

MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2013 series

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/13

Paper 1 (Principles and Methods 1), 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 should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

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Section A

**1 ‘Coercion is required in order to ensure social conformity in modern industrial societies.’
Explain and assess this view. [25]**

- 0–6** A few assertions about the nature of social conformity, with little sociological provenance, might be worth three or four marks. A cursory attempt to define the concept of coercion, with no further development, would trigger the top of the band.
- 7–12** Answers that are confined to a simple account of one sociological theory of social order, without any explicit reference to coercion, would merit lower part of the band. A basic account of one or more theory of social order, with some implicit or explicit reference to the role of coercion, would trigger the higher part of the band. Answers at this level may be mainly or wholly descriptive.
- 13–18** A sound account of one or more sociological theory that draws on the concept of coercion to explain how social order is maintained, would fit the lower part of the band. Likewise, an answer that identifies a range of factors that may be involved in producing social order, would also trigger the lower part of the band. To go higher, there must be some attempt to assess the importance of coercion as a factor in explaining how social order is maintained. The assessment may lack depth at this level and is likely to be confined to the juxtaposition of different theories of how social conformity is achieved, such as the functionalist and the Marxist.
- 19–25** Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the claims made by conflict theorists about the role of coercion in maintaining social order. This is likely to include references to Marxist and/or Weberian theory. The ability to distinguish between different strands of Marxist theory (cultural versus structural Marxist views, for example) may be a feature of answers that merit the top part of the band. To merit this band, there will also be a sustained and well-informed assessment of the claim on which the question is based. Lower in the band, the assessment may rely mainly on the juxtaposition of different theories of social order. To go higher in the band, however, the assessment must include additional elements that constitute a more direct analysis of the importance of coercion or recognising that the use of force is linked in complex ways to other aspects of society that play a part in encouraging social conformity.

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2 'Society can and should be studied objectively.' Explain and assess this view. [25]

- 0–6** Some general assertions about the study of human behaviour or research methods, might be worth three or four marks. A few simple points about objectivity or scientific method, would trigger the top of the band. Likewise, answers that focus mainly on describing different sociological research methods could reach the top of the band, but no higher.
- 7–12** A simple descriptive account of the positivist perspective, with no direct reference to the concept of objectivity, would trigger the lower part of the band. Higher in the band, the answer may also begin to explore the anti-positivist arguments, albeit still in a largely descriptive manner and without clear links to objectivity. At this level, there may be little or no evidence of assessment.
- 13–18** A sound account of the positivist perspective, together with some reference to the anti-positivist position, would merit the lower part of the band. To go higher, the treatment of the anti-positivist perspective would need to be more developed. The assessment at this level is likely to rely on the juxtaposition of the two main perspectives, with the concept of objectivity figuring only in a limited way or implicitly. Reward candidates who note the possible contradictions between the high ideals of scientific method to deliver objectivity and the way that scientists actually carry out their work. However, this type of material should not dominate the answer.
- 19–25** Answers will be based on a detailed and accurate account of the positivist perspective, with a well-informed and sustained assessment that focuses directly on the issue of whether society can and should be studied objectively. A sound understanding of the anti-positivist perspective is likely to feature as a main part of the assessment. Lower in the band, the assessment may include little or no reference to the distinction between 'can' and 'should' in relation to the question. To reach the top of the band, however, this part of the question needs to be addressed directly.

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Section B

3 'The resources available for conducting a study are the main influence on the choice of research method.' Explain and assess this view. [25]

0–6 A few simple points about research methods, with no direct links to the question, would be worth three or four marks. A poorly developed account of why time and/or finance is important in carrying out sociological research would trigger the top of the band.

7–12 A basic explanation of why time and the availability of funding may influence choice of research method, with no further development, would merit the lower part of the band. Higher in the band, there would be some recognition that choice of research method may also be affected by other factors, including location, size of sample, nature of the study group, researcher's skills set, together with a range of theoretical concerns such as the researcher's aims, values, interests, and attitude to issues such as validity, reliability, representativeness and objectivity. Answers at this level may be mainly or wholly descriptive.

13–18 Answers at this level will identify a range of practical and theoretical factors that may influence choice of research method and show a sound understanding of the part time and availability of funding may play in this process. Lower in the band, the treatment of theoretical factors may be lacking in detail. Higher in the band, the discussion of theory will be better informed and there will also be a concerted attempt to assess the view that the resources available (for example, time and finance) are the main influence on the choice of research methods. The assessment at this level is likely to lack depth and may be confined to some poorly supported claims about theoretical perspective being the key factor influencing the choice of research method.

19–25 At this level we should expect an accurate and detailed account of the role that resources like time and finance may play in the choice of research methods. Other factors, both practical and theoretical, will also be considered in some detail. In addition, there will be a sustained and well developed assessment of the view on which the question is based. Lower in the band, the conclusions reached may lack originality and are likely to rely on the idea that theoretical perspective is the main influence on choice of research methods. Higher in the band, the assessment will be more refined and appropriate caveats may be added about the circumstances under which one factor or another may play the leading role in influencing choice of research methods.

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4 'Qualitative secondary data is too subjective to be useful in sociological research.' Explain and assess this view. [25]

- 0–6** A few simple points about secondary data in general may be worth three or four marks. A basic attempt to distinguish between different types of secondary data would fit the top half of the band.
- 7–12** At the lower end of the band, answers may be limited to a few general points about the strengths and/or limitations of secondary data in general. Better responses at this level will distinguish between quantitative and qualitative forms of secondary data. There will also be an attempt to explain some of the strengths and limitations of qualitative secondary data, although the emphasis may be on mainly practical factors rather than issues of theory. Within this band, answers are likely to be mainly or wholly descriptive.
- 13–18** Answers at this level will provide a sound account of the strengths and limitations of qualitative secondary data. Both practical and theoretical factors will be considered, though not necessarily with equal emphasis. Higher in the band, the handling of theory is likely to be more assured. To reach the top half of the band, there must also be an attempt to assess the research. However, the assessment may lack depth at this level and is likely to be confined to a juxtaposition of the respective claims of quantitative versus qualitative research/data in sociology. The issue of subjectivity may be largely overlooked or addressed only indirectly.
- 19–25** Answers that merit this band will demonstrate a good understanding of the strengths and limitations of qualitative secondary data. This might include references to particular types of qualitative secondary data, though equally the discussion may remain at a more general level. There will also be a sustained and well-informed assessment of the value of using qualitative secondary data in sociological research, with specific reference to the claim that this type of data is too subjective. Lower in the band, the assessment may rely mainly on a juxtaposition of arguments for qualitative versus quantitative research. Higher in the band, however, the assessment will be less generic and incisive points will emerge about the particular strengths and limitations of using qualitative secondary data. Common assumptions about the strengths and limitations of secondary data may also be challenged and debated. Answers that discuss the relative merits of different types of qualitative secondary data, as part of the overall response to the question, are likely to trigger the top half of the band.

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Section C

5 Explain and assess the functionalist view that social inequality is a necessary and inevitable feature of modern industrial societies. [25]

- 0–6** A few simple points about the nature of social inequality might be worth three or four marks. A limited account of the functionalist theory of stratification, with no further development, would fit the top of the band.
- 7–12** A general discussion of the extent of social inequality in modern industrial societies and the degree to which it may be inevitable, would fit the lower part of the band. A sound account of the functionalist perspective on social stratification, including some reference to the importance of differential rewards in a modern economy, would trigger the higher part of the band. At this level, there may be little or no attempt at assessment.
- 13–18** Answers that merit this band will provide a clear explanation of why functionalists think that social inequality is a necessary and inevitable feature of modern industrial societies. References to Parsonian functionalism and to Davis and Moore, would be particularly relevant in this context. Higher in the band, there will also be an assessment of the view on which the question is based. However, the assessment may lack depth and rely on a juxtaposition of functionalist theory with contrasting views, such as the Marxist perspective.
- 19–25** At this level there will be a good account of the functionalist view that social inequality is a necessary and inevitable feature of modern industrialist societies. There will also be a sustained assessment. Lower in the band, the assessment may be based mainly around a contrasting of different theories of stratification. To go higher, however, there must be evidence of more direct engagement with the issues by the view expressed in the question. This might take the form of, for example, a critique of Davis and Moore's key assumptions, or a questioning of what is meant by social inequality in relation to the question.

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6 'Radical feminists have exaggerated the extent to which the position of women in society serves the interests of men.' Explain and assess this view. [25]

- 0–6** A few simple observations about the nature of gender inequality may be worth three or four marks. Some poorly articulated points about feminist theory in general, with only indirect links to the question, would trigger the top of the band.
- 7–12** Lower in the band, answers may be confined to a basic account of a single sociological explanation of gender inequality. Higher in the band, a wider range of explanations will be considered at a basic level. References to feminist theories at this level may be somewhat indirect and generalised. A sound account of feminist theory that is not particularly well linked to the topic of gender inequality in employment could gain up to twelve marks, but no higher. Within this band, answers may be mainly or wholly descriptive.
- 13–18** Answers at this level must include an explicit discussion of feminist explanations of gender inequality. Lower in the band, responses may be confined to a general account of the feminist position on gender inequality, with some reference to the radical feminist perspective implicit in this. Higher in the band, different strands of feminist theory will be considered and there will also be an attempt to assess the view expressed in the question. The assessment at this level may lack depth and is likely to be confined to a simple juxtaposition of different explanations for gender inequality in the workplace.
- 19–25** A good account of a range of explanations of gender inequality will be offered at this level, and this will include references to different strands of feminist theory, with emphasis on the radical feminist position. There will also be a sustained and well informed assessment of the radical feminist theory. Lower in the band, the assessment may rely mainly on basic contrasts between different sociological perspectives on gender inequality. To go higher in the band, however, the assessment must include a more direct analysis of the issues raised by the question. This might include, for example, questioning over-deterministic elements in feminist explanations of gender inequality or using evidence from relevant studies to provide a sustained and sophisticated assessment of radical feminist theories.