1.5 Structure and Action: 10-minute Pack

AQA 8192 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Where a question refers to Item G, use both the Item and your own knowledge of the structure and action debate in your answer.

1 Sociologists use the term 'social structure' to describe a key feature of society that shapes individual lives.

- ☐ A) The organised pattern of institutions and relationships that shapes people's lives
- ☐ B) A single person's individual opinion about society
- ☐ C) A type of building found only in cities
- ☐ D) A method used only in laboratory science

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

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2 For each statement below, state whether it best reflects a structural or an action (agency) view of behaviour.

(a) Society consists of social facts that exist externally to the individual and constrain behaviour. **(1)**

(b) Sociologists should try to understand the subjective meaning an individual attaches to their own behaviour. **(1)**

(c) Structure both constrains and enables action, and is itself reproduced by individuals' everyday actions. **(1)**

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

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3 Explain one strength of a purely structural explanation of behaviour.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

4 Explain why the structure-and-action debate matters for how sociologists explain social change.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.5 Structure and Action: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

A (the organised pattern of institutions and relationships) **B1**

Answer: A

Question 2

(a) structural **B1**

(a) Answer: Structural

(b) action **B1**

(b) Answer: Action (agency)

(c) both **B1**

(c) Answer: Both (Giddens' duality of structure)

Question 3

identifies a genuine strength, e.g. it can explain consistent, large-scale patterns that recur across many different individuals, such as patterns linked to class or family background **B1**

development, e.g. this makes it useful for explaining why inequality tends to persist across generations, rather than treating each individual case as random **B1**

Answer: A structural explanation can explain consistent, large-scale patterns that recur across many individuals, such as patterns linked to class or family background, making it useful for explaining why inequality tends to persist across generations rather than looking random.

Question 4

identifies that a purely structural view can make social change hard to explain, since structure is presented as constraining rather than as something individuals can alter **B1**

development, e.g. an account that includes agency, such as Giddens' structuration theory, can better explain how individuals' actions gradually change social structures over time **B1**

Answer: A purely structural view can make social change hard to explain, since structure is presented mainly as constraining; an account that includes agency, such as Giddens' structuration theory, can better explain how individuals' actions gradually change social structures over time.

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