
SOCIOLOGY

9699/21

Paper 2 Theory and Methods

May/June 2017

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 50

Published

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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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1(a)	<p>What is meant by the term <i>covert observation</i>?</p> <p>One mark for a partial answer such as ‘an undercover observation’.</p> <p>Two marks for a clear and accurate definition.</p> <p>In covert observation, the research is carried out secretly, with the researcher concealing their identity from the study group.</p>	2	
1(b)	<p>Describe <u>two</u> ethical issues with participant observation.</p> <p>Ethical issues might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any deception by the researcher • the confidentiality / anonymity of the information gained • consent issues • psychological impact on the group • potential involvement in dubious activities. 	4	One mark for the example plus one mark for development (2 × 2 marks).

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1(c)	<p>Explain why interpretivists support the use of participant observation.</p> <p>0–4 Lower in the band, a few simple points which are likely to demonstrate limited understanding about what is meant by participant observation and/or interpretivism, or be in some other way marginal to the question.</p> <p>Higher in the band, a basic account of the features of PO that interpretivists support, or a basic overview of interpretivist thinking.</p> <p>5–8 Lower in the band, a sound account of what is considered useful about PO in general, but without fully focusing upon the wording of the question. However, there should be something here linking interpretivism to PO.</p> <p>Higher in the band, there is likely to be a clear and accurate explanation with links to relevant key concepts like verstehen.</p> <p>Supporting reasons might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ability to experience the way of life of the study group in a natural setting without imposing researcher’s views • the depth of understanding gained and the validity of the research data • allows theories to emerge from the research as it progresses • the ability to observe interaction and understand meanings [verstehen] • the opportunity to study groups in a natural setting that might be otherwise difficult to access [deviant, subcultural groups] 	8	<p>A good list of undeveloped points may gain up to six marks. To go higher, some of the points should be developed</p> <p>This question asks candidates to ‘explain’, therefore there is no requirement for assessment</p>

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1(d)	<p>Assess the strengths and limitations of non-participant observation.</p> <p>0–4 Answers at this level are likely to show only limited appreciation of the issues raised by the question.</p> <p>Lower in the band, a few simple points describing observational research in general.</p> <p>Higher in the band, there may be a limited attempt to describe non-participant observation itself but with few direct links to the set question</p> <p>5–8 Answers at this level show some sociological knowledge and understanding of the question.</p> <p>Lower in the band, a simple account of a few strengths and / or limitations of non-participant observation, perhaps relying on some material from the stem.</p> <p>Higher in the band, a more developed account that explores some strengths and limitations; however, there may be a lack of balance in the response, perhaps emphasising practical rather than theoretical strengths and limitations. A one-sided answer that is done very well, could also gain up to 8 marks.</p> <p>A descriptive answer cannot gain more than 8 marks.</p> <p>9–11 Answers at this level will demonstrate good sociological knowledge and understanding applied to the question. There will also be an assessment of the strengths and limitations of non-participant observation. Those responses that usefully distinguish between overt and covert observation should be rewarded.</p> <p>Lower in the band, there will be a good account of a range of strengths and limitations and some attempt to assess issues raised by the question will be made e.g. perhaps by examining critically some of the strengths and/or limitations.</p>	11	<p>Strengths might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance/non participation means groups can be studied in a natural setting without influencing behaviour – generates valid data • Reduces access issues • Allows research on those who may not want to be studied • More objective than PO – no issues around involvement [‘going native’] <p>Limitations might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability issues – not easy to replicate [positivist] • Representativeness – sample characteristics/composition may change over time • Distance view may reduce depth/richness • Ethical issues – though perhaps less so compared to PO <p>Not always easy to remain inconspicuous [overt v covert]</p>

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1(d)	At the top of the band, the assessment must either cover a good range of issues and / or demonstrate depth of understanding perhaps including an overall evaluation of the usefulness of non-participant observation.		

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
2	<p>'Marxist theory continues to offer the most convincing account of how society works.' Explain and assess this view.</p> <p>0–6 Answers at this level are likely to be assertive and focus on a few common sense observations.</p> <p>Lower in the band, answers may be confined to one or two simple points based on assertion / common sense understanding. For example, a few comments about social class relations.</p> <p>Higher in the band, there may be a wider range of simple points based on assertion / common sense understanding perhaps demonstrating a basic understanding of Marx's theory of class but offering very little detail or development that is relevant to the question as set.</p> <p>7–12 Answers at this level will show some sociological knowledge and understanding of the question. Other theories may be present at this level albeit in a fairly basic form.</p> <p>Lower in the band [7–9], the answer may be confined to a narrow range of points, lacking detail and possibly with some inaccuracies. Answers will be rather list-like and may focus on some practical pros and cons of Marxist theory but the discussion will be limited and/or lacking in balance</p> <p>Higher in the band [10–12], answers may either cover a narrow range of points in reasonable detail or cover a wider range of points in limited detail. There will be some extension of key points, perhaps through a simple attempt to identify some changes affecting the social structure of industrial societies during the twentieth century. At this level the description of Marxist theory is likely to be linked to classical Marxism although this may not be explicit.</p> <p>13–18 Answers at this level will show good sociological knowledge and understanding. The material used will be interpreted accurately and applied well to answering the question. There is no <u>requirement</u> for assessment at this level although it may be present.</p> <p>Lower in the band [13–15], answers may give a sound account of Marxist views the range of knowledge shown is limited. There will be less use of concepts and / or theory, and the points covered may lack development. The discussion may be confined to one strand of Marxism, most likely classical.</p>	25	

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
2	<p>Higher in the band [16–18], answers will use a wider range of knowledge, supported by the use of concepts and / or theory where relevant and include some well-developed points. Neo-Marxism and reference to different Marxist thinkers (e.g. Gramsci, Althusser) may feature. Sources of criticism might be discussed by reference to, for example, changes in class boundaries, changes in the distribution of income and wealth, the creation of state welfare provision, consumerism, class fragmentation, and the increased focus on gender and ethnic divisions.</p> <p>Candidates will begin to address the specific wording of the question, though the analysis of the view may lack depth and development.</p> <p>19–25 Lower in the band [19–21], the assessment may be largely delivered through juxtaposition of contrasting arguments / theories e.g. functionalism or feminism. Alternatively, the assessment may be limited to just one or two evaluative points that are explicitly stated perhaps in relation to the degree of conflict in society.</p> <p>Higher in the band [22–25], there will be sustained assessment and the points offered will be explicit and well-directed towards the question. Reference to more recent Marxist thinkers who attempt to update classical thinking might provide one way of shaping assessment that addresses the wording of the question, or good use of post-modernist ideas to engage critically with Marxist theory.</p> <p>Answers at this level must achieve three things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, there will be good sociological knowledge and understanding • Second, the material used will be interpreted accurately and applied effectively to answering the question • Third, there must also be some evidence of assessment. At this level expect a clear and accurate understanding of Marxist theories. Candidates will also show a strong awareness of to offer a convincing explanation of society. <p>There is likely to be a well-formulated conclusion</p>		

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
3	<p>‘The aim of sociological research should be to help disadvantaged groups in society.’ Explain and assess this view.</p> <p>0–6 Answers at this level are likely to be assertive and focus on a few common sense observations</p> <p>Lower in the band, answers may be confined to one or two simple points based on assertion / common sense understanding. For example, some brief comments about the nature of sociological research.</p> <p>Higher in the band, there may be a wider range of simple points based on assertion / common sense understanding. For example, answers will demonstrate a basic understanding of the purposes for which sociologists might use their research but offer very little detail or development that is relevant to the question as set.</p> <p>7–12 Answers at this level will show some sociological knowledge and understanding of the question.</p> <p>Lower in the band [7–9], the answer may be confined to a narrow range of points, lacking detail and possibly with some inaccuracies. Answers will be rather list-like and may offer a general discussion of views about the possible uses of sociological research</p> <p>Higher in the band [10–12], answers may either cover a narrow range of points in reasonable detail or cover a wider range of points in limited detail. There will be some extension of key points, perhaps through references to the debates between those who favour a value-neutral approach to sociological research and those who argue for a committed approach. Links to relevant theoretical perspectives may be present but are likely to be limited.</p> <p>13–18 Answers at this level will show good sociological knowledge and understanding of the ideas of those who have argued that sociologists should use their research to help the disadvantaged groups in society e.g. Marxists, feminists, Mills, Becker, Goffman. The material used will be interpreted accurately and applied effectively to answering the question. ‘Disadvantaged’ may be understood to mean a wide variety of groups but this is not a necessary feature of an answer. There is no <u>requirement</u> for assessment at this level although it may be present.</p>		

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
3	<p>Lower in the band [13–15], answers may use a limited range of knowledge, there will be less use of concepts/theory, and the points covered may lack development.</p> <p>Higher in the band [16–18], answers will use a wider range of knowledge, supported by the use of concepts / theory where relevant and include some well-developed points.</p> <p>Candidates will begin to address the specific wording of the question, though the analysis of the view put forward in the question may not be fully convincing.</p> <p>There is no requirement for assessment at this level.</p> <p>19–25</p> <p>Lower in the band [19–21], the assessment may be largely delivered through juxtaposition of contrasting arguments / theories over the debate about values in sociology. Alternatively, the assessment may be limited to just one or two evaluative points that are explicitly stated.</p> <p>Higher in the band [22–25], there will be sustained assessment and the points offered will be explicit and well-directed towards the question. For example, candidates may question whose interests sociological research serves, who may benefit from efforts to help disadvantaged groups, and what values support the idea of a committed form of sociology</p> <p>Answers at this level must achieve three things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, there will be good sociological knowledge and understanding of the arguments and theoretical perspectives that support the idea of a value committed sociology. • Second, the material used will be interpreted accurately and applied effectively to answering the question • Third, there must also be some evidence of assessment. At this level expect to see clear assessment of the view that sociologists should use their research to help disadvantaged groups in society <p>There is likely to be a well-formulated conclusion</p>		