
SOCIOLOGY

9699/22

Paper 2 Theory and Methods

May/June 2017

1 hour 30 minutes

No Additional Materials are required.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

An answer booklet is provided inside this question paper. You should follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

Answer Question 1 and **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.



This document consists of **2** printed pages, **2** blank pages and **1** insert.

Section A

Answer Question 1.

- 1 Observation is an important research method in sociology. A sociologist using this method will observe people's behaviour and listen to what they say. Sociologists may record their research findings either as they happen or after the event. There are two forms of observation: participant and non-participant. In participant observation the sociologist must join and become part of the group they are studying. One example of a study using this method is Whyte's 'Street Corner Society', which was based on participant observation with local gangs in a slum district of Boston. Participant observation is a method that allows researchers to gain a detailed understanding of the research topic. Supporters of this approach claim that it produces data that is high in *validity*. However, positivists criticise this approach for theoretical reasons.

The second form of observation is non-participant observation where the sociologist will observe the people being studied without interacting with them. In general, observational studies give rise to a number of practical and ethical problems. These problems include gaining access to the group being studied and deciding whether the observation will be overt or covert.

- (a) What is meant by the term *validity*? [2]
- (b) Describe **two** difficulties in gaining access to a study group. [4]
- (c) Explain why a sociologist might decide to use overt rather than covert observation. [8]
- (d) Assess positivist arguments against the use of participant observation. [11]

Section B

Answer **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3.

- 2 'The functionalist model of how society works has many limitations and few strengths.' Explain and assess this view. [25]
- 3 'Sociologists should always aim to study society in an objective way.' Explain and assess this view. [25]

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