

JUNE 2001

GCE ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY AND ADVANCED LEVEL

MARK SCHEME

MAXIMUM MARKS : 50

SYLLABUS/COMPONENT : 9699/2

SOCIOLOGY



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1.

Culture refers to the values, customs and modes of behaviour that are learned and internalised by people rather than being genetically transmitted from one generation to the next. Sociologists claim that culture, rather than biological instinct, is the key to understanding human behaviour. This implies that learning plays an important part in creating social beings. In Sociology the term given to the process by which we learn the norms, values and roles approved by our society is 'socialisation'.

Individuals begin at an early age to become aware of the existence of others and to take this knowledge into account as they form their own identities. Gradually, as part of the process of 'growing up', they absorb the standards and expectations of society so unconsciously that they become transformed into social beings almost without noticing it. In this way norms of conduct are experienced as natural and become part of our 'taken-for-granted' assumptions about appropriate social behaviour.

a) What is meant by the term *social being*? (2)

A person who understands and responds appropriately to the norms, values and rules of his or her society. This definition or an appropriate variation of it would be worth full marks. One mark for a poorly expressed or otherwise limited effort that has some merit e.g. "a member of society" or "someone who has been socialised".

b) Describe **two** examples of 'taken-for-granted' assumptions about appropriate social behaviour. (4)

One mark for each example, plus a further mark in each case for development. Obviously, there are many examples of 'taken-for-granted' assumptions and these tend to be culture specific. Examples from British culture include, for instance, queuing rather than queue jumping; applauding a musical performance as part of the audience; wearing clothes in public (usually) rather than appearing naked; following a particular dress code for work; etc. Reward other appropriate cultural examples.

c) Explain how young children become aware of others and form their own identities. (8)

0-4 A commonsense account with little or no reference to recognisable sociological sources may merit up to 4 marks, though it would have to be well developed to reach the top of the band. Similarly, a basic account of the process of socialisation, perhaps based on the functionalist perspective, would merit 3 or 4 marks.

5-8 Appropriate discussion of the interactionist perspective is likely to trigger this band. Well chosen references to G.H. Mead, Cooley, Becker, etc., may feature in good answers. The focus must be on the *processes* through which young children become aware of others and form their own identities.

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d) Assess sociological explanations of why norms may differ for different social groups. Answer with reference to differences between women and men. (11)

- 0-4 Answers are likely to be based on assertion, perhaps with a few vague sociological references and/or basic examples of differences in norms.
- 5-8 Two or more appropriate sociological explanations will be described, possibly with some inaccuracy and lack of detail lower in the band. Some attempt to assess these explanations will be evident higher in the band, albeit as a very basic level. Higher in the band, the answer will be focused on differences in the norms relating to women and men specifically.
- 9-11 As for the previous band except that the assessment will be sustained and incisive. Differences between the norms relating to women and men will be explored in reasonable detail and appropriate explanations discussed. The explanations may be in terms of grand theory (feminist, Marxist, etc.), or specific studies of, for example, differences in gender socialisation, power relations, social expectations and opportunities, etc.

2.

Sociology has had to fight to establish itself as a social science. Using the principles of the scientific method established by the natural sciences, sociologists have developed methods of data collection that enable them to claim that sociological knowledge is as reliable as that found in any other sphere of the social sciences. This does not mean that Sociology can produce universal laws of society (laws that are true for all times and places). However, it can endeavour to follow the rules of the scientific method to establish verifiable data and valid correlations that may be used to confirm or deny an hypothesis (or create a new one). In essence, this involves testing theoretical statements against evidence that is gathered by the most logical method in an objective manner and interpreted in an impartial way.

a) What is meant by the term *hypothesis*? (2)

A hypothesis is an untested statement about the relationship between concepts within a given theory. Two marks for an accurate definition along these lines. One mark for a partial effort e.g. "what the scientist is trying to test" or "a theory that guides the research".

b) Describe **two** methods of data collection used by sociologists. (4)

One mark for each method e.g. questionnaires, interviews, participant observation, content analysis, etc. One mark for describing each method accurately.

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c) Explain the principles and rules of the scientific method established by the natural sciences. (8)

0-4 A basic account of what is involved in scientific research, with some omissions and/or inaccuracy.

5-8 A systematic response, possibly based on a clear and accurate account of the hypothetico-deductive method. Reward also discussions of the fact/value relationship in science. Note: it is not necessary to explore the relationship between scientific method and sociological research to answer this question fully.

d) Assess the view that sociological research should be based on the methods and principles of the natural sciences. (11)

0-4 A few descriptive comments about the value of a scientific approach in sociology are all we need expect at this level.

5-8 Answers will demonstrate awareness of the positivist/anti-positivist debate(s) in sociology. At the higher end of the band there will be some assessment, though this will be limited to a few basic points.

9-11 The positivist perspective will be described with some accuracy and detail, and criticisms will be offered. Balanced, well-reasoned conclusions will be reached and the assessment will be plausible and sustained.

3.

In recent years the idea that an underclass is emerging – or re-emerging – in the class structure of the modern industrial societies has become a central focus of debate. The term ‘underclass’ generally means a substratum of society somewhere below the working class, economically and socially distinct from the rest of society, with little opportunity to be socially mobile. Characteristically, members of this group live on state benefits, may be involved in crime, are perhaps drug addicts, were conceived when their mothers were in their teenage years, become teenage parents themselves, have children who frequently miss school, and missed school themselves.

Some studies have found a disproportionate number of people from ethnic minorities in the underclass. However, other sociologists have noted difficulties in linking ethnicity with membership of an underclass.

a) What is meant by the term *ethnic minority*? (2)

A group that forms a minority within a larger ‘host’ community and is distinguished in terms of racial attributes and/or other cultural characteristics such as religion, occupation, language, or politics. One mark for explaining the concept of *ethnicity*; one mark for explaining what *minority* means in relation to the concept.

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b) Describe **two** reasons why it may be difficult for a person in the underclass to be socially mobile. (4)

One mark for each reason identified; one mark for the development of each reason. Many possible reasons such as, for example: lack of educational opportunities/qualifications; discrimination; poor health; culture of poverty; drug addiction; lack of material resources; etc.

c) What explanations have sociologists advanced for the emergence of an underclass? (8)

Explanations tend to be split along the behavioural/structural axis e.g. Murray's welfare dependency explanation versus neo-Marxist theories of structured inequality.

0-4 Answers may be limited to just one explanation or may cover several explanations in a partially inaccurate and/or incomplete way. Poorly adapted answers focusing on theories of poverty only, may justify 3 or 4 marks.

5-8 Answers will demonstrate some awareness of the behavioural/structural differentiation, and this will be well developed at the top of the band.

d) Assess the usefulness of the concept of an underclass in understanding the inequalities experienced by many ethnic minorities in modern industrial societies. (11)

0-4 A few vague points about the usefulness of the concept of an underclass, probably based on commonsense reasoning and not necessarily with any reference to ethnic minorities specifically, is what we might expect at this level.

5-8 Answers will demonstrate some awareness of the debates in sociology about the appropriateness of linking ethnic minorities with the concept of an underclass. This may be limited at the lower end of the band to a few descriptive points about the inequalities experienced by some ethnic minorities. Higher in the band answers will begin to assess, in a very basic way, the usefulness of the concept in understanding the socio-economic position of ethnic minorities.

9-11 Answers will consider arguments for and against the proposition that the concept of an underclass is useful in understanding the inequalities experienced by many ethnic minorities. This coverage will be balanced, sustained and incisive at the top of the band.