant observation. However, this method has a number of limitations which may damage the validity of the study. Sociologists also use various forms of interviews to gain detailed information, but these may lack the detail that can be achieved using participant observation.

(a) In sociological research, what is meant by the following terms:

(i) covert observation [2]

Answers are likely to refer to the study of an individual or group without the knowledge of the participants. Do not allow participant observation.

2 marks for a full explanation, 1 mark for a partial definition.

(ii) objectivity [2]

Answers are likely to refer to the process where data is studied, or research carried out, in a neutral manner without prejudice, bias or distortion.

2 marks for a full explanation, 1 mark for a partial definition.

(iii) qualitative data [2]

Answers are likely to refer to collecting valid data that attempt to reveal the meanings and perceptions of the participants under study. Reference may be made to the collecting of descriptive data, but this alone is likely to achieve only 1 mark.

2 marks for a full explanation, 1 mark for a partial definition.

(b) Describe <u>one</u> strength and <u>one</u> limitation of *non-participant* observation. [4]

Candidates can gain 2 marks for each strength and limitation. The factors outlined must refer to non-participant observation. Limitations which refer to observation in general can only achieve 1 mark.

Likely limitations will focus on: the observer may not get a real sense of the dynamics of the group; various important interactions may be missed. Likely strengths will focus on the greater ease of recording data because the researcher is not directly involved; the ability of the researcher to have an overview of the group.

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2 marks for identification and an explanation of each point. 1 mark for identification but no explanation.

(c) Describe <u>two</u> reasons why a researcher carrying out participant observation may find it difficult to be accepted by the study group. [4]

Answers are likely to focus on social, ethical, age-related factors. Reference may be made to the difficulty in integrating into the culture of the group, initiation processes, witnessing/participating in illegal activities, gaining trust or any other relevant response.

2 marks for identification and an explanation of each reason. 1 mark for identification.

(d) Describe <u>two</u> difficulties in carrying out *covert* participant observation. [4]

Answers must focus on covert observation and are likely to focus on gaining access to the group, remaining undetected, risky behaviour, recording data and becoming too closely involved with the group or any other relevant response.

2 marks for identification and an explanation of each reason. 1 mark for identification.

(e) Describe <u>two</u> reasons why the participant observer may find it difficult to record their observations accurately when studying the group. [4]

Answers are likely to focus on: if the observation is covert the recording will have to be done afterwards, therefore ensuring that the data are selective. The researcher is often involved with the group and therefore may provide a biased, subjective account; the researcher may miss or omit certain aspects of the group's activities by accident or deliberate omission; the group may be behaving differently because of their presence or any other relevant response.

2 marks for identification and an explanation of each reason. 1 mark for identification.

(f) Describe <u>two</u> strengths and <u>two</u> limitations of using interviews in sociological research. [8]

Likely strengths include: interviews may provide detailed and valid responses; communication between interviewer and interviewee is easy; generalisations can be made from findings if the sample constructed is representative. Interviews may allow new theories to emerge if they are carried out in an unstructured way or any other relevant issue.

2 marks for identification and an explanation of each issue. 1 mark for identification.

Likely limitations include: interviews may be subject to an 'interviewer effect', damaging the validity of the data. Interviews may be carried out on a limited scale and therefore the findings may not be representative. Structured interviews may prevent interviewees from expressing their real concerns or any other relevant issue.

2 marks for identification and an explanation of each issue. 1 mark for identification.

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Section B: Culture and Socialisation

2 Sociologists claim that it is through the process of socialisation that people come to learn the norms and values of society.

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

Answers are likely to refer to beliefs and goals considered to be important in society, those ideas that underpin moral judgements.

2 marks for a full explanation, 1 mark for a partial definition.

(b) Distinguish between *primary* and *secondary* socialisation. [4]

In defining primary socialisation reference should be made to the first stages of learning the norms, values, language and culture in a society, which usually takes place within the family. Secondary socialisation should be defined as learning the norms, values and roles of a society from other agencies such as school, the peer group or any other agency.

1 mark for identifying each term. A further mark for briefly describing each type of socialisation.

(c) Explain how young children learn to interact effectively with other people. [6]

0–3: A few isolated comments about the importance of socialisation, maybe limited to primary socialisation, with little or no direct link to the question may be worth up to 3 marks.

4–6: A better answer will examine a range of ways young people learn to interact with others, including primary and secondary socialisation. These may include: language, play, imitation, canalisation, informal and formal learning at school as well as positive and negative sanctions. The greater the range of explanations the higher in the band the answer should be placed.

(d) How far are sociologists correct in claiming that the way people behave is mainly the result of socialisation? [8]

0–3: At this level there will be a few comments about aspects of socialisation, possibly just primary socialisation, but there will be little attempt to address the question.

4–6: At this level there will be some attempt to address the question, including both primary and secondary socialisation, but answers are likely to be descriptive, outlining in some detail a range of ways socialisation is important. At the top of the band there may be a limited attempt to engage with the question with cross-cultural examples and references to feral children that provide some form of elementary assessment.

7–8: At this level there will be an attempt to address the question and to present some form of discussion of the nurture/nature debate and at the top of the band to provide examples to support the arguments made.

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3 An individual's roles change as they leave childhood and experience adulthood.

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

Answers are likely to focus on the period of a person's life after they have reached physical maturity at the end of childhood and have full legal rights and responsibilities. Frequently, this is achieved at the age of 18 years.

1 mark for a partial definition and 2 marks for a full description.

(b) Describe <u>two</u> features of childhood. [4]

Answers are likely to focus on financial and emotional dependence on a parent or guardian. It is a time when the child is being socialised in norms, values and customs of their society and frequently seen as a time of innocence. Reference may be made to a period where individuals have certain protection under the law.

1 mark for a partial explanation and 2 marks for a full description for each feature.

(c) Explain how the roles of childhood and adulthood differ. [6]

0–3: At this level answers are likely to be basic, perhaps making a few simple comments about the roles of adults and children.

4–6: At this level answers will discuss a number of roles such as dependence and becoming educated. There will also be a clear attempt to explain adult roles, possibly focusing on providing care for children in terms of financial and emotional support as well as status. At the top of the band there is likely to be a clear distinction between the roles of the two groups.

(d) How far do the experiences of childhood differ between societies? [8]

0–3: At this level a number of basic points about childhood may be advanced. At the top of the band there may be some simplistic comparisons made but they are either likely to lack substance or development or just describe different socialisation practices.

4–6: At this level answers are likely to be more developed, with some attempt to make comparisons. There may be cultural examples to explain the differences. At the top of the band examples are likely to be limited in range but specific examples of the social construction may be advanced.

7–8: At this level answers are likely to be characterised by a range of specific examples and there will be an attempt to address the question directly, commenting on both similarities and differences between societies which will include childhood as a time of protection compared with exploited childhoods.

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Section C: Social Stratification and Inequality

4 In modern industrial societies there are more opportunities for individuals to improve their life chances.

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

Answers are likely to focus on the opportunities an individual has to improve or weaken their social position in life in terms of education, employment, health and income.

1 mark for a partial definition and 2 marks for a full description.

(b) Describe <u>two</u> ways through which an individual can improve their life chances. [4]

Answers are likely to focus on education, promotion, luck, marriage and entrepreneurial spirit.

1 mark for a partial explanation and 2 marks for a full description of each feature.

(c) Explain why people in traditional societies are likely to have fewer life chances. [6]

0–3: At this level answers are likely to be basic, perhaps making a few simple comments about lack of educational opportunities. One issue well explained may achieve up to 3 marks.

4–6: At this level answers will discuss a number of factors, such as the lack of educational opportunities, poverty, lack of work opportunities, rural communities, patriarchal societies that limit women etc. At the top of the band there is likely to be a range of factors discussed.

(d) How far do women now have equal opportunities with men in modern industrial societies? [8]

0–3: At this level there are likely to be a few basic descriptive points about women's improved roles, but there will be a lack of detailed examples.

4–6: At this level answers are likely to be more developed, making some attempt to discuss the opportunities of women, but they are likely to be narrow in range or lacking development at the bottom of the band. At the top of the band there is likely to be some attempt to address the question, relate their answer to modern industrial societies and offer some form of assessment, though this is likely to be limited.

7–8: At this level answers are likely to be characterised by a range of specific examples and there will be an attempt to address the question directly, commenting on the improved opportunities women may experience, but reference will also be made to continued barriers in areas such as the home and employment and such concepts as the glass ceiling. At the top of the band the answer may refer to feminist accounts.

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5 Poverty can be described as absolute or relative. Relative poverty appears to be a greater problem than absolute poverty in modern industrial societies.

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

Answers are likely to focus on the idea that individuals in absolute poverty will lack the means to meet their basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter.

1 mark for a partial definition and 2 marks for a full description.

(b) Describe <u>two</u> examples of relative poverty. [4]

Answers are likely to focus on lack of material possessions such as TVs, cars etc. Answers may examine the idea of lack of income to undertake various leisure pursuits or have fewer educational opportunities. To gain the full marks reference should be made to the ideas that an individual in relative poverty is deprived in relation to other people in their society.

1 mark for a partial explanation and 2 marks for a full description for each feature.

(c) Explain some of the ways in which people can escape poverty. [6]

0–3: At this level answers are likely to be basic, perhaps making a few simple comments about getting better jobs or becoming lucky in some way. One issue well explained may achieve up to 3 marks.

4–6: At this level answers will discuss a number of ways such as: developing skills, having an education, promotion, marriage, luck, hard work and migration to societies with more opportunity. At the top of the band there is likely to be a range of factors discussed.

(d) How far is poverty caused by the life style of the individual? [8]

0–3: At this level there are likely to be a few basic points about the life style of the poor contributing to their poverty, but ideas are likely to be simplistic and there will be a lack of detailed examples.

4–6: At this level answers are likely to be more developed making some attempt to discuss the life style of the poor in some detail. Answers are likely to focus on aspects of the culture of poverty and dependency culture, but towards the bottom of the band answers are likely to be narrow in range or lacking development. At the top of the band there is likely to be some attempt to address the question by looking at the ways in which the poor supposedly contribute to their own poverty, e.g. drug addiction and structural features that trap them, and offering limited assessment.

7–8: At this level answers are likely to be characterised by a range of specific examples and there will be an attempt to address the question directly, commenting on both cultural and external causes of poverty. At the top of the band the answer may refer to empirical research such as Lewis or Murray.

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Section D: Power and Authority

6 Political parties are an important feature of democratic societies.

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

Answers are likely to focus on the idea of a political organisation that seeks to present a manifesto and a set of policies in order to win elections.

1 mark for a partial definition and 2 marks for a full description.

(b) Describe <u>two</u> features of a political party. [4]

Answers are likely to focus on features such as the presentation of an ideological view of society, a manifesto published at election times, voluntary membership, financial contributions and the election of candidates to contest elections etc. Any other relevant response.

1 mark for a partial description and 2 marks for a full description.

(c) Explain why political parties are important in democratic societies. [6]

0–3: At this level answers are likely to be basic, perhaps making a few simple comments about the role of parties in elections to form governments. One point well explained may achieve up to 3 marks.

4–6: At this level answers will discuss a number of ways parties are important in democratic societies. These may include leadership of governments, campaigning, targeting key seats, effective use of the media, conduits for different political views, a training ground for future political leaders, nature of representative governments. At the top of the band there is likely to be a range of factors discussed.

(d) To what extent are modern industrial societies democratic? [8]

0–3: At this level there are likely to be a few basic points about how governments must listen to the people especially at election times, but answers are likely to be simplistic and there will be a lack of detailed examples.

4–6: At this level answers are likely to be more developed, making some attempt to discuss representation of the public. Knowledge of the influence of pressure groups and other powerful interests may be conveyed, but answers in the lower part of the band are likely to lack balance. At the top of the band there is likely to be some attempt to address the question, relate answers to modern industrial societies and offer some form of assessment, though this is likely to be limited, possibly commenting on how governments must consider the electorate more carefully closer to elections.

7–8: At this level answers are likely to be characterised by an understanding of both pressure groups and other interests and there is likely to be an attempt to address the question directly, perhaps discussing Marxist and pluralist theories.

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7 At election times opinion polls are used by the mass media to measure the views of the public on political issues. There is disagreement about how far the results of opinion polls influence the political process.

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

Answers are likely to focus on surveys of the electorate's views on certain issues. Normally they are concerned with voters' choices during election campaigns and many polls are done by papers or political parties but some are organised by independent researchers.

1 mark for a partial definition and 2 marks for a full description.

(b) Describe <u>two</u> ways in which opinion polls may influence governments. [4]

Answers are likely to focus on: negative polls may lead to changes in policy or personnel; positive polls may have an influence on the timing of elections; policies may reflect the public's attitudes towards certain issues. Answers may refer to specific examples of how polls have influenced the actions of governments or any other relevant response.

1 mark for a partial description and 2 marks for a full description.

(c) Explain how the mass media may influence the views of the public about the government. [6]

0–3: At this level answers are likely to be basic, perhaps making a few simple comments about the effects of the media over time. One issue well explained may achieve up to 3 marks.

4–6: At this level answers will discuss a number of ways the media may influence the opinion of the public about the government. These may include the targeting of individuals and policies for favourable or negative coverage. At the top of the band there is likely to be an awareness that governments attempt to manipulate the media and a range of factors is likely to be discussed.

(d) To what extent do opinion polls accurately reflect the views of the public about political issues? [8]

0–3: Answers are likely to be simplistic, perhaps describing in a limited way what opinion polls do. There will be little or no direct answer to the question.

4–6: At this level answers are likely to be more developed, outlining one or two factors that may influence the extent to which opinion polls accurately reflect the views of the public about political issues. At the top of the band there may be a limited attempt to provide some form of assessment, possibly identifying some sources of potential bias in opinion polls.

7–8: At this level answers are likely to focus directly on the issues raised by the question and provide some form of assessment, which may involve examining arguments for and against the view that opinion polls accurately reflect the views of the public on political issues, including such concepts as the band wagon effect. At the top of the band, ideas are likely to be well developed and supported.

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