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UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

279 0010 ZA

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996 D010 ZA

BSc degrees and Diplomas for Graduates in Economics, Management, Finance and the Social Sciences, the Diploma in Economics and Access Route for Students in the External Programme

Introduction to Sociology

Wednesday, 10 May 2006 : 2.30pm to 5.30pm

Candidates should answer **THREE** of the following **FOURTEEN** questions:

QUESTION 1 of Section A (40 marks), **ONE** question from Section B or C (30 marks) and **ONE** question from Section D (30 marks). **Candidates are strongly advised to divide their time accordingly.**

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SECTION A

Answer all **eight** parts of question 1 (40 marks in total).

Question 1

Ethnography is the study of people and groups at first hand over a period of time, using participant observation or interviews to learn about social behaviour. Ethnographic research seeks to uncover the meanings that underpin social actions; this is done through the researcher's direct involvement in the interactions that constitute social reality for the group being studied.

(Giddens, A.: *Sociology*; Polity Press)

- (a) What is ethnography? (1 mark)
- (b) Identify any **one** sociological study that uses ethnography. (1 mark)
- (c) Look at the statements below about ethnography. Say whether each one is true or false and briefly explain why.
- i. Ethnographic studies are usually very reliable. (2 marks)
 - ii. Ethnography usually provides data that are valid. (2 marks)
 - iii. 'Over-involvement' may be a problem in ethnographic research. (2 marks)
- (d) Your employers want to undertake an ethnographic participant observation study of their workforce. Advise them on the following.
- i. Explain **two** of the major difficulties in setting up a participant observation study. (2 marks)
 - ii. Describe and explain **two** of the likely benefits of such a study. (3 marks)
 - iii. Describe and explain **two** of the major limitations such a study. (3 marks)
- (e) Identify some possible problems in using official statistics in social research. (4 marks)

(question continues on next page)

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- (f) Briefly explain any **one** of the following distinctions: (4 marks)
- i. structure and action
 - ii. modernity and postmodernity
 - iii. positivism and interpretivism
- (g) Explain why 'facts never speak for themselves.' (6 marks)
- (h) Compare and contrast the key ideas of any **two** of the theorists identified below. (10 marks)
- i. Weber
 - ii. Durkheim
 - iii. Parsons
 - iv. Mead
 - v. Goffman
 - vi. Giddens

SECTION B

Answer **one** question from **either** this section **or** from Section C (30 marks).

2. 'In spite of recent changes, the family remains an essential unit in society.' Explain and discuss this statement.
3. 'Religion is the opiate of the masses.' Explain and discuss.
4. 'Urbanisation is a necessary process of modernisation.' Explain and discuss.
5. Using **two** sociological theories, explain the changes in educational provision in any **one** society.
6. 'Globalisation is a new phenomenon.' Explain and discuss.
7. Describe and evaluate a Marxist theory of social change.

SECTION C

Answer **one** question from **either** this section **or** from Section B (30 marks).

8. Compare and contrast any **two** sociological theories of social inequality.
9. Outline any **one** theory of gender inequality illustrating your answer with data from any **one** society.
10. Discuss how any **two** sociological theories have explained ethnic divisions in society.
11. Compare any **two** theories of social class.

SECTION D

Answer **one** question from this section (30 marks).

12. Compare and contrast any **two** theories of power holding in society.
13. 'Male domination is all pervasive.' Is this still the case?
14. Account for the growth of organisations in the modern world.

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