

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

GCE Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2014 series

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/31

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

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.

Cambridge will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge is publishing the mark schemes for the May/June 2014 series for most IGCSE, GCE Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level components and some Ordinary Level components.

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Section A (where applicable)

1 (a) Explain the relationship between the hidden curriculum and gender inequality in schools. [9]

0–4 A few general observations about gender inequality in education with no direct links to the question set, would be worth 2 or 3 marks. An accurate account of what is meant by the hidden curriculum, that it has only limited links to issues of gender inequality, could gain up to a maximum of 4 marks.

5–9 Lower in the band, answers will explain the relationship between the hidden curriculum and gender inequality in schools, but the account will lack detail and depth. Higher in the band, the relevant links between the hidden curriculum and gender inequality will be explained with greater development, and this may include references to appropriate studies and theorists, such as Lobban, Best, Abraham, Stanworth and Spender.

(b) Assess the view that racism is the main factor explaining why pupils from some minority ethnic groups underachieve at school. [16]

0–6 A few simple points about educational achievement with no direct links to the questions, would be placed in the lower part of the band. An answer that makes some basic assertions about possible reasons for the underachievement of some ethnic minority groups in education, with no wider analysis or assessment, would merit a mark in the top half of the band.

7–11 A sound sociological account of the ways in which racism might influence educational achievement, would be worth 7 or 8 marks. To reach the higher part of the band, there must be some attempt to compare the influence of racism with other factors that may influence the educational performance of ethnic minority groups. Other factors may include: pupil cultures and sub-cultures, material deprivation, peer group influences, and cultural capital explanations. A basic summary of a range of relevant factors from this list, with little or no explicit attempt to compare and contrast their relative impact, would be sufficient to merit a mark in the top half of the band.

12–16 A reasonably detailed account of the impact of racism and one or more other factors that may influence the educational achievement of ethnic minority groups, would be placed in the lower part of the band. To be placed higher in the band, there must be an explicit assessment of the relative importance of racism as a factor that influences educational achievement. This may take the form of arguing that the importance of racism has been exaggerated and/or is declining. Alternatively, there may be a direct attempt to weigh the importance of racism against other factors that may influence the educational achievement of ethnic minority groups. Well-reasoned conclusions that provide a coherent response to the question will be a feature of answers that merit a mark in the top half of the band.

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2 (a) Explain the Marxist theory of the relationship between the education system and the economy. [9]

0–4 A few simple points about the role of the education system in general would be worth 1 or 2 marks. A basic summary of the Marxist view that education reinforces the interests and values of the ruling class, would be placed in the higher part of the band. Answers at this level will make few, if any, references to the specific links that Marxists identify between the education system and the economy.

5–9 Lower in the band, there will be a sound account of the Marxist theory of education, and this will include relevant information about how capitalist interests and values are expressed through the education system. Higher in the band, answers will demonstrate a more confident handling of the relevant material and may include references to relevant studies and theorists, such as Althusser, Bowles and Gintis, and Giroux.

(b) Assess the view that the education system helps to improve the life chances of all members of society. [16]

0–6 A few simple points about equality in relation to the education system would fit the lower part of the band. A summary of the different roles or functions that have been ascribed to the education system, with no further development, would merit a mark in the top half of the band.

7–11 A basic explanation of how education systems might help to improve life chances, would be worth 7 or 8 marks. A more developed analysis of the role of education in promoting social equality, without any assessment, would merit a mark in the higher part of the band. This type of response may include, for example, a discussion of the links between education and the idea of meritocracy. Likewise, candidates may discuss evidence showing the impact of various educational policies in helping to reduce social inequality.

12–16 Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the possible links between education and the achievement of social equality. There will also be an assessment of the view on which the question is based. Lower in the band, the assessment may be confined to a few points evaluating the contribution that education makes to achieving social equality. The persistence of different forms of inequality within education may be documented as a counter to the idea that the education system helps to achieve equality in opportunity and/or outcome. Better answers will go beyond this type of response to question in a broader context what purposes or role is served by the education system. For example, different sociological perspectives might be cited in order to discuss the relative importance of the different roles or functions that have been ascribed to education (economic, social, cultural and libertarian functions, for example). High quality answers may also distinguish between different forms of educational provision and the relevance of those distinctions for addressing the issues raised by the question.

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3 (a) Explain why children in low-income countries are likely to experience economic exploitation. [9]

0–4 A few basic observations about the nature of child exploitation, with no direct links to the question, would be placed in the lower part of the band. A simple account of why children in low-income countries may be vulnerable to economic exploitation, would be placed in the top half of the band. A simple account is likely to be based on general knowledge rather than on specific sociological evidence and analysis.

5–9 Lower in the band, answers will demonstrate a sound account of two or three reasons why children in low-income countries may be vulnerable to economic exploitation. Answers that merit a mark in the top half of the band will cover a wider range of relevant points and/or will demonstrate a deeper understanding of some of the factors that lead to child exploitation. Relevant factors to consider in answering this question include: lack of legal protection for children, traditional status designations for children in low-income countries, the impact of family poverty, early death or disablement of parents in many developing countries, migration and the breakdown of supportive communities, urban destitution, and the effects of war and violence in some low-income countries.

(b) ‘Low-income countries can never become rich’. Assess this view. [16]

0–6 A few simple observations about the characteristics of low-income countries, with no direct links to the question, would be placed in the lower part of the band. Some simple assertions about the problems faced by low-income countries in terms of development, with little sociological underpinning, would merit a mark in the top half of the band.

7–11 A basic account of two or three reasons why low-income countries may struggle to become rich, would fit the lower part of the band. A better answer would explain in greater detail the reasons cited and/or cover a wider range of relevant points. However, there may be little or no explicit attempt at assessment at this level.

12–16 A good account of several reasons why low-income countries may struggle to become rich, with some limited assessment of the claim on which the question is based, would fit the lower part of the band. To achieve a higher mark, the assessment must be more explicit, and well-reasoned arguments should be offered to support conclusions about just how fundamental the obstacles are to low-income countries to becoming rich. Reward candidates who also demonstrate sophisticated understanding by linking the relevant issues to different concepts and theories of development. Another way of showing sophistication in the analysis would be to distinguish between the situations of different low-income countries and regions; for example, noting that the factors that enabled some countries in South-East Asia to undergo rapid economic development may not apply in the same way to low-income countries in other parts of the world.

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4 (a) Explain why there are different views about how ‘development’ should be defined. [9]

0–4 A simple attempt to define the concept of development, with little or no recognition of the debates that surround the issue of formulating an acceptable, single definition, would be placed in the lower part of the band. A better answer at this level might focus on just one area within the debate surrounding the definition of development. For example, problems in defining development in economic terms might be considered. (9)

5–9 Lower in the band, different definitions of development will be discussed, covering dimensions such as the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects. A basic attempt will be made to explain why there are different views surrounding how ‘development’ should be defined. To be placed in the higher part of the band, the problems in formulating a single definition of development that would be widely acceptable, will be identified explicitly. Good answers may also highlight possible links between particular definitions of development and vested interests. Links to different theories of development might also be a feature of answers that merit being placed in the higher part of the band.

(b) ‘A global economy means greater opportunity for everyone’. Assess this claim. [16]

0–6 A few simple points about the characteristics of a global economy, with no further development in relation to the question, would fit the lower part of the band. A better answer at this level might comprise of a few assertions about the benefits or drawbacks of a global economy.

7–11 Lower in the band, a few ways in which a global economy might create greater opportunity for people will be noted, though the points covered may lack detail and may include some over-simplification. Better answers will cover a wider range of the possible impacts of a global economy. However, there may be little or no explicit attempt to assess whether economic globalisation truly extends opportunities for all.

12–16 Answers that fit this band will provide a good account of the impact of economic globalisation and whether it brings greater opportunities for all. Lower in the band, the assessment is likely to be limited to a few basic arguments for or against the claim on which the question is based. Higher in the band, there will be a more sustained and discursive assessment. Explicit and well-reasoned conclusions will be reached about the extent to which economic globalisation leads to greater opportunities for everyone. Sophisticated analysis might be demonstrated by questioning what is meant by ‘greater opportunity’ and how this can be objectively measured and compared.

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5 (a) Explain the factors that may influence the production of television news. [9]

0–4 A few observations about the content of television news, which are of broadly sociological relevance without directly linking to the question set, would be worth 1 or 2 marks. A basic account of a single factor that may influence the content of the news, would merit being placed in the top half of the band. Likewise, a simple list of several factors that influence the production of television news, would gain 3 or 4 marks.

5–9 A basic account of two or three factors that influence television news content, would be placed in the lower part of the band. Better answers would go into greater depth about the factors covered and/or would include references to a broader range of factors. The factors likely to affect the content of television news include: editorial intervention, news values, practical issues of news coverage, journalists, censorship and state regulation, the influence of media owners, advertisers and news recipients and pressure groups. Answers that include appropriate links to different theoretical perspectives on the factors influencing news content are likely to trigger the higher part of the band.

(b) ‘The new media are undermining the power of those who own newspapers and television stations.’ Assess this view. [16]

0–6 A few assertions about the impact of the new media, with little direct bearing on the question, would be placed in the lower half of the band. An answer that demonstrates some basic sociological understanding of the impact of the new media, but with the links to the question left somewhat implicit, would merit being placed in the top half of the band.

7–11 A sound sociological account of the impact of the new media would be worth 7 or 8 marks. A better answer would focus explicitly on explaining how the new media may pose a threat to the power of the traditional media. Answers at this level may be descriptive, with no explicit assessment of the view expressed in the question.

12–16 A good account of the impact of the new media on the power of the traditional media, with some basic assessment, would be placed in the lower part of this band. A better answer will include a detailed assessment of how far it is true to say that the new media pose a threat to the power of the established media. Attempts to distinguish between different types of media within the broad divide new media/traditional media, may be one way in which sophistication can be demonstrated in answering the question. References to appropriate theoretical perspectives (pluralist, Marxist, feminist, post-modernist) might also be a feature of answers that merit high marks.

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6 (a) Explain the difficulties of studying the impact that television has on viewers. [9]

0–4 A few observations about the impact of television on viewers which are of broadly sociological relevance, would be worth 1 or 2 marks. A brief account of one or two factors that might make it difficult to study the impact of television on viewers, would merit a mark in the top half of the band. An answer that focuses on research methods that might be used in studying the impact of television, is unlikely to be worth more than a maximum of 4 marks.

5–9 An answer that provides a sound account of two or three difficulties in studying the impact of television on viewers, would fit the lower part of the band. Difficulties include: how relevant variables can be separated, ethical issues e.g. in studying the impact of violence on television, the long-term nature of the likely impact of television, problems of studying people in controlled environments, and specific difficulties of interpreting research data in this area. Higher in the band, a wider range of difficulties will be mapped and/or the explanations will be more detailed. There may also be references to appropriate studies, such as Bandura, Lull, and Morley.

(b) ‘Existing theories fail to explain adequately how the media influence human behaviour.’ Assess this view. [16]

0–6 A few assertions about how the media influence human behaviour, with little sociological foundation, would fit the lower half of the band. A simple statement of one sociological theory or explanation of the influence of the media on human behaviour, would merit being placed in the top half of the band. A general account of functionalist and/or conflict theories of the media could gain up to a maximum of 6 marks.

7–11 A sound account of one theory of media influence, possibly the hypodermic-syringe model, would be worth 7 or 8 marks. A better answer would describe two or more relevant theories. A likely focus for the answer would be the debates between supporters of the hypodermic syringe and its uses and gratification models, but other theories may also be covered including the two step flow model, the interpretive model, and post-modernist contributions. There may be little or no explicit assessment at this level.

12–16 A good account of two or more relevant theories, with an assessment of the theories implied through juxtaposition, would be placed in the lower part of the band. A better answer will include an explicit assessment of the value of each theory, and may also include an attempt to draw an overall conclusion about the strengths or limitations of theories that aim to explain the impact of the media on human behaviour. References to several relevant theories may be a feature of high quality answers that merit being placed in the top half of the band. Good use of contributions from post-modernist writers (Baudrillard, Turkle) may be another distinguishing feature of answers that are worthy of high marks.

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7 (a) Explain the difficulties in measuring the extent of religiosity in society. [9]

0–4 A few observations about the nature of religious belief, with no direct links to the question, would be placed in the lower half of the band. A simple account of a few of the difficulties in understanding or assessing the beliefs of others, would be placed in the top half of the band.

5–9 A sound account of two or three of the difficulties associated with measuring the extent of religiosity in a society, would be placed in the lower part of the band. To be placed higher in the band, the account must be more detailed or wider-ranging in the difficulties covered. Difficulties in assessing the extent of religiosity include: problems of definition, lack of reliability of comparative statistics from earlier periods, different criteria are used to record membership of religious organisations, church attendance is not necessarily an indication of religiosity, people may conceal the truth about their religious practice and sentiments, and difficulty in operationalising the concept of religious belief for the purposes of sociological investigation.

(b) ‘The extent to which secularisation has occurred in modern industrial societies has been exaggerated.’ Assess this view. [16]

0–6 A few assertions about the nature or role of religion, without direct links to the question, would be placed in the lower part of the band. An outline of what is meant by secularisation, with no further development, would merit a mark in the top half of the band.

7–11 Lower in the band, the answer may be confined to a basic account of the secularisation thesis that is somewhat lacking in detail. To be placed higher in the band, there would need to be a more developed treatment of the secularisation debate, with different indicators of secularisation documented, including references to, for instance, church attendance figures, church membership, public influence of established religious organisations, and studies of religious belief. However, the discussion at this level may be one-sided and will be lacking an explicit assessment of the idea that religious influence is in decline in modern industrial societies.

A broad account of different theories of religion, with some indirect links to the secularisation debate that are mostly or wholly indirect, could score up to 8 marks.

12–16 Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the secularisation thesis. There must also be an assessment of that thesis. Lower in the band, the assessment may consist of simply describing the different arguments for and against the secularisation thesis. Better answers will engage more directly with the debates and will develop well-reasoned arguments for supporting a particular view about the influence of religion in society today. High quality answers may also show other elements of sophistication, such as distinguishing between different types of secularisation (Casanova), or drawing international comparisons about the degree of secularisation in different countries (Martin, Davie, Bruce), or discussing the notion of religious revival (Kepel).

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8 (a) Explain the view that religion is a form of social control. [9]

0–4 A few simple points about social control in general, with few direct links to the question, would be placed in the lower part of the band. Some simple examples of how religion may contribute to social control, would be placed in the top half of the band.

5–9 A basic account of the sociological thinking behind the idea that religion is a form of social control, would merit a mark in the lower half of the band. To be placed higher in the band, the answer must show a stronger understanding of the underlying ideas and will include references to appropriate theory (Marxist and/or feminist). High quality answers may distinguish between different strands of thinking within the Marxist and/or feminist perspectives on religion.

(b) ‘The growth of religious fundamentalism is a response to globalisation.’ Assess this view. [16]

0–6 A few simple assertions about the impact of globalisation on cultures or belief systems, would be worth 1 or 2 marks. A basic outline of what is meant by religious fundamentalism, would merit being placed in the higher part of the band.

7–11 An answer that offers a simple view of how globalisation may have led to the growth of religious fundamentalism, could gain up to 9 marks. To be placed higher in the band, the explanation must be more detailed and/or cover some other factors that may account for the growth of religious fundamentalism. The ideas of thinkers such as Bayer, Huntington, Bauman, Giddens and Beckford, would be particularly relevant when answering the question.

12–16 Answers at this level will include a sound account of the possible links between globalisation and the growth of religious fundamentalism. There will also be an attempt to assess these purported links. Lower in the band, the assessment may be made through the simple juxtaposition of two or more contrasting explanations for the growth of religious fundamentalism. Higher in the band, though, the assessment must be explicit, and clear conclusions will be reached about the relative merits of the explanations discussed. Good use of post-modernist contributions to the debate about globalisation, with particular reference to fundamentalism, may be a feature of answers that merit being placed in the top part of the band. Candidates may also draw distinctions between different manifestations of religious fundamentalism, as a contribution to analysing the issues raised by the question.