

## **MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2013 series**

### **9699 SOCIOLOGY**

**9699/11**

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 'The extent to which the individual is free to choose their own social identities has been underestimated in the main theories of socialisation.' Explain and assess this view. [25]**

**0–6** Answers at this level are likely to be based on a few common sense observations about social identity with little or no sociological backing. A few simple points about social roles may be worth three or four marks. If some limited understanding of the process of socialisation is demonstrated, this may merit the top of the band.

**7–12** A basic account of the importance of socialisation in human development, with no reference to issues of choice and free will, would fit the lower part of the band. A summary of the functionalist theory of socialisation, with no further development, would be worth up to 10 marks. To go higher within the band, there must either be a critique of the functionalist view of socialisation or else the discussion is broadened to include a descriptive account of one or more other theories of socialisation. There may be little or no assessment in answers at this level.

**13–18** Answers that merit this band will refer to ideas associated with the interpretivist notion that people are free to negotiate their social roles and identities. Lower in the band, the discussion of the extent to which free will may be exercised in the construction and adoption of social identities may lack subtlety and be rather narrow in the range of ideas/thinkers covered. Higher in the band, a wider range of material on these themes will be covered and some answers may distinguish, for example, between different strands of interpretivist (symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology) or integrate post-modernist ideas into the response. To reach the top half of the band, there must also be an assessment of the extent to which people are free to choose their own social identities. However, the assessment may lack depth at this level and is likely to be confined to a juxtaposition of different strands of determinist and voluntarism thinking in sociological accounts of the dynamics of human behaviour.

**19–25** Answers at this level will provide a good account of different theories of socialisation, including those perspectives that emphasise the importance of viewing the individual as a creative social actor. The idea that people are free to negotiate and select their social identities will be fully explained. 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 still rely mainly on juxtaposition of contrasting sociological theories; for example, structural versus action theories of human behaviour. To go higher in the band, there must also be a more direct analysis of the extent to which the claim that people are free to negotiate their social identities is justified. The analysis may take the form of, for example, arguing that the interpretivist position (in relation to some interpretivist thinkers, at least) is not as 'voluntarist' as it might seem or as it has been characterised by some opponents. Another line of attack would be to mount a defence of the determinist view that choice in relation to human behaviour is highly restricted by social forces. Post-modernist ideas might also be used to support (or possibly to refine) the overall tenor of the interpretivist perspective on socialisation.

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**2 ‘Sociological research can never be as objective as positivists claim.’ Explain and assess this view. [25]**

- 0–6** Some general assertions about the nature of sociological research, or the study of human behaviour more generally, might be worth three or four marks. A few simple points about scientific method/procedures would trigger the top of the band.
- 7–12** A basic descriptive account of scientific method, with no further links to the question, would trigger the lower part of the band. Higher in the band, the answer may begin to explore the positivist and/or anti-positivist arguments, albeit still in a largely descriptive manner. The concept of objectivity may be overlooked at this level, or figure only indirectly in the answers.
- 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. Explicit evaluation of the view expressed in the question is likely to be confined to a few simple observations only. Reward candidates who note the possible contradictions between the high ideals of scientific method 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 anti-positivist perspective, with a well-informed and sustained assessment that focuses directly on the issue of whether or not the methods favoured by positivists provide a satisfactory way of understanding the factors that shape human behaviour. The concepts of objectivity mentioned in the question will be discussed directly in answers at this level. To reach the top of the band, there needs in addition to be some further indication of sophistication, such as the ability to recognise limitations in both the positivist and the anti-positivist positions, or some well-informed application of the post-modernist critique of science.

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### Section B

**3 Structured interviews have little value in sociological research because they allow only a narrow range of questions to be asked.’ Explain and assess this view. [25]**

**0–6** Answers at this level may be characterised by a few elementary observations about interviews in general. Mention of a couple of relevant strengths and/or limitations of interviews in general would justify a mark at the top of the band.

**7–12** Lower in the band, some relevant strengths and/or limitations will be described, though the account may fail to differentiate between different types of interview. Higher in the band, reference will be made to the strengths and limitations of structured interviews specifically, though the discussion may focus mainly on practical issues rather than theory. Answers at this level may be mainly or wholly descriptive.

**13–18** Answers at this level will provide a sound account of the strengths and limitations of structured interviews. Lower in the band, the treatment of theory may be less well developed than the treatment of practical issues. Higher in the band, there will be a more accurate and detailed consideration of some of the theoretical issues concerning the use of structured interviews in sociological research. To reach the top half of the band, there must also be some assessment of the view on which the question is based. However, the assessment may lack depth at this level and is likely to be confined to a simple juxtaposition of the strengths and limitations of the different types of interview.

**19–25** At this level answers will provide a good account of the practical and theoretical strengths and limitations of structured interviews. There will also be a sustained and well-informed assessment of the value of structured interviews relative to other types of interview. This might include, for example, a discussion of research aims and values, reflections on the relationship between the researcher and the respondent, and issues of what constitutes good sociological research. Reward candidates who use references to relevant studies to show the type of context in which structured interviews might be a particularly appropriate choice of research method. Lower in the band, the assessment is likely to rely mainly on contrasts between structured and unstructured interviews. Relevant links may be made to the positivist versus interpretivist debates on research methods. Higher in the band, the assessment will also include a more direct response to the claim that structured interviews have little value in sociological research because they allow only a narrow range of questions to be asked.

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**4 'Covert participant observation produces a deeper understanding of group behaviour than can be achieved using overt participant observation.' Explain and assess this view. [25]**

- 0–6** A few basic points about research methods in general, with no clear links to participant observation, might be worth two or three marks. Some simple points about participant observation, with no distinction drawn between covert and overt methods, would trigger the top of the band. Answers that are confined to defining the difference between covert and overt observation would also fit the top of the band.
- 7–12** A sound account of the strengths and/or limitations of participant observation, with no distinction drawn between covert and overt methods, could achieve up to ten marks. To go higher, there must be some attempt to describe the benefits and/or drawbacks of the covert method of observation. The discussion is likely to lack detail at this level and may focus mainly on practical points rather than exploring the more complex theoretical issues of validity, objectivity and ethics. At this level there may be little or no assessment of the claim on which the question is based.
- 13–18** A sound account of some strengths and limitations of covert participant observation, with the focus perhaps more on practical issues, would fit the lower part of the band. A more developed discussion of covert participant observation, with greater understanding of the relevant theoretical and/or ethical issues, would trigger the top part of the band. Higher in the band, there will also be an attempt to assess the claim on which the question is based. Within this band, however, the assessment may lack depth and is likely to be confined to a few simple contrasts with overt participant observation.
- 19–25** A good account of the strengths and limitations of covert participant observation will be offered at this level, and the treatment of relevant theoretical issues will be accurate and well informed. An attempt will also be made to explain why covert participant observation may produce a deeper understanding of group behaviour than might be the case using overt participant observation. Lower in the band, the assessment may still be based primarily on making contrasts between covert and overt observation, though now there must also be some attempt to draw direct conclusions about whether the view expressed in the question is accurate. The more developed the assessment in terms of analysing explicitly the view that covert participant observation produces a deeper understanding of group behaviour than can be achieved using overt participant observation, the higher in the band the answer is likely to reach. Answers that recognise the complexities involved in drawing conclusions about whether covert participant observation is a superior method in terms of achieving validity and depth of understanding, are likely to trigger the top half of the band. Good use of relevant participant observation studies to illustrate key points may also be a feature of answers in this band, though it would be possible to reach the top of the band without mentioning any studies.

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### Section C

**5 'The working class would appear to have been replaced by the middle class in modern industrial societies.' Explain and assess this view. [25]**

**0–6** Answers that are confined to a few simple observations about social class may fit the lower half of the band. If there is also some rudimentary commentary about one or more sociological theory of class, a mark at the top of the band may be justified.

**7–12** A basic account of the decline in manual employment would fit the lower part of the band. A sound account of the embourgeoisement thesis would trigger the top half of the band. Likewise, a basic summary of the post-modernist claims about the death of class would also fit the higher part of the band. Answers at this level may be mainly or wholly descriptive.

**13–18** Answers that merit this band will address directly the idea that the working class has in some ways changed fundamentally in recent years. Lower in the band, the discussion may be confined to a sound account of a limited range of relevant material. An answer that contrasts the embourgeoisement thesis with the arguments about proletarianisation would be an example of this. Higher in the band, a wider range of relevant material will be considered. In addition to the debate about embourgeoisement, this might include the notions of class de-fragmentation, the 'new working class', the emergence of an underclass, the impact of consumerism, and the breakdown of traditional working class identities. Changes in the political behaviour of the working class might also be considered. Higher in the band, there will also be some attempt to assess the view on which the question is based, though the analysis may lack depth at this level. Answers that stop at 1950s/1960s debates (embourgeoisement, proletarianisation, etc.) would need to be very well done to reach the top of the band. Such answers would need to be complemented by references to more recent class analysis to merit a mark in the next (19–25) band.

**19–25** Answers at this level will provide a good account of a range of changes that may have affected the working class in recent years. There will also be a sustained and well informed assessment of the view that the working class is fundamentally different today from, for example, the working class described by Marx in the nineteenth century. Lower in the band, the assessment may rely mainly on the juxtaposition of different views about the nature of the working class today. To go higher in the band, however, the assessment must also respond in a more direct way to the claim that the working class has been replaced by the middle class. For example, a good answer might question what is meant by the middle class and whether such a grouping exists. Another useful line of analysis would be to challenge the post-modernist notion that class identity has become much less relevant in modern industrial societies or to challenge the claim that manual workers are no longer separated economically and/or culturally from other working groups.

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**6 ‘Cultural explanations of ethnic inequality have many limitations and few strengths.’  
Explain and assess this view. [25]**

- 0–6** Lower in the band answers may be restricted to a few assertions about the reasons for ethnic inequality, or perhaps a few general points about the nature of ethnic inequality in areas such as employment and housing. Better answers at this level may identify some relevant explanations, though these will be based more on common sense than on references to appropriate sociological evidence and arguments.
- 7–12** At the lower end of the band, there may be a general account of one relevant theory, of ethnic inequality, perhaps with only limited links to cultural issues. Higher in the band, the focus may still be on a single theory or explanation of ethnic inequality, though the account will be more accurate and/or detailed. There may be little or no evidence of assessment at this level, and references to cultural explanations may be lacking or poorly developed at best.
- 13–18** Answers that reach this band will demonstrate a basic understanding of one or more cultural explanations of ethnic inequality. Lower in the band, the answer may be confined to a descriptive account of a single theory that highlights cultural influences on ethnic inequality. Higher in the band, there may also be references to other explanations. Links to appropriate studies could be another feature of answers that merit the top of the band. Higher in the band, there will be some attempt to assess the explanations offered, though this may be largely implicit.
- 19–25** As for the previous band except that the assessment will be better well-informed and explicit. Lower in the band, the assessment may take the form of a critique of cultural explanations of ethnic inequality through juxtaposition with structural theories. Higher in the band, this may be combined with an attempt to reach a balanced and reasoned conclusion about the reasons why certain ethnic minorities continue to experience inequality in modern industrial societies. To reach the top half of the band, clear and well-reasoned conclusions about the overall value of cultural explanations of ethnic inequality should also be evident in the answers.