

Questions for the Sociology Module (IHS 2025)

Rubric

Marks: 30 marks

Q1) According to C. W. Mills, what is the sociological imagination? In the words of Peter Berger, what are the essential qualities of a sociologist? (Marks: 2+4)

A sociological imagination allows an individual to grasp the relation between history and individual biographies within a society.

According to Berger,

- 1) Art of skepticism (an attempt to understand; looking behind the scene, art of mistrust, questioning the taken for granted)
- 2) Value-free: an intellectual training for controlling biases
- 3) Researching the unofficial and unrespectable
- 4) Debunking common sense
- 5) Relativise phenomenon/practices
- 6) Developing a cosmopolitan imagination (plurality of meanings, multiple paradigms)

Q2) How do Gaby and Carolina describe the concepts of screened intimacy, swipe logic, and curatorial selves? (Marks: 6)

Screened intimacy can be also termed as mediated intimacy. Intimacy means closeness, familiarity and something private. Although in the case of Tinder, the mediated nature makes intimacy: volatile, ethereal (airiness), adds speed (acceleration), adds immediacy. It transforms intimacy to become much more about judgement. Intimacy is supplemented by gestures such as pinching, dragging, scrolling, zapping, and clicking foster connections primarily using images

Swipe logic: Swipe logic describes the pace, or the increased viewing speed encouraged by the UI of this app, and that very pace that emerged as a prominent feature of the discourses examined both online and offline. The mediatization and depersonalization that is encouraged as a result of the speed of profile-viewing enabled by the swipe logic and thus as a top-down discursive hindrance to intimacy. Gamification at its heart, molarization and Dromology.

Curatorial Selves: Setting parameters and creating a profile. Exclusively image-based interactions are crucial for the emergence of the swipe logic. People put similar photos, and bios. Thus, the curatorial selves are partial representation of the who the person really is. Paid features – Passport and unlimited likes. Goffman – Front stage and back stage (impression management).

These numerous everyday life photographs, populating the enormous dating/hook-up app databases, are, here, considered part of a learning process of self-mediation, training users in the editing, curating, and construction of a pseudo self-authenticity.

Molarization.

Q3) What is social action theory? According to Weber, what are the various types of social action? Use examples to describe each of them. (Marks: 2+8)

Social Action Theory: Society is a construction of the interactions & meanings of its members. It depends on human behaviour & the meanings they embed in institutions. Interpretivist approach to studying society (Practicing empathy to understand the meaning and motives behind people's actions: **Verstehen**)

Zweckrational action (Instrumental Rational action): Actor conceives his goal clearly & combines means to attain it. Rationality is defined in terms of knowledge of an actor

Example: Engineer building a bridge

Wertrational action (Value rational action): Goal is to remain faithful to his own idea of honour. Example: Captain going down with his ship, because abandoning the sinking ship will be regarded as dishonourable

Affective action: dictated by the state of mind or humour of the subject. Emotional reaction of the actor overpowers (affectual orientation especially emotional). Example: Mother slapping child

Traditional action: Dictated by customs & beliefs, obeying to certain norms due to conditioning. action, which is guided by customs and longstanding beliefs which become second nature or habit and is unquestioned. Example: Greetings with folded hand

Q4) According to Karl Marx, what is alienation? Describe the various forms of alienation experienced by workers in an industrial society. (Marks: 2+8)

Man is essentially a creature who works; if he works under inhuman conditions, he is dehumanized, because he ceases to perform the activity that, given the proper conditions, constitutes his humanity. In the capitalist economy, production does not help man realize its true potential, causing alienation. Instead of work being the expression of man himself, work has been degraded into an instrument, a means of livelihood. In capitalism, the root of alienation is **economic** in nature.

1) **Man and his producing activity:** Labour is external and coerced. The worker does not feel content while working. Division of labour & highly repetitive tasks does not allow the worker to reach its full potential. The capitalist productive activity mortifies the body and ruins the mind of a worker.

2) **Man and his product:** Man is alienated from his product because the activity producing it is alienated. The product is the summary of the activity. It is not only that the labour becomes an object but it exists outside him, independently & the product becomes a power on his own confronting him. The product now controls the man. For example: articles of consumption have power over the man by virtue of the desire it creates.

3) Man in relation to the other man: If the product does not belong to the worker and becomes alien to him, it means it belongs to some other man than the worker. This means someone else is the master or owner of the product.

4) Man and his species: In tearing away from man the object of his production, estranged labour tears from his species life. The proposition that man's species-nature is estranged from him means that one man is estranged from the other, as each of them is from **man's essential nature (to labour as a form of self-expression)**