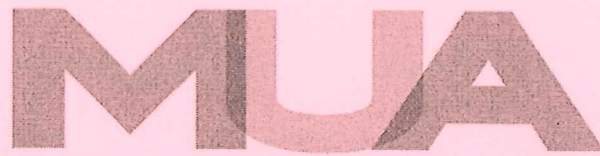


The
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UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

SWK 302: SOCIAL BEING: POWER, STRUCTURE AND AGENCY

DATE: 31ST MARCH 2025

DURATION: 2 HOURS

MAXIMUM MARKS: 70

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Write your registration number on the answer booklet.
2. DO NOT write on this question paper.
3. This paper contains SIX (6) questions.
4. Question ONE is compulsory.
5. Answer any other THREE questions.
6. Question ONE carries 25 MARKS and the rest carry 15 MARKS each.
7. Write all your answers in the Examination answer booklet provided..

QUESTION ONE

Read the Case Study below carefully and answer the questions that follow:

Maria is a 27-year-old single mother living in a densely populated, low-income urban neighborhood. She works two part-time jobs to support her two children, ages five and eight. Despite her hard work, Maria faces persistent challenges, including unaffordable housing, limited healthcare access, and systemic wage gaps that prevent her from achieving financial stability. Her neighborhood has a high crime rate, underfunded schools, and few social support services, making upward mobility difficult for many residents.

Maria's community is characterized by deep-rooted structural barriers. Many of her neighbors have limited educational opportunities and experience employment discrimination. Political leaders in the area have historically favored business investments and real estate development over social welfare programs, leading to increased displacement of low-income residents. As a result, many families struggle to secure stable housing, often facing eviction or relocation due to gentrification.

Despite these obstacles, Maria is actively engaged in local grassroots movements advocating for housing rights, affordable childcare, and access to healthcare. She collaborates with community organizers to raise awareness about the challenges faced by low-income families. Her activism, however, has been met with resistance from local government officials and developers who argue that economic growth and urban renewal projects should take precedence over expanded social services. Additionally, Maria faces challenges within her own community, as some residents fear that advocating for policy changes might result in job losses or increased tensions with authorities.

Maria's story reflects the ongoing struggle between agency and structure. While she exercises her agency by fighting for better conditions, the rigid social structures around her limit her opportunities and create additional barriers to success. Her ability to navigate power dynamics, advocate for policy changes, and mobilize her **community will ultimately determine the extent to which she** can influence her **environment and bring about meaningful change.**

Required:

Using sociological theories and course concepts, answer the following questions:

- a) Analyze the role of social structure in shaping Maria's life opportunities and challenges. (7 Marks)
- b) Explain how Maria's agency is demonstrated in her efforts to challenge systemic barriers. (8 Marks)
- c) Discuss how power dynamics between local authorities and grassroots movements influence social change. (10 Marks)

QUESTION TWO

- a) Define power and discuss how it operates in different social contexts. (5 Marks)
- b) Explain the significance of power relations in shaping individual and collective agency. (10 Marks)

QUESTION THREE

- a) Compare and contrast conflict theory and symbolic interactionism in explaining social structure. (10 Marks)
- b) Discuss how social action theories contribute to understanding individual agency. (5 Marks)

QUESTION FOUR

- a) Examine the role of institutions in maintaining or challenging social structures. (8 Marks)
- b) Discuss how social structures influence inequalities in access to resources. (7 Marks)

QUESTION FIVE

- a) Explain how symbolic interactionism helps us understand everyday social interactions. **(7 Marks)**
- b) Analyze the relationship between social norms and agency in shaping individual behavior. **(8 Marks)**

QUESTION SIX

- a) Assess the impact of globalization on power structures in contemporary society. **(5 Marks)**
- b) Discuss strategies that marginalized groups use to challenge dominant power structures. **(10 Marks)**