

## Student 3 – Social Science Answer Sheet

### Question 1

**Explain the differences between sociology, anthropology, and political science within the field of social science. Provide examples of research topics for each discipline.**

**Answer:**

Sociology focuses on how people relate to one another and interact within groups, examining societal structures, institutions, and cultural norms. Research topics in sociology include studying family life, social inequality, urban communities, and criminal behavior.

Anthropology is concerned with understanding humans both in the present and the past, with a strong emphasis on cultural, social, and biological development. Anthropologists often use fieldwork and ethnography to explore kinship systems, rituals, language evolution, and the origins of humanity.

Political science analyzes how societies are governed, looking at political systems, institutions, public policies, and international relations. Typical research areas include elections, the workings of democracies, policy analysis, and global conflicts.

In summary, sociology investigates social patterns and institutions, anthropology explores human diversity and culture, and political science studies systems of power and governance.

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### Question 2

**Describe the structure and function of a typical social survey. Why are surveys important in social science research?**

**Answer:**

A social survey is a systematic method for gathering information from a population, usually through questionnaires or interviews.

**Key elements include:**

- **Sampling:** Selecting a group that accurately represents the larger population.
- **Questionnaire:** Designing structured or semi-structured questions.
- **Data Collection:** Collecting responses in person, by phone, online, or by mail.
- **Analysis:** Interpreting the data to find trends, relationships, or patterns.

Surveys are crucial in social science because they provide quantitative data on attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and demographics. This information helps researchers identify social trends, inform policy decisions, and test sociological theories.

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### Question 3

**Discuss the ethical considerations and societal impacts of conducting social science research with human participants.**

**Answer:**

Ethical considerations in social science research include:

- **Informed Consent:** Ensuring participants are fully informed about the study and agree to take part voluntarily.
- **Confidentiality:** Protecting the privacy and identity of participants.
- **Non-maleficence:** Avoiding harm or distress to participants.
- **Right to Withdraw:** Allowing participants to leave the study at any time.

Social science research can inform policy, improve social welfare, and deepen understanding of social issues. However, unethical research or misuse of data can lead to mistrust, reinforce stereotypes, or harm vulnerable groups. Therefore, ethical oversight and transparent communication are essential.

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### Question 4

**Explain the concept of social stratification and discuss its advantages and limitations in understanding society.**

**Answer:**

Social stratification is the ranking of individuals or groups in society based on factors such as wealth, power, education, or status.

**Advantages:**

- Helps explain social inequality and mobility.
- Provides a framework to analyze class, gender, race, and other divisions.
- Aids in understanding how resources and opportunities are distributed.

**Limitations:**

- May oversimplify the complexity of social life.
- Can reinforce stereotypes or justify inequalities.
- Doesn't always consider individual choices or cultural differences.

Modern research continues to refine stratification theories to better address intersectionality and social change.

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**Question 5**

**Describe the principles of qualitative research and how interviews are used to explore social phenomena.**

**Answer:**

Qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena through detailed, non-numerical data.

**Key principles include:**

- Gaining deep, contextual understanding of participants' experiences.
- Using flexible, open-ended methods for data collection.
- Focusing on meaning, interpretation, and social processes.

Interviews are a central tool in qualitative research, allowing researchers to explore participants' perspectives, motivations, and experiences in depth. Interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured, and are used to collect rich, descriptive data on topics like identity, beliefs, social change, and group dynamics.