

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

Cambridge International Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2015 series

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/31

Paper 3 (Social Inequality and Opportunity),
maximum raw mark 75

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Section A: Education

- 1 (a) Explain why females now achieve higher educational qualifications than males in many modern industrial societies. [9]

[0–4]

At this level, there may be little or no reference to relevant sociological sources. Answers may rely on general knowledge and/or personal observation. Explanations will be brief and cover only a narrow range of relevant points.

A few general observations about gender inequality in education, with no direct links to the question would be worth 1 or 2 marks. An accurate account of one reason why females now achieve higher educational qualifications than males could gain up to a maximum of 4 marks. Likewise, an answer that covers a number of relevant points, but only in a skeletal fashion, would fit the top part of the band.

[5–9]

At this level, there will be some use of relevant sociological sources, such as concepts, theories and explanations. Answers will cover a range of points and show a sound understanding of the issues raised by the question. Lower in the band, answers will provide a sound account of two or more reasons why females now achieve higher educational qualifications than males, but the account will lack detail and depth. Higher in the band, the explanation will be more substantial and perhaps cover a wider range of factors, possibly with some links to theory and/or relevant studies. Answers that merit the top part of the band may also cover both the reasons why female educational performance may have improved and also consider the possibility that the educational performance of boys from certain groups may have deteriorated.

- (b) ‘The education system serves the interests of the ruling class.’ Assess this view. [16]

[0–6]

At this level, there may be little or no reference to relevant sociological sources. Answers may rely on general knowledge and/or personal observation. Explanations will be brief and cover only a narrow range of relevant points.

A few simple points about the functions or role of education, with no direct links to the question, would fit the lower part of the band. An answer that made some basic assertions about how the education system may serve the interests of the ruling class, with no wider analysis or assessment, would merit the upper part of the band.

[7–11]

Answers at this level will provide a sound sociological account of the ways in which the education system may serve the interests of the ruling class. Lower in the band (7–8 marks), the answer may be list-like and references to relevant concepts, theories and thinkers will be lacking. Higher in the band (9–11 marks), the answers will either provide a more substantial account of the links between the education system and the interests of the ruling class, or there will be an attempt to contrast the Marxist view of education with other theories of the role/function of education.

An answer that does not include evaluation cannot score higher than 11 marks.

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[12–16]

Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the Marxist theory of education. There will be a clear explanation of how the education system may serve the interests of the ruling class. There will also be an attempt to assess the Marxist viewpoint. Lower in the band, the assessment may be limited to a basic juxtaposition of Marxist theory with other accounts of the role/function of education. To reach the top part of the band, however, the assessment must also include some relevant analysis that goes beyond the simple juxtaposition of contrasting theories. For example, candidates might refer to evidence suggesting that economic needs are not always well served by the education system. A good answer might also note that education may be a tool that is used by some people to challenge the status quo and the capitalist system. Candidates might also question the findings from research studies that broadly support the Marxist view of education, such as the work of Willis, Bowles and Gintis.

- 2 (a) **Explain how pupil sub-cultures can affect the educational performance of working class boys.** [9]

[0–4]

At this level, there may be little or no reference to relevant sociological sources. Answers may rely on general knowledge and/or personal observation. Explanations will be brief and cover only a narrow range of relevant points.

A few simple points about pupil sub-cultures with no links to educational performance would be worth 1 or 2 marks. Answers that provide a simple account of how pupil sub-cultures may affect educational performance, but with little or no reference to working class boys, would fit the higher part of the band. A simple account of this kind will cover only a limited range of relevant points and may be based largely on assertion, lacking clear links to appropriate sociological concepts and evidence.

[5–9]

At this level, there will be some use of relevant sociological sources, such as concepts, theories and explanations. Answers will cover a range of points and show a sound understanding of the issues raised by the question. Lower in the band, answers may be confined to describing just one or two ways in which pupil sub-cultures may affect the educational performance of working class boys. Better answers at this level will either cover a wider range of explanations or else provide a detailed account that focuses on just one or two key links between pupil sub-cultures and educational performance. Be wary of answers that describe different pupil sub-cultures, but fail to link the material well to the impact of sub-cultures on educational performance. Clear links to the educational performance of working class boys specifically are required in order to reach the top mark band.

- (b) **'Lack of cultural capital is the main reason why pupils from some minority ethnic groups underperform in the education system.' Assess this view.** [16]

[0–6]

At this level, there may be little or no reference to relevant sociological sources. Answers may rely on general knowledge and/or personal observation. Explanations will be brief and cover only a narrow range of relevant points.

A few simple points about the educational performance of different social groups would fit the lower part of the band. An attempt to explain the concept of 'cultural capital', with no further links to the question, would merit a mark in the top half of the band.

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[7–11]

Answers at this level will provide a sound sociological account of the relationship between cultural capital and educational achievement. A basic explanation of how educational performance generally may be influenced by cultural capital would be worth 7 or 8 marks. More marks would be justified were the discussion linked directly to the educational performance of minority ethnic groups. Answers at this level may be confined to an explanation of the links between cultural capital and educational performance, and therefore lack assessment. Reward candidates who are able to distinguish between different minority ethnic groups in ways that are relevant for answering the question.

[12–16]

Answers that fit this band will demonstrate a good understanding of how cultural capital may play a role in explaining the educational performance of some minority ethnic groups. There will also be an assessment of the view on which the question is based. Lower in the band, the assessment may be presented through a simple account of some other factors, apart from cultural capital, that may affect educational performance. Better answers will go beyond this type of response to question directly the extent to which lack of cultural capital is the main reason why pupils from some minority ethnic groups underperform in the education system. For example, candidates may question whether possession of cultural capital alone would be sufficient to overcome the obstacles to educational success that pupils from some ethnic minority groups face. High-quality answers might also consider whether the concept of cultural capital is too abstract and divorced from the way that the education system actually operates; it might also be criticised as an outdated concept.

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Section B: Global Development

3 (a) Explain how population growth may be affected by development. [9]

[0–4]

At this level, there may be little or no reference to relevant sociological sources. Answers may rely on general knowledge and/or personal observation. Explanations will be brief and cover only a narrow range of relevant points.

A few basic observations about development, with no direct links to demographic trends, would fit the lower part of the band. A simple account of one or two factors influencing population growth in developing countries would trigger the top half of the band. A simple account is likely to rely on general knowledge rather than specific sociological evidence and analysis.

[5–9]

At this level, there will be some use of relevant sociological sources, such as concepts, theories and explanations. Answers will cover a range of points and show a sound understanding of the issues raised by the question. Lower in the band, answers will provide a sound account of one or two ways in which demographic trends may be affected by development. The process of development may impact on demographic trends in ways such as:

- rising GDP leading to better health care and therefore a lower mortality rate
- economic conditions more conducive to smaller family units and therefore a lower birth rate
- development is usually accompanied by significantly higher rates of rural-urban migration
- lower birth rates/mortality rates mean an aging population.

Answers that merit the top half of the band will cover several relevant points about the impact of development on demographic trends. The explanations offered will be clear and well developed.

(b) ‘There will always be disagreement about the best way to achieve development’. Assess this view. [16]

[0–6]

At this level, there may be little or no reference to relevant sociological sources. Answers may rely on general knowledge and/or personal observation. Explanations will be brief and cover only a narrow range of relevant points.

A few simple observations about the social and economic problems that developing countries may face, with no direct links to the question, would fit the lower part of the band. A limited attempt to describe one or two approaches to development, with little sociological underpinning, would merit a mark in the top half of the band.

[7–11]

Answers at this level will provide a sound sociological account of different views about the best way to achieve development. A basic account of some theories about how best to achieve development, with no further links to the question, would fit the lower part of the band. A better answer would begin to explain why it may be difficult to achieve agreement about the best approach to development. Reasons why it might be difficult to achieve agreement include: different views about the appropriate aims and goals of development; contrasting ideological and theoretical perspectives; the different and possibly conflicting interests of those who might benefit from development; the problems of a ‘one cap fits all’ approach to development.

An answer that does not include evaluation cannot score higher than 11 marks.

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[12–16]

Answers at this level will provide a good account of several reasons why it may be difficult to achieve agreement about the best approach to development. There will also be an assessment of the view on which the question is based. Lower in the band, the assessment may be limited to a simple questioning of whether there is a best approach to achieving development. To merit higher marks, the assessment must be more developed and cover a wider range of points. For example, candidates might argue that disagreements about the best approach to development are rooted in political and/or social structural factors, and then draw conclusions about the implications of this for the chances of formulating an approach to development that would be widely acceptable.

4 (a) Explain the main types of aid in developing countries. [9]

[0–4]

At this level, there may be little or no reference to relevant sociological sources. Answers may rely on general knowledge and/or personal observation. Explanations will be brief and cover only a narrow range of relevant points.

A simple attempt to define what is meant by ‘aid’, with no further links to the question, would trigger the lower part of the band. An answer that describes some examples of aid projects, or identifies a few types of aid in a list-like way, would fit the top half of the band.

[5–9]

At this level, there will be some use of relevant sociological sources, such as concepts, theories and explanations. Answers will cover a range of points and show a sound understanding of the issues raised by the question. Lower in the band, one or two types of aid will be described in basic detail. Types of aid include:

- Emergency or short-term aid - needed after sudden disasters such as the 2000 Mozambique floods or the 2004 Asian tsunami.
- Conditional or tied aid – when one country donates money or resources to another (bilateral aid) but with conditions attached eg the controversial Pergau Dam project in Malaysia, where Britain used aid to secure trade deals with Malaysia.
- Charitable aid – funded by donations from the public through organisations such as OXFAM.
- Long-term or development aid – involves providing local communities with education and skills for sustainable development, usually through organisations such as Practical Action.
- Multilateral aid – given through international organisations such as the World Bank rather than by one specific country.

Note that the above is not an exhaustive list; other examples of types of aid can be rewarded.

Answers that fit the top part of the band will distinguish accurately between several types of aid.

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(b) ‘Capitalism is a major obstacle to development in many countries.’ Assess this view. [16]

[0–6]

At this level, there may be little or no reference to relevant sociological sources. Answers may rely on general knowledge and/or personal observation. Explanations will be brief and cover only a narrow range of relevant points.

A few simple points about capitalism, with no clear links to development, would fit the lower part of the band. A better answer at this level might comprise a few basic points about obstacles to development in general.

[7–11]

Answers at this level will provide a sound sociological account of the relationship between capitalism and development. Lower in the band, there will be a limited attempt to show how capitalism may limit the scope for development in some countries. The analysis at this level may lack references to relevant concepts and theories. Higher in the band, the discussion will be more developed and greater use will be made of relevant sociological sources.

However, there may be little or no assessment at this level. Accounts of the links between capitalism and development may draw upon the work of Gunder Frank and Wallerstein. Similarly, Marxist accounts of transnational corporations may be put to good use in answering the question.

[12–16]

Answers that fit this band will provide a good account of the links between capitalism and development. This will include references to relevant concepts and theories. There will also be an assessment of the view on which the question is based. Lower in the band the assessment may be based on the juxtaposition of different theoretical perspectives, such as the ideas of Marxist theorists such as Gunder Frank and those within the functionalist and Weberian traditions. Higher in the band, the assessment will engage more directly with the claim that capitalism provides an obstacle to development in some countries. For example, the determinism that underpins Marxist theories of development might be questioned, or there may be an attempt to clarify which countries in particular may be held back in their development by capitalism. Reasons why those countries are so affected may also be explored.

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Section C: Media

5 (a) Explain how the media have been affected by globalisation. [9]

[0–4]

At this level, there may be little or no reference to relevant sociological sources. Answers may rely on general knowledge and/or personal observation. Explanations will be brief and cover only a narrow range of relevant points.

A few observations about globalisation, with little or no reference to the media, would be worth 1 or 2 marks. Answers that rely on a few assertions about how the media have been affected by globalisation would fit the top of the band. References to appropriate sociological concepts, evidence and theories are likely to be scant at this level.

[5–9]

At this level, there will be some use of relevant sociological sources, such as concepts, theories and explanations. Answers will cover a range of points and show a sound understanding of the issues raised by the question. A basic account of how the media have been affected by globalisation, with some links to appropriate sociological concepts and evidence, would trigger the lower part of the band. Better answers will provide a more detailed view of how globalisation has impacted on the media. The focus of a good answer is likely to be the various trends that have affected the organisation and presentation of the media in the wake of globalisation. This would include, for example, the emergence of global media corporations, cross-media ownership, the rise of the new media and the digital revolution, internationalisation of media content and new attempts to limit the powers of the media through censorship.

5 (b) ‘There are no limits to the power of the media.’ Assess this view. [16]

[0–6]

At this level, there may be little or no reference to relevant sociological sources. Answers may rely on general knowledge and/or personal observation. Explanations will be brief and cover only a narrow range of relevant points.

A few assertions about the role of the media, with little direct bearing on the question, would fit the lower half of the band. An answer that attempts to explain the power of the media in very simple terms, with limited sociological underpinning, would fit the higher part of the band.

[7–11]

Answers at this level will provide a sound sociological account of the power of the media. A basic sociological account of the power of the media would be worth 7 or 8 marks. A better answer would provide more detail about the nature of media power, helping to illustrate just how much power media organisations wield. However, at this level there may be little or no assessment of the view on which the question is based.

[12–16]

Answers at this level will provide a good account of the power of the media. The response will draw on references to appropriate sociological sources, such as concepts, theories and evidence from research studies. There will also be an assessment of the view that there are no limits to the power of the media. Lower in the band the assessment may be based on a juxtaposition of theories and/or evidence. For example, the Marxist theory of the media may be contrasted with the pluralist theory. Better answers at this level will also include some direct engagement with the issue raised by the question. This might focus on, for example, the debates about censorship and the scope for government control of media output. The assessment could also consider evidence about the extent to which audiences are directly affected by media messages.

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6 (a) Explain the role of the media in agenda setting. [9]

[0–4]

At this level, there may be little or no reference to relevant sociological sources. Answers may rely on general knowledge and/or personal observation. Explanations will be brief and cover only a narrow range of relevant points.

A few general observations about the impact of television on viewers which are of broadly sociological relevance would be worth 1 or 2 marks. A basic attempt to define the concept of agenda setting, with little further development, would merit a mark in the top half of the band. Likewise, an answer that discusses the role of the media in general, while also including some references to agenda setting, could score up to 4 marks.

[5–9]

At this level, there will be some use of relevant sociological sources, such as concepts, theories and explanations. Answers will cover a range of points and show a sound understanding of the issues raised by the question. An answer that explains how the media contributes to agenda setting would fit the lower part of the band. A better answer at this level would provide further development, such as through references to relevant studies of the media or by citing specific examples of agenda setting. High-quality answers to this question will provide a developed account of how the media contributes to the process of agenda setting.

6 (b) ‘The media support the interests and values of the ruling class’. Assess this view. [16]

[0–6]

At this level, there may be little or no reference to relevant sociological sources. Answers may rely on general knowledge and/or personal observation. Explanations will be brief and cover only a narrow range of relevant points.

A few assertions about the power of the media, with little sociological foundation, would fit the lower half of the band. Answers that provide a simple account of how ruling class interests might be represented by the media would fit the top half of the band.

[7–11]

Answers at this level will provide a sound sociological account of the relationship between the media and the interests and values of the working class. A basic account of the Marxist theory of the media would be worth 7 to 9 marks. To go higher within this band the explanation would need to be more developed. This could be achieved by, for example, distinguishing between different strands of Marxist theory, or by good use of appropriate concepts such as hegemony and ISA, or by references to appropriate sociological studies of the media. There may be little or no evidence of assessment at this level.

[12–16]

Answers at this level will provide a good account of the Marxist theory of the media, explaining clearly how the media might represent the interests and values of the ruling class. Effective use will be made of appropriate sociological concepts, theories and evidence. There will also be an assessment of the extent to which the media represents ruling class interests and values. Lower in the band the assessment may be in the form of the juxtaposition of different theories of the media. To go higher, however, the assessment must also include a direct evaluation of the Marxist position. This could focus on particular case studies showing the role of the media in supporting or opposing ruling class interests. The discussion might also consider the power of the state and its role in regulating the media. The scope to undermine traditional media power through use of the new media could also provide a hook on which to hang a strong assessment of the issues raised by the question.

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Section D: Religion

7 (a) Explain why some sociologists view religion as a conservative force in society. [9]

[0–4]

At this level, there may be little or no reference to relevant sociological sources. Answers may rely on general knowledge and/or personal observation. Explanations will be brief and cover only a narrow range of relevant points.

A few observations about the nature of religion, with no direct links to the question set, would fit the lower half of the band. A simple account of how religion may act as a conservative force, with little sociological underpinning, would trigger the top part of the band. Likewise, a list-like response summarising the main functions of religion, would also be worth up to 4 marks.

[5–9]

At this level, there will be some use of relevant sociological sources, such as concepts, theories and explanations. Answers will cover a range of points and show a sound understanding of the issues raised by the question. A sound sociological account of the view that religion acts as a conservative force would trigger the lower part of the band. To go higher, the account must be more detailed or wider-ranging in the different concepts and theories covered. Good answers will include references to relevant theories/theorists and may also refer to examples of where religion acts as a conservative force. Note though that examples are not essential in order to gain full marks for this question.

(b) ‘Power within religious organisations is increasingly held by women’. Assess this view. [16]

[0–6]

At this level, there may be little or no reference to relevant sociological sources. Answers may rely on general knowledge and/or personal observation. Explanations will be brief and cover only a narrow range of relevant points.

A few assertions about the nature of organised religions, with no direct links to the question, would fit the lower part of the band. An outline of how power is distributed within organised religions, with only limited reference to the position of women, would merit a mark in the top half of the band. A basic account of the feminist view that organised religions are patriarchal, again with no clear references to the idea that woman may have acquired greater power recently, could also gain up to 4 marks.

[7–11]

Answers at this level will address the claim that women have an increasingly powerful role within organised religions today. Lower in the band, the answer may be confined to a basic account of how men traditionally have monopolised power within organised religions, with a few limited references to how the situation may have changed in recent years. Better answers within this band will provide a more detailed explanation of the view that women now hold greater power within religious organisations. However, the discussion at this level may be one-sided and lacking an assessment of the view on which the question is based.

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[12–16]

Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the evidence and arguments supporting the view that women now hold greater power within religious organisations. There will also be an assessment of the view that there has been a power shift in religious organisations towards women. Lower in the band, the assessment may consist of simply juxtaposing the view that religious organisations are patriarchal with some evidence and/or arguments that women now have greater power. Better answers will engage more directly with the debates and develop well-reasoned arguments for supporting a particular view about how far power has shifted towards women. High-quality answers may also show other elements of sophistication, such as distinguishing between the positions of women in different religions. References to relevant studies of women within religious organisations might also be used to good effect in high scoring answers.

8 (a) Explain how sociologists distinguish between cults, sects and churches. [9]

[0–4]

At this level, there may be little or no reference to relevant sociological sources. Answers may rely on general knowledge and/or personal observation. Explanations will be brief and cover only a narrow range of relevant points.

A few points about religious organisations, with no clear distinction between cults, sects and churches, would fit the lower part of the band. A simple attempt to define the concepts in the question, with no further development, would trigger the top half of the band.

[5–9]

At this level, there will be some use of relevant sociological sources, such as concepts, theories and explanations. Answers will cover a range of points and show a sound understanding of the issues raised by the question. Answers at this level will distinguish clearly between cults, sects and churches. Lower in the band the distinctions made between the terms may be lacking in accuracy and/or clarity to some extent. Better answers will demonstrate a deeper understanding of how these three types of religious entity are distinguishable from each other.

(b) 'It is a mistake to think that religion has become a less powerful force in society today.' Assess this view. [16]

[0–6]

At this level, there may be little or no reference to relevant sociological sources. Answers may rely on general knowledge and/or personal observation. Explanations will be brief and cover only a narrow range of relevant points.

A few simple points about the role of religion, with no direct links to the question, would be worth up to 3 marks. A simple attempt to explain the secularisation thesis, with no further development, would merit the higher part of the band. A few assertions about the power of religion in the modern world, with little use of sociological concepts and theories, could gain up to 6 marks.

[7–11]

Answers at this level will demonstrate a sound understanding of the secularisation thesis. There will also be an attempt to explain why the claim that religion has become a less powerful force is mistaken. Lower in the band the answer may focus overwhelmingly on describing the secularisation thesis. Better answers at this level may start to examine critically some of the claims on which the secularisation thesis is based. However, there need be no assessment of the view on which the question is based for answers that fit this band.

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[12–16]

Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the secularisation thesis and some of the reasons why it may be mistaken to think that religion has become a less powerful influence in society in recent times. There will also be assessment of the view on which the question is based. Lower in the band, the assessment may be through the simple juxtaposition of the secularisation thesis with the ideas of thinkers who questioned the idea that religious influence has declined. Better answers at this level will offer a more direct analysis of the issues, examining critically the arguments of those who suggest that religion remains a very powerful force in society. Good answers may question what is meant by religion and how it can be distinguished from other belief systems today. Studies of religion may also be used to support key arguments in high quality answers.