

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
Cambridge International Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2014 series

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/32

Paper 32 (Essay), maximum raw mark 75

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Section A: Education

1 (a) Explain why sociologists question the importance of intelligence in explaining educational achievement. [9]

- 0–4 A few simple assertions about the importance of intelligence, as an influence on educational achievement would be worth 1 or 2 marks. A simple account of one reason why sociologists question the importance of intelligence in explaining the educational achievement of pupils, would fit the higher part of the band. Reasons why sociologists question the importance of intelligence in explaining the educational achievement of pupils include: difficulty of defining and measuring intelligence; socially ascribed nature of intelligence tests and the social influences on what is defined and accredited as knowledge and intelligence; the impact of social inequality on educational achievement arguably far outweighs any impact of innate intelligence; conflict theorists argue that schools are more geared to promoting social order than to encouraging the expression of intelligence.
- 5–9 Lower in the band, answers will provide a basic account of two or more reasons why sociologists question the importance of intelligence in explaining educational achievement. A basic account may lack detail and leave key points underdeveloped. For example, there may be no reference to supporting evidence or studies, or only limited use will be made of links to relevant concepts and theories. Better answers will demonstrate a surer handling of the relevant material and use it to provide well developed explanations for why sociologists question the importance of intelligence as an influence on educational achievement.

(b) Assess the view that the main role of the education system is to maintain social order. [16]

- 0–6 A few simple points about social order, with no specific links to education, would fit the lower part of the band. A few assertions about the role of education, with little or no linkage to social order, would merit a mark in the top half of the band.
- 7–11 A list-like account of the different roles or functions that have been ascribed to the education system, with no further development, would be worth 7 or 8 marks. A basic account of the role of education in promoting social order, would justify a mark in the higher part of the band. A basic account may be distinguished by reliance on just one theory of education, perhaps the functionalist or the Marxist theory. Although the points offered will be accurate, they may lack detail, such as lacking references to appropriate evidence, concepts, studies and thinkers. There may be little or no explicit assessment at this level.
- 12–16 Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the possible links between education and the maintenance of social order. 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 system is committed to achieving 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

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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.

2 (a) Explain why the educational opportunities that a child has may be influenced by their parents' income. [9]

- 0–4 A few assertions about influences on educational opportunities, with no direct links to parental income, would be worth 1 or 2 marks. A simple account of how parental income may influence educational opportunities, perhaps stating points in a list-like fashion, would fit the higher part of the band.
- 5–9 Lower in the band, answers will provide a basic account of how parental income may affect the educational opportunities that a child has. A basic account would cover two or three ways in which parental income is an influence, without going into significant detail or showing sophistication in the analysis applied. Better answers will demonstrate a surer handling of the relevant material and perhaps cover a wider range of ways in which parental income may be an influence on educational opportunities. Ways in which parental income may influence educational opportunities include: choice of school, directly through ability to fund private education or indirectly through access to the catchment areas for better schools; payment for extra tuition; funding of school trips; purchase of educational toys and books; better facilities in the home for completing homework. Also, high income has links with status networks through which privileged parents may obtain advantages for their children in the education system.

(b) Assess the view that peer group influences are the main factor explaining what children achieve at school. [16]

- 0–6 A few assertions about the factors influencing educational achievement, with no direct links to peer groups, would fit the lower part of the band. A simple explanation of how educational achievement may be influenced by peer groups, would merit a mark in the top half of the band.
- 7–11 A brief summary of some factors that may influence educational achievement, which includes some limited reference to the influence of peer groups, would be worth up to 9 marks. A sound account of the role of peer groups in influencing educational achievement, with no further development, would justify a mark in the higher part of the band.
- 12–16 Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the possible links between peer groups and educational achievement. This might include references to relevant theorists, such as Hargreaves and Woods. Distinctions might also be drawn between different types of peer group/pupil subculture. At this level, 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 influence of peer group on educational achievement. Better answers will go beyond this type of response to question in a broader context whether peer groups influence is the main factor determining educational achievement. For example, different sociological perspectives might be cited in order to discuss the relative importance of the different factors that supposedly influence educational achievement.

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Section B: Global Development

3 (a) Explain why high levels of government debt may be a problem for low-income countries. [9]

0–4 A few basic observations about the nature of government debt, with no direct links to the question set, would fit the lower part of the band. A simple account of one or two ways in which high levels of government debt may be a problem for low-income countries, would trigger the top half of the band. A simple account of this kind would likely be based on general knowledge, rather than specific sociological evidence and analysis.

5–9 Lower in the band, answers will demonstrate a sound understanding of the relationships between government debt and development. However, the explanations offered may lack detail or the range of points considered will be fairly narrow. Answers that merit the top half of the band will show a more detailed understanding of why high levels of government debt may be a problem for low-income countries. Reasons why high levels of government debt may be a problem for low-income countries include: can increase dependence on overseas investment; economy becomes more geared to export based activities rather than sustainable internal development; negative impact on exchange rate and interest rates; the government may have less autonomy in its decision making; increases the dependence on developed countries for aid and support.

(b) ‘Choosing the right government policies is the key to achieving economic growth.’ Assess this view. [16]

0–6 A few simple observations about economic growth, with no direct links to the question set, would fit the lower part of the band. Some simple observations about development, with little sociological underpinning or focus on government policy, would merit a mark in the top half of the band.

7–11 A basic account of some factors influencing economic growth, with little or no reference to government policies, would trigger the lower part of the band. A better answer would include some coverage of the potential for government policies to assist the development process. There may be little or no explicit attempt at assessment at this level.

12–16 A good account of how government policies may impact on opportunities for economic growth, would fit the lower part of the band if it also includes some limited assessment. To go higher, the assessment must be more explicit and well-reasoned arguments offered to support conclusions about the extent to which economic growth can be generated through selecting the right government policies. The assessment is likely to be based on awareness that some theorists question the extent to which government policy alone can bring about development. To what extent low-income countries have the autonomy to implement effective policies for economic growth will be a focus for discussion in high-quality answers. Different theories of development might also be used to develop the analysis. Note that candidates who discuss supranational government interventions (for example, the EU) should be rewarded.

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4 (a) Explain the difficulties in distributing aid effectively in low-income countries. [9]

- 0–4 A few assertions about the nature of aid, or the effectiveness of aid, with little or no direct focus on the question, would trigger the lower part of the band. A better answer at this level might offer a simple explanation of one or two difficulties in distributing aid effectively in low-income countries.
- 5–9 Lower in the band, there will be a basic account of a few difficulties in distributing aid effectively in low-income countries. Answers may be somewhat list-like or else narrow in the range of difficulties covered. To go higher, the answer must provide greater detail about the difficulties in distributing aid effectively in low-income countries. These difficulties include: logistical problems; government corruption; cultural and political sensitivities; impact of war and ethnic conflicts in some regions; bureaucratic obstacles; lack of effective local knowledge.

(b) ‘The power of transnational corporations must be reduced if global inequality is to be overcome’. Assess this view. [16]

- 0–6 A few simple observations about the nature of transnational corporations, with no direct links to the question set, would fit the lower part of the band. Some simple observations about the impact of transnational corporations on global inequality, with little sociological underpinning, would merit a mark in the top half of the band.
- 7–11 A basic account of the impact of transnational corporations on global inequality, perhaps one-sided or lacking detail, would trigger the lower part of the band. A better answer would show greater recognition of the complexity of the relationships between transnational corporations and issues of global development. However, there may be little or no explicit attempt at assessment at this level.
- 12–16 A good account of the impact of transnational corporations on global inequality, with assessment demonstrated through the juxtaposition of different interpretations and theories of development, would fit the lower part of the band. To go higher, the assessment must be more explicit and well-reasoned arguments offered to support conclusions about the overall impact of transnational corporations on global inequality. Reward candidates who also demonstrate sophisticated understanding by recognising, for example, the differences between transnational corporations or by discussing different concepts of global inequality/development in a way that is relevant to the question. High-quality answers may also be distinguished by use of relevant links to theoretical perspectives, such as the Marxist and functionalist viewpoints. Another way of showing sophistication in the analysis would be by recognising changes over time in the nature of transnational corporations and their impact on global inequality.

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Section C: Media

5 (a) Explain ways in which youth sub-cultures are represented by the media. [9]

- 0–4 A few observations about youth sub-cultures, which are of broadly sociological relevance without directly linking to the role of the media, would be worth 1 or 2 marks. Likewise, a few remarks about how the media may influence young people would be worth up to two marks. A basic account of one way in which youth sub-cultures are represented by the media, would merit the top half of the band. Likewise, a simple list of several ways in which sub-cultures are represented by the media, would gain 3 or 4 marks.
- 5–9 A basic account of two or three ways in which the media represent youth sub-cultures, would trigger the lower part of the band. Better answers would go into greater depth about the examples covered and/or include references to a broader range of examples of media representation of youth. Answers that include appropriate links to relevant studies and/or theories, are likely to trigger the higher part of the band. The work of sociologists, such as Pearson and Estrada, may be summarised in good answers to this question.

(b) Assess the view that audiences have the greatest influence on the content of the media. [16]

- 0–6 A few assertions about the role or influence of audience, with little sociological bearing, would fit the lower half of the band. An answer that is confined to discussing the role/influence of the media in general, would also fit the lower part of the band. A simple account of one sociological explanation of how audiences may influence the content of the media, would merit the top half of the band.
- 7–11 A sound account of how audiences may exercise influence over the content of the media would be worth up to 9 marks. To go higher within this band, there must also be some reference to other factors that may influence the content of the media. No explicit assessment of the view on which the question is based is necessary at this level.
- 12–16 At this level, a good account of the role of audiences will be combined with a review of some other factors that may influence the content of the media. There will also be an assessment of the view on which the question is based. Lower in the band, the assessment may take the form of a juxtaposition of different factors that may influence the content of the media. A better answer will include an explicit assessment of the importance of different factors and clear conclusions will be drawn about whether or not audiences have the greatest influence over the media. Attempts to distinguish between different types of media as part of the analysis may be a further way in which sophistication can be demonstrated in answering the question.

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6 (a) Explain how the social identity of a person may be influenced by the media. [9]

0–4 A few observations about the factors influencing social identity, without directly linking to the media, would be worth 1 or 2 marks. A simple attempt to explain how social identity might be influenced by the media, would merit a mark in the top half of the band.

5–9 A basic account of how the social identity of a person may be influenced by the media, would fit the lower part of the band. Answers at this level may lack reference to relevant theorists, concepts or theories.

Higher in the band, the explanation will be more detailed and may include references to appropriate concepts and/or theorists. Concepts such as deviancy amplification, stereotypes, hegemony, and media representations, may feature in high-quality responses.

(b) Assess the extent to which the media promote the democratic political process. [16]

0–6 A few assertions about the extent of democracy in modern industrial societies, with no direct links to the question, would fit the lower half of the band. A simple explanation of one way in which the media may promote democracy, would merit the top half of the band.

7–11 A simple account of some ways in which the media may promote and/or obstruct democracy, would be worth up to 9 marks. Simple answers of this kind may be somewhat list-like or lack some clarity and/or accuracy. Better answer would offer more detail and/or cover a wider range of ways in which the media may promote and/or obstruct the democratic political process. Ways in which the media may promote democracy include: coverage of political events, publication of opinion polls, interviews with politicians, editorial contributions to political debates, the media acting as a pressure group or sponsoring campaigns for social change. There may be little or no explicit attempt at assessment at this level.

12–16 At this level, there will be a good account of several ways in which the media may promote the democratic political process. There will also be an assessment of the extent to which the media promote democracy. Lower in the band, the assessment may be confined to a simple juxtaposition of some arguments for and against the idea that the media promotes democracy. To go higher, the assessment must engage more directly with the issue of how far the media promotes democracy. This might include useful references to relevant theoretical perspectives, such as the debate between pluralists and Marxists. Good use might also be made of post-modernist contributions.

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Section D: Religion

7 (a) Explain the social factors that lead to the growth of sects. [9]

- 0–4 A few observations about the nature of religious organisations, with no direct links to sects, would fit the lower half of the band. A simple account of one factor that might lead to the growth of sects, would reach the top half of the band.
- 5–9 A sound account of one factor that may lead to the growth of sects, or a simple outline of several relevant factors, would trigger the lower part of the band. To go higher, the account must be more detailed and/or wider-ranging in the factors covered. Factors that may be linked to the growth of sects include marginality, relative deprivation, modernisation, secularisation, and ethnicity.

(b) ‘Science and rationalisation have undermined the power of religion in society’. Assess this view. [16]

- 0–6 A few observations about the nature or role of religion, without direct links to the question, would fit the lower part of the band. An account of what is meant by secularisation, with no further development, would merit a mark in the top half of the band.
- 7–11 A basic account of the secularisation thesis, perhaps with some inaccuracy and lack of detail, would trigger the lower part of the band. To go higher, there would need to be a more detailed treatment of the secularisation debate. The discussion at this level may be one-sided and lacking an explicit assessment of the view on which the question is based.
- 12–16 Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the secularisation debate, which will include direct links to the role of science and rationalisation as factors that may have undermined the power of religion in society. There must also be an assessment of the view on which the question is based. 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 role of science and rationalisation as factors impacting on the influence of religion in society. 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). Post-modernist ideas may feature in answers that provide a good assessment.

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8 (a) Explain why there are more men than women in positions of authority in most religious organisations. [9]

0–4 A few simple points about feminist views of gender inequality in general, with no direct links to the question, would fit the lower part of the band. Some examples of how women may be treated within a particular religion or religions, with no wider discussion of explanations or theories, would trigger the top half of the band.

5–9 A basic general account of feminist ideas about religion and the treatment of women, would merit a mark in the lower half of the band up to 7 marks. To go higher, the answer will focus directly on explaining why there are more men than women in positions of authority in most religious organisations. Content covered might include, for example, references to Armstrong and female marginality in organised religion, de Beauvoir on religion and patriarchy, El Saadawi on the manipulation of religion by men, Wilson on veiling, Badawi on women in Islam.

(b) Assess the post-modernist contribution to understanding the role of religion in society. [16]

0–6 A few assertions about the influence of religion today, with little or no sociological insight, would fit the lower part of the band. An account of a modernist theory of religion (functionalist, Marxist, feminist), with no further development, would merit the higher part of the band.

7–11 A basic account of one or two ideas associated with the post-modernist view of religion could gain 7 or 8 marks. To go higher, the discussion must be more detailed or a wider range of features of post-modernist thought will be covered.

12–16 Answers at this level will demonstrate a good understanding of the post-modernist theory of religion. This is likely to include references to different strands of post-modernist theory and/or to different post-modernist writers on religion. The answer will also include an assessment of the post-modernist theory of religion. Lower in the band, the assessment is likely to be in the form of the juxtaposition of different theories of religion. To go higher, the assessment must be explicit and direct, highlighting the strengths and/or limitations of the post-modernist theory.