

MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2007 question paper

9699/01	9699 SOCIOLOGY Paper 1 (Essay), maximum raw mark 50
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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.

All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes must be read in conjunction with the question papers and the report on the examination.

- CIE will not enter into discussions or correspondence in connection with these mark schemes.

CIE is publishing the mark schemes for the October/November 2007 question papers for most IGCSE, GCE Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level syllabuses and some Ordinary Level syllabuses.

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Section A

1 To what extent can the existence of social order be explained in terms of the functionalist concept of value consensus?

- 0–6 An answer consisting of a few general remarks about the nature of social order, with little or no linkage to the question, would meet the requirements for the lower half of the band. To go higher within the band, there needs to be evidence of some elementary understanding of the functionalist perspective on social order.
- 7–12 Lower in the band the candidate will demonstrate a simple understanding of the concept of value consensus, but the answer will lack development both in terms of the functionalist theory and in failing to consider other perspectives on the topic of social order. Higher in the band the account of the functionalist theory will be more detailed and the contribution of specific theorists (Durkheim, Parsons, Merton) may be discussed. Any assessment at this level will be rudimentary.
- 13–18 Answers at this level will provide a clear and accurate account of the functionalist perspective on social order. There will also be an attempt to assess the extent to which the existence of social order can be explained in terms of the concept of value consensus. Lower in the band the assessment will be confined to a few simple analytical points, or possibly a rather basic juxtaposition of functionalist theory with the Marxist perspective on social order. To go higher in the band, however, the assessment must be more convincing. A well-explained attempt to contrast functionalist and Marxist theory that links explicitly to the question would trigger the higher part of the band.
- 19–25 Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the concept of value consensus and its strengths and limitations in explaining the existence of social order. The assessment will be explicit and sustained. While the main part of the assessment may be based on a comparison of functionalist and Marxist views of social order, there must be something in the analysis that goes beyond this in order to justify a mark in the top band. This extra dimension might include, for example, the use of relevant empirical material, references to other sociological perspectives, or questioning of what is meant by the term 'social order'. At the top of the band, the assessment will be tightly constructed and draw on a range of appropriate arguments and/or evidence. Criticism of the over-deterministic nature of the functionalist and traditional Marxist explanations of social order is likely to be a feature of high quality answers.

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2 “The social identities associated with childhood vary historically and are influenced by factors such as social class and culture.” Explain and assess this view.

- 0–6 Answers at this level may be confined to a few simple assertions about the nature of childhood. Within that mode of response, if there was any hint that the candidate understands the concept of a social identity or the culturally relative nature of childhood experiences, a mark in the top half of the band would be justified.
- 7–12 Some candidates may respond to the question by discussing the importance of socialisation in the construction of human identity. References to so-called feral children are likely to be widespread in this type of answer. A general discussion of socialisation is not entirely inappropriate in relation to the question, though the relevance is somewhat marginal, and so an answer that is based solely on this approach would merit no more than 9 marks. A better answer within this band would demonstrate some awareness that the social identities associated with childhood, to some extent, vary historically and across cultures. A few basic references to the work of Aries, for example, would be sufficient to reach the top half of the band. Likewise, the use of cross-cultural examples of differences in childhood would be a way to demonstrate a basic understanding of the requirements of the question.
- 13–18 A sound account of the contribution of Aries to the debate about the social construction of childhood, with little or no assessment, would merit a mark at the bottom of the band. Similarly, a reasonably detailed description of cross-cultural examples of differences in childhood could be worth 13 or 14 marks. To reach the top part of the band, however, there needs to be a certain amount of assessment. This could be in the form of a critique of Aries’ work or the evaluation might be developed through an attempt to identify further evidence and arguments that support the idea of childhood being an historically and culturally relative phenomenon. The assessment will be somewhat lacking in range and/or depth at this level, though.
- 19–25 As for the top of the previous band, though the assessment will now be sustained and well directed. Each dimension of the question will be addressed to some extent, so that the candidate discusses not only the historically and culturally relative nature of childhood, but also examines the influence of social class on the way children are socialised and treated. While the general line of argument adopted by the candidate may be to support the Aries argument that the identities associated with childhood are socially constructed, at the top of the band there should also be awareness of the limitations in the evidence and arguments used by Aries and other who have viewed childhood in this way. References to socio-biology and the contribution of post-modernist writers might also be used to demonstrate the level of sophistication in analysis required to trigger the top of the band.

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Section B

3 “The data collected by sociologists using questionnaires is very limited by comparison with the insights generated by participant observation studies.” Explain and assess this view.

0–6 A few vague comments about questionnaires and/or participant observation would be sufficient to merit a mark in the middle of the band. Within this, if there were also a very simple attempt to explain the view expressed in the question, a mark at the top of the band should be awarded.

7–12 Answers at the bottom of the band may be confined to a few broadly accurate observations about the limitations of questionnaires as a sociological research method. At this level, there will be little or no attempt to explain why it might be thought that the evidence collected using participant observation is superior to that obtained through the use of questionnaires. To reach the top part of the band, however, there must be a basic attempt to contrast the limitations of questionnaires with the purported advantages of participant observation studies. There may be little or no attempt to assess the view expressed in the question at this level.

13–18 The view expressed in the question will be explained accurately, possibly by referring to the interpretivist critique of quantitative data and the methods (questionnaires, structured interviews) through which it is derived. Higher in the band, the explanation will be more developed and will make good use of relevant concepts such as validity, verstehen, and in-depth understanding. Answers that merit the lower part of the band, will provide some relevant assessment, though it will be somewhat limited in scope and possibly confined to a few basic point about the strengths of questionnaires and/or the limitations of participant observation. A better assessment would connect the strengths of questionnaires with the limitations of participant observation and vice versa.

19–25 Answers at this level will offer a full and well-informed account of why the data collected using questionnaires might be considered inferior to the insights provided by participant observation studies. The assessment will cover a range of strengths and limitations of each research method (questionnaires and participant observation) and will demonstrate a sound understanding of the theoretical issues involved. There will also be an attempt to reach an overall conclusion in response to the question and the extent to which this is developed may be the main discriminator between scripts within the top band. In this respect, a good response would possibly question what is meant by the term ‘limited’ in relation to different types of sociological data and more generally raise questions about the basis on which research methods can be ranked against each other in terms of usefulness or degree of insight produced.

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4 “With the exception of official statistics, most forms of secondary data are too subjective to be useful in sociological research.” Explain and assess this view.

- 0–6 Answers at this level may demonstrate little or no understanding of what is meant by secondary data. A few isolated points about official statistics, however, may merit a mark at the top of the band.
- 7–12 At the lower end of the band, answers may be limited to a few general points about secondary data loosely connected to the question. Better responses at this level will distinguish between official statistics and other forms of secondary data. There will also be an attempt to explain the view expressed in the question, though this may lack some detail and clarity.
- 13–18 Answers falling within this band will provide a clear and accurate explanation of why it might be thought that official statistics provide an objective source of information while other forms of secondary data are too subjective to be useful in sociological research. The view expressed in the question will also be assessed, though the analysis may be rather limited at the lower end of the band. Higher in the band, we might expect the candidate to question the notion that official statistics are an objective source of data. The idea that other sources of secondary data are too subjective to be useful in sociological research may also be scrutinized.
- 19–25 As for the top of the previous band, though the assessment will be wider ranging and/or more incisive. A variety of sources of secondary data will be considered and the strengths and limitations of each source will be discussed in relation to the issues of objectivity/subjectivity raised by the question. Answers that merit the top of the band will question thoroughly both the idea that official statistics avoid the problems of subjectivity associated with other types of data and the view that other sources of secondary data are too subjective to be useful in sociological research.

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Section C

5 “Weber’s view of stratification overcomes many of the limitations with Marx’s theory of social class.” Explain and assess this view.

- 0–6 Answers that are confined to a few assertions about the nature of social class would fit the bottom half of the band. A slightly better response at this level would make a few isolated observations about aspects of Marx or Weber’s work relevant to the topic of stratification.
- 7–12 Knowledge of Weber’s ideas may be scant in answers at the lower end of the band. Candidates at this level are more likely to demonstrate some basic understanding of Marx’s theory of class, though they may have little else to offer by way of a response to the question. To go higher in the band, there must be at least a basic account of Weber’s view of stratification and/or an attempt to assess Marx’s theory of social class.
- 13–18 At this level, Weber’s view of stratification will be outlined clearly and accurately and Marx’s theory of social class will be used as a context for this account. The more the answer focuses on explaining the notion that Weber’s view of stratification overcomes many of the limitations in Marx’s theory of social class, the higher the mark that should be awarded. To reach the top of the band there must also be an attempt to assess the view expressed in the question, though the analysis at this level may lack depth and detail.
- 19–25 As for the previous band, though the assessment will be sustained and incisive. There are different forms that the assessment might take. One possibility is illustrating the usefulness of Weber’s ideas by referring to evidence and arguments from more recent studies of social stratification. Another line of attack would be to defend the relevance of Marx’s theory of social class against the influence of Weber in contemporary sociological accounts of class relations and social division. Another angle would be to identify limitations that apply to the ideas of both thinkers, such as the failure to anticipate the capacity of the state to regulate and modify free market capitalism and the emergence of a major divide in society based on welfare dependency. A well-honed assessment that focuses throughout on the analytical issues raised by the question would merit the top of the band.

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6 “With improved educational opportunities for females, sexual inequality has now largely disappeared in modern industrial societies.” Explain and assess this claim.

- 0–6 In answers that merit the bottom of the band we might expect only a few simple assertions about the nature of sexual inequality. If there is also some simple linkage with the notion that there have been improvements in educational opportunities for females, a mark at the top of the band may be justified.
- 7–12 Answers at the bottom of the band will demonstrate a basic awareness of improvements in educational opportunities for females and there will also be some commentary substantiating or denying the claim that sexual inequality has largely disappeared in modern industrial societies. However, little or no attempt will be made to explore the links between improved educational opportunities and a supposed reduction in sexual inequality generally. Higher in the band, such links will be reviewed as a way of explaining the claim on which the question is based. But any assessment of the claim will be very limited at this level.
- 13–18 Answers at the bottom of the band may run through a selection of evidence that purportedly demonstrates that sexual inequality remains a salient feature of modern societies. The relevance of this material for addressing the issues raised by the question will be left largely implicit. Higher in the band, however, evidence about continuing sexual inequality may be used more intelligently in assembling clear lines of argument that address directly the relevant issues.
- 19–25 As for the top of the previous band, but the assessment will be more developed and is likely to resist simple, over-arching conclusions about the state of sexual inequality today. It will be recognised at this level that sexual inequality takes different forms and any reduction in inequality may be more evidence in some areas than in others. Answers at the top of the band will be distinguished by added elements of sophistication, such as awareness that different groups of women may be affected by sexual inequality in different ways and to varying degrees. Also reward highly candidates who question why sexual inequality continues to exist despite improved educational opportunities for females.