UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level and GCE Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2010 question paper

for the guidance of teachers

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/23   Paper 2 (Data Response), maximum raw mark 50

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.

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 2010 question papers for most IGCSE, GCE Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level syllabuses and some Ordinary Level syllabuses.

1   Socialisation is the process by which individuals learn to become members of society, both by internalising the norms and values of society and also by learning to perform social roles. Social sanctions exist to encourage appropriate behaviour and to discourage inappropriate behaviour. The most intensive period of socialisation occurs within the family during childhood and is called primary socialisation. However, socialisation does not end with childhood, but continues throughout a person's life.

Sociologists emphasise the importance of socialisation, rather than biological instinct, as the key to understanding human behaviour. Functionalist sociologists also believe that social order is an important outcome of socialisation. In this view, socialisation teaches people to accept the same norms and values, which leads to social conformity and common agreement about what is acceptable behaviour. However, Marxist theorists reject the functionalist idea that social order is based on a *value consensus*. They consider that dominant groups exist in society who use their power to impose social rules on other, less powerful members of society.

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

Value consensus refers to what functionalists believe is an agreement that exists in society concerning the values by which people live their lives and by which society is organised. A definition along these lines would be worth two marks; one mark for a partial definition, such as 'shared agreement in society' or 'people being taught the same social values'.

(b)   Describe <u>two</u> social sanctions that may be used to discourage inappropriate behaviour.   [4]

Examples of formal or informal mechanisms of social control might be cited here, including imprisonment, fines, torture, community service, ridicule, ostracism, labelling, etc. One mark for a relevant example and one mark for a brief description of the sanction in question.

(c)   Explain how children learn to internalise the norms and values of society.   [8]

0–4   A few general observations about the way a child learns to interact with other people, demonstrating little sociological knowledge of the subject, may be worth 2 or 3 marks. A broad account of what socialisation in general involves, with no particular reference to children, could reach the top of the band if done well.

5–8   Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the question, with links to relevant sociological material such as G. H. Mead's account of how children learn through interaction with others. Well-chosen references to psychological theories of cognitive development, such as the work of Piaget, may also provide a relevant backdrop for answering the question. At the top of the band, the explanation will be detailed and well focused on the importance of the interaction process itself.

(d) Assess the Marxist theory of social order.   **[11]**

0–4 Answers at this level are likely to show only limited understanding of the Marxist theory of social order. A few simple remarks about Marxism in general might be worth 2 or 3 marks. A basic account of what the process of socialisation involves that might, to some extent, be linked to Marxist theory would trigger the top of the band.

5–8 A sound descriptive account of the Marxist theory of social order, with no further development, would fit the lower part of the band. If the material on the Marxist theory is complemented by an account of how social order is viewed in at least one other sociological perspective, most likely functionalism, the top of the band would be triggered. Explicit assessment of the Marxist theory is not essential to reach the top of this band.

9–11 At this level, a good account of the Marxist theory of social order will be accompanied by an assessment of the strengths and limitations of that theory. Lower in the band, a good part of the assessment may be in the form of juxtaposition through, for example, contrasting the Marxist and functionalist views of social order. The analysis will be more explicit and conceptually sophisticated at the top of the band. Use of empirical material to assess theories of social order should be judged on its merits and, potentially, could be highly relevant.

2   Interviewing is a common method used in sociological research. An interview consists of a face-to-face question-and-answer session between interviewer and interviewee. The presence of the interviewer in this process creates many advantages, but it can lead to the problem of *researcher effect*. The three main types of interview are structured, semi-structured and unstructured.

Questionnaires are also widely used in sociological research. A questionnaire consists of a set of written questions that are either given to respondents to complete or are posted to them. This method allows a large number of questions to be asked to a wide group in a short period of time. Sociologists working within the positivist tradition favour the use of questionnaires because of the reliability of the method, and also the ability to identify trends and make generalisations from the data that is collected. However, from an interpretivist perspective, research based on questionnaires is said to lack validity.

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

Researcher effect refers to the influence that the presence of the researcher may have on the responses or behaviour of the people under study. Two marks for a clear and accurate definition; one mark for a partial definition, such as 'able to repeat a study' or 'the results are always the same'.

(b)   Describe <u>two</u> advantages of structured interviews.   [4]

Advantages of structured interviews include, for example, the ease of codifying answers and creating statistical data, easily replicated and high in reliability, no need for highly trained interviewers, cost and time efficient compared with many other methods, etc. One mark for the example plus one mark for development. (2 x 2 marks).

(c)   Explain why interpretivists consider that research based on questionnaires lacks validity.   [8]

0–4   A few general points about the strengths/limitations of questionnaires with no clear reference to the concept of validity would be worth 2 or 3 marks. A simple statement of one or two reasons why questionnaires might lack validity would trigger the top of the band.

5–8   A sound account of the reasons why the data produced by questionnaires might lack validity, perhaps with only tenuous links to the interactionist perspective, would merit 5 or 6 marks. To go higher, the links to interactionism need to be clear and accurate.

(d) Assess the strengths and limitations of using *postal questionnaires* in sociological research. **[11]**

0–4 A few isolated points about questionnaires in general, without any reference to strengths/limitations, might be worth 2 or 3 marks. A couple of practical strengths/ limitations noted, without further development, would trigger the top of the band.

5–8 Lower in the band, answers are likely to concentrate wholly or mainly on the practical strengths/limitations of postal questionnaires. Answers that lack balance, i.e. consider only strengths or only limitations, can achieve no more than 6 marks. Higher in the band, the answers will include more references to relevant theoretical issues and/or begin to assess the usefulness of postal questionnaires. Assessment at this level may be confined to juxtaposition, for example by noting the strengths and limitations of postal questionnaires, and possibly also the pros and cons of other ways of administering questionnaires.

9–11 At this level, we should expect answers to cover a good range of practical and theoretical points related to the strengths/limitations of postal questionnaires. There will also be a concerted attempt to assess the usefulness of this research method. Answers that merit the top of the band may be distinguished by, for example, a sharp analysis of the differences between the various types of questionnaires and/or appropriate links to the main theoretical perspectives in sociology.

3   Social mobility studies measure the movement of individuals and groups between different positions within the system of stratification in a society. A distinction is made between short-range and long-range social mobility. In modern industrial societies, social mobility is mostly short range. Relatively few people experience long-range mobility involving movement from low to high status positions in society (or from high to low status positions).

Sociologists have identified two main types of social mobility. The first, intragenerational mobility, refers to social mobility within a single generation. It is measured by comparing the occupational status of an individual at two or more points in their working life. The other type, intergenerational mobility, refers to social mobility between generations. It is measured by comparing the occupational status of children with that of their parents.

High rates of social mobility are likely to occur in societies where status is based on achievement. In such societies, individuals are rewarded on the basis of their talent and hard work. The term 'meritocracy' has been used to describe the type of society in which rewards are distributed solely on the basis of ability and effort rather than *ascribed status*. The extent to which meritocracy exists in modern industrial societies is the subject of considerable debate among sociologists.

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

Ascribed status refers to the allocation of roles on the basis of characteristics (e.g. kinship, age, sexuality, ethnicity, caste) that are predetermined for the individuals concerned. An accurate definition along these lines would be worth two marks; one mark for a partial definition such as, for example, 'a status the individual is unable to change' or 'inherited social positions'.

(b)   Describe two ways in which a person can achieve upward social mobility.   [4]

Ways of achieving upward social mobility include, for example, marriage, career advancement, entrepreneurial activity, lottery win, political power, etc.

One mark for identifying each relevant example and one further mark for each example that is described accurately. (2 x 2 marks).

(c)   Explain why social mobility rates are higher in some modern industrial societies than in others.   [8]

0–4   A few simple observations about the nature of social mobility, with no direct links to the question, might be worth 2 or 3 marks. Some evidence about differences in rates of social mobility between modern industrial societies, with no further development, would trigger the top of the band.

5–8   At this level, there will be a clear attempt to explain why social mobility rates vary between countries. In better answers, the focus will be on modern industrial societies, though it is not a requirement that candidates refer to specific countries. The explanations offered may cover factors such as, for example, differences in economic structure, political culture, social class divisions, social policies in areas such as education and employment, attitudes to sexual equality, religious influences, etc.

(d) Assess the extent to which meritocracy exists in modern industrial societies. **[11]**

0–4 An answer that shows some limited understanding of what meritocracy means, without addressing the question directly, might be worth 2 or 3 marks. A simple attempt to describe the meritocracy thesis, with no further development, would trigger the top of the band.

5–8 A sound account of the meritocracy thesis would be worth 5 or 6 marks. To go higher, there needs to be some attempt to discuss whether meritocracy exists in modern industrial societies today. There are a number of ways in which this could be delivered. One way would involve reflecting on evidence about, for example, social mobility or social inequality. Another approach would draw on different theoretical perspectives, such as the functionalist, Marxist and feminist theories. However, any assessment at this level will be limited in both scope and depth.

9–11 To reach this band, the assessment will be sustained and well-focused. There will be a clear understanding of the meritocracy thesis and a range of relevant sociological material will be used to analyse the extent to which meritocracy exists in modern industrial societies. Lower in the band, the assessment may lack some sharpness and conclusions reached may be somewhat lacking in support from the evidence and arguments presented. Higher in the band, the assessment will be more tightly constructed and plausible conclusions will emerge about the extent to which meritocracy exists in modern industrial societies.