SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 9699/11
Essay 11
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General Comments

The overall standard of the scripts was similar to the corresponding session last time. Some responses provided detailed descriptive accounts of relevant sociological evidence and ideas, but failed to offer the analysis and assessment that is also required in order to gain high marks. Other answers disappointed through lacking focus on the specific wording of the question. In order to achieve higher marks, it is recommended that more attention is given to practising exam skills, including the ability to interpret questions accurately and to construct answers that dissect and probe the relevant analytical issues. It was pleasing to see some candidates making good use of references to recent sociological studies and to contemporary sociological theory, such as the contributions of post-modernist and post-feminist writers.

There were no common misinterpretations of the questions. **Questions 1, 3** and **4** proved the most popular. There were comparatively few answers to **Questions 5** and **6**. Most candidates appeared able to write two full answers in the time available. There were no common rubric errors.

Question 1

This was a popular question that was answered competently by many of the candidates. Weak answers were confined to a few simple points about the concept of socialisation, with little or no attempt to demonstrate the importance of the socialisation process in shaping human behaviour. Better answers typically described two or more theories of socialisation. To gain high marks, however, it was also necessary to assess the claim that it is only through socialisation that we learn to behave in ways that are identifiably 'human'. Candidates were rewarded for making good use of references to cases of children brought up with little or no human contact. Discussion of cross-cultural and gender differences in behaviour also featured in some of the better answers. Particularly impressive were candidates who questioned what is meant by the reference in the question to behaviour that is 'human'.

Question 2

There were a few weak answers where the candidates wrote about the social influences on human behaviour without relating the material to the issues raised by the question. Simple outlines of the positivist perspective provided the basis for many answers. Better responses went beyond a description of positivism to focus specifically on the issue of values in sociology. The debate was often constructed around contrasts between positivist and interpretivist positions. Some of the best answers included references to particular thinkers who have written about the role of values in sociology, including Weber, Gouldner, Goffman and C Wright Mills. Good answers also featured a well reasoned conclusion about whether or not sociology can be a science.

Question 3

Weak answers were often confined to a few comments about interviews in general. Answers that simply listed some of the strengths and limitations of unstructured interviews, without referring to the specific issues raised by the question, gained around half of the marks available. Good answers focused on the claim that unstructured interviews have little value in sociology because they are too subjective and create practical problems for the interviewer. Candidates who linked their discussion accurately to the wider debates between positivists and interpretivists gained particular credit. Some candidates also impressed the Examiners by making good use of references to relevant sociological studies.

Question 4

There were a few poor answers that discussed only the usefulness of quantitative data in general in sociology. Another weak response involved describing different types of secondary data without focusing specifically on official statistics. Good answers identified a range of strengths and limitations of official statistics, with coverage of both practical and theoretical issues. Particular credit was awarded to candidates who linked their discussion accurately to the positivist perspective and its critics. The best answers provided an explicit assessment of the usefulness of official statistics in sociological research, and these often included references to appropriate studies.

Question 5

This was one of the least popular questions. Weak answers were often based on a few simple assertions about the nature of class divisions today. Better answers referred to relevant sociological knowledge about social mobility and class relations. Answers that were confined to a simple defence of the meritocracy thesis or the functionalist perspective on social stratification, gained some credit. However, better answers focused directly on explaining the possible links between social class background and opportunities to experience social mobility. The Examiners were particularly impressed by candidates who made good use of references to relevant studies of social mobility. The best answers explained accurately the sociological thinking behind the idea that social class no longer creates a barrier to upward social mobility. Those answers also included an explicit assessment of the extent to which the influence of class background on opportunities for social mobility has weakened in recent years.

Question 6

Weak answers typically described a few features of poverty without analysing the possible causes. Some responses were limited to a discussion of the causes of poverty in general. Better answers distinguished between modern industrial societies and developing societies, recognising that there may be both differences and similarities in the causes of poverty between the two types of society. The best answers considered a range of possible causes of poverty and located the discussion in relation to the differences between modern industrial societies and developing societies. Some candidates made particularly good use of appropriate theoretical perspectives in answering the question.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/12
Essay 12

General Comments

The overall standard of the scripts was similar to the corresponding session last time. Some responses provided detailed descriptive accounts of relevant sociological evidence and ideas, but failed to offer the analysis and assessment that is also required in order to gain high marks. Other answers disappointed through lacking focus on the specific wording of the question. In order to achieve higher marks, it is recommended that more attention is given to practising exam skills, including the ability to interpret questions accurately and to construct answers that dissect and probe the relevant analytical issues. It was pleasing to see some candidates making good use of references to recent sociological studies and to contemporary sociological theory, such as the contributions of post-modernist and post-feminist writers.

There were no common misinterpretations of the questions. **Questions 1, 3** and **4** proved the most popular. There were comparatively few answers to **Questions 5** and **6**. Most candidates appeared able to write two full answers in the time available. There were no common rubric errors.

Question 1

This was a popular question that was answered competently by many of the candidates. Weak answers were confined to a few simple points about the concept of socialisation, with little or no attempt to demonstrate the importance of the socialisation process in shaping human behaviour. Better answers typically described two or more theories of socialisation. To gain high marks, however, it was also necessary to assess the claim that it is only through socialisation that we learn to behave in ways that are identifiably 'human'. Candidates were rewarded for making good use of references to cases of children brought up with little or no human contact. Discussion of cross-cultural and gender differences in behaviour also featured in some of the better answers. Particularly impressive were candidates who questioned what is meant by the reference in the question to behaviour that is 'human'.

Question 2

There were a few weak answers where the candidates wrote about the social influences on human behaviour without relating the material to the issues raised by the question. Simple outlines of the positivist perspective provided the basis for many answers. Better responses went beyond a description of positivism to focus specifically on the issue of values in sociology. The debate was often constructed around contrasts between positivist and interpretivist positions. Some of the best answers included references to particular thinkers who have written about the role of values in sociology, including Weber, Gouldner, Goffman and C Wright Mills. Good answers also featured a well reasoned conclusion about whether or not sociology can be a science.

Question 3

Weak answers were often confined to a few comments about interviews in general. Answers that simply listed some of the strengths and limitations of unstructured interviews, without referring to the specific issues raised by the question, gained around half of the marks available. Good answers focused on the claim that unstructured interviews have little value in sociology because they are too subjective and create practical problems for the interviewer. Candidates who linked their discussion accurately to the wider debates between positivists and interpretivists gained particular credit. Some candidates also impressed the Examiners by making good use of references to relevant sociological studies.
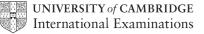
Question 4

There were a few poor answers that discussed only the usefulness of quantitative data in general in sociology. Another weak response involved describing different types of secondary data without focusing specifically on official statistics. Good answers identified a range of strengths and limitations of official statistics, with coverage of both practical and theoretical issues. Particular credit was awarded to candidates who linked their discussion accurately to the positivist perspective and its critics. The best answers provided an explicit assessment of the usefulness of official statistics in sociological research, and these often included references to appropriate studies.

Question 5

This was one of the least popular questions. Weak answers were often based on a few simple assertions about the nature of class divisions today. Better answers referred to relevant sociological knowledge about social mobility and class relations. Answers that were confined to a simple defence of the meritocracy thesis or the functionalist perspective on social stratification, gained some credit. However, better answers focused directly on explaining the possible links between social class background and opportunities to experience social mobility. The Examiners were particularly impressed by candidates who made good use of references to relevant studies of social mobility. The best answers explained accurately the sociological thinking behind the idea that social class no longer creates a barrier to upward social mobility. Those answers also included an explicit assessment of the extent to which the influence of class background on opportunities for social mobility has weakened in recent years.

Question 6

Weak answers typically described a few features of poverty without analysing the possible causes. Some responses were limited to a discussion of the causes of poverty in general. Better answers distinguished between modern industrial societies and developing societies, recognising that there may be both differences and similarities in the causes of poverty between the two types of society. The best answers considered a range of possible causes of poverty and located the discussion in relation to the differences between modern industrial societies and developing societies. Some candidates made particularly good use of appropriate theoretical perspectives in answering the question.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/13

Essay 13

General Comments

It was pleasing to note further improvement in the study skills deployed by the candidates in answering the questions. In particular, the candidates demonstrated greater knowledge and understanding of the relevant theoretical perspectives. Some candidates are also paying greater attention to the specific wording of the questions when constructing their answers. This helps in producing answers that are more analytical and tightly focused. However, there are many candidates who still answer the questions in a way that is too descriptive. Some also rely on knowledge that is only indirectly relevant to the question. More practice in interpreting and analysing questions would help the candidates write answers that are less discursive and more probing.

There were no common misinterpretations of the questions. **Questions 1** and **3** proved the most popular. There were comparatively few answers to **Questions 5** and **6**. Most candidates appeared able to write two full answers in the time available. There were no common rubric errors.

Question 1

Weak answers offered a basic account of the functionalist theory of socialisation which omitted references to the concept of value consensus. Better answers focused on the functionalist view of how social order is achieved. The concept of value consensus was explored in some detail and good responses often also included contrasts with Marxist theories of social order. Explicit assessment of the functionalist theory was a feature of the best answers. Candidates gained particular credit by highlighting the over-deterministic nature of the functionalist and Marxist accounts, which impressed the Examiners.

Question 2

Some candidates wrongly interpreted this question as an opportunity to discuss the nurture versus nature debate. Better answers focused on the debates about the relationship between sociology and the methods of the natural sciences. A typical basic response described the positivist perspective without relating the material to the issues of consciousness and free will. Better answers assessed the positivist perspective by drawing contrasts with the interpretivist position. Good responses addressed the specific wording of the question by considering whether the factors of consciousness and free will support the conclusion that a science of society is impossible. Candidates gained particular credit for questioning the nature of science and what is meant by a 'scientific approach'.

Question 3

A few candidates confused covert participant observation with the overt approach. There were also some weak answers that described a few features of participant observation without referring to the covert approach specifically. Better answers identified a range of strengths and limitations of covert participant observation. The Examiners awarded particular credit to candidates who discussed both practical and theoretical issues. The best answers also included an assessment of the usefulness of covert participant observation, drawing sound conclusions about the overall value of the approach.
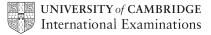
Question 4

Weak answers often comprised a few simple points about particular research methods. Better answers explored some possible links between theoretical perspective and choice of research method. Good answers also considered other factors that may influence choice of research method, including practical and ethical issues. The best responses included an assessment of which factor(s) is (are) the most important influence on choice of research method. Some candidates impressed the Examiners by using references to appropriate studies to support key points in their answers.

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Question 5

Weak answers demonstrated little knowledge of Marx's and Weber's ideas about social class. These responses were often confined to a few assertions about the nature of class and social inequality. Some answers gained credit by describing Marx's theory of social class, but failed to extend the discussion into an assessment of Marx's ideas. Better answers made good use of Weber's ideas to highlight some of the main strengths and limitations in Marx's theory of social class. Some candidates made good use of recent studies of social inequality to illustrate the strengths and limitations of Weber's writings on stratification.

Question 6

Answers meriting low marks were often confined to a few basic observations about the nature of poverty. Better responses demonstrated knowledge of Lewis' culture of poverty thesis. Good answers contrasted cultural perspectives on the causes of poverty with structural or situational theories. An explicit and thorough assessment of the culture of poverty thesis was a requirement for answers to merit the top mark band. Some candidates drew useful comparisons between poverty in different countries, often referring to the importance of the distinction between modern industrial and developing societies.

SOCIOLOGY

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│ **Paper 9699/21** │
│ **Data Response 21** │
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General Comments

There continue to be improvements in the exam technique used in answering these structured data response questions. Fewer candidates are wasting time by answering the **(a)** and **(b)** questions at greater length than necessary. A short response of no more than two or three lines is all that is required to answer an **(a)** or **(b)** question. Longer responses are required for the **(c)** and **(d)** questions, though candidates should still be wary of over-writing. A lot of the answers to the **(c)** and **(d)** questions this time were rather too discursive. Higher marks could have been achieved had the answers been more tightly focused on the question set.

There were no common misinterpretations of the questions. **Questions 1** and **2** proved the most popular. **Question 3** was answered less well than the other two questions. Most candidates were able to answer two questions fully in the time available. There were no common rubric errors.

Question 1

(a) Most candidates were able to gain full marks by noting that culture refers to the shared norms and values of a society. A few candidates confused culture with the concept of socialisation.

(b) Some candidates responded to this question by describing the agencies of socialisation and thereby failed to gain any marks. Many candidates distinguished between positive and negative sanctions and gave appropriate examples of each type.

(c) There were some weak answers that merely described the stages of socialisation without specific references to how children learn the norms and values of society. Better answers referred to the ideas of relevant theorists such as Cooley, Mead, Piaget, and Oakley.

(d) Weak answers often consisted of a few simple points about socialisation, unrelated to any particular theory. Most candidates were able to access higher marks by describing the main elements of the functionalist theory of socialisation. Better answers went further by assessing the strengths and limitations of the functionalist perspective. The assessment often revolved around drawing contrasts with the Marxist and/or interpretivist views of socialisation.

Question 2

(a) Most candidates were able to identify at least one distinguishing characteristic of qualitative data. Those who were able to identity two appropriate characteristics gained full marks.

(b) A few candidates confused structured interviews with unstructured interviews. Some answers failed to gain marks because they focused on the strengths and limitations of structured interviews in general, rather than the strengths and limitations relative to questionnaires. Good answers demonstrated a sound understanding of the differences between structured interviews and questionnaires.

(c) There were some weak answers that identified one or two features of unstructured interviews, but without drawing relevant links with the interpretivist perspective. Better answers explained what qualities interpretivists value in sociological research and how those qualities are expressed through the use of unstructured interviews.

(d) There were some weak answers that were confined to describing a few advantages of interviews in general. Better answers outlined several strengths and limitations of unstructured interviews, covering both practical and theoretical issues. The best answers included an overall assessment of the value of using unstructured interviews in sociological research.

Question 3

(a)   Most candidates were able to gain one mark through offering a definition that was partially correct. Better answers used appropriate sociological language to define the term.

(b)   Some candidates answered this question incorrectly by identifying two causes of poverty. Good answers focused on the functions served by poverty, such as contributing surplus value and helping to guarantee the status of other groups in society.

(c)   Weak answers were confined to a few simple points about the nature of poverty. Better answers focused on the relationship between the poor and the wealthy. Candidates who used appropriate concepts and theories to explore the benefits that the rich derive from the existence of the poor gained high marks.

(d)   A small number of candidates demonstrated no understanding of the culture of poverty thesis. A typical response worthy of around half marks consisted of a basic account of Lewis' ideas with no assessment offered. Good answers demonstrated a sound understanding of the culture of poverty thesis and identified some of its weaknesses and/or strengths. Candidates gained particular credit for understanding the significance of the differences between cultural and structural explanations of poverty.

UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE
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SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/22
Data Response 22

General Comments

There continue to be improvements in the exam technique used in answering these structured data response questions. Fewer candidates are wasting time by answering the **(a)** and **(b)** questions at greater length than necessary. A short response of no more than two or three lines is all that is required to answer an **(a)** or **(b)** question. Longer responses are required for the **(c)** and **(d)** questions, though candidates should still be wary of over-writing. A lot of the answers to the **(c)** and **(d)** questions this time were rather too discursive. Higher marks could have been achieved had the answers been more tightly focused on the question set.

There were no common misinterpretations of the questions. **Questions 1** and **2** proved the most popular. **Question 3** was answered less well than the other two questions. Most candidates were able to answer two questions fully in the time available. There were no common rubric errors.

Question 1

(a) Most candidates were able to gain full marks by noting that culture refers to the shared norms and values of a society. A few candidates confused culture with the concept of socialisation.

(b) Some candidates responded to this question by describing the agencies of socialisation and thereby failed to gain any marks. Many candidates distinguished between positive and negative sanctions and gave appropriate examples of each type.

(c) There were some weak answers that merely described the stages of socialisation without specific references to how children learn the norms and values of society. Better answers referred to the ideas of relevant theorists such as Cooley, Mead, Piaget, and Oakley.

(d) Weak answers often consisted of a few simple points about socialisation, unrelated to any particular theory. Most candidates were able to access higher marks by describing the main elements of the functionalist theory of socialisation. Better answers went further by assessing the strengths and limitations of the functionalist perspective. The assessment often revolved around drawing contrasts with the Marxist and/or interpretivist views of socialisation.

Question 2

(a) Most candidates were able to identify at least one distinguishing characteristic of qualitative data. Those who were able to identity two appropriate characteristics gained full marks.

(b) A few candidates confused structured interviews with unstructured interviews. Some answers failed to gain marks because they focused on the strengths and limitations of structured interviews in general, rather than the strengths and limitations relative to questionnaires. Good answers demonstrated a sound understanding of the differences between structured interviews and questionnaires.

(c) There were some weak answers that identified one or two features of unstructured interviews, but without drawing relevant links with the interpretivist perspective. Better answers explained what qualities interpretivists value in sociological research and how those qualities are expressed through the use of unstructured interviews.

(d) There were some weak answers that were confined to describing a few advantages of interviews in general. Better answers outlined several strengths and limitations of unstructured interviews, covering both practical and theoretical issues. The best answers included an overall assessment of the value of using unstructured interviews in sociological research.

Question 3

(a)   Most candidates were able to gain one mark through offering a definition that was partially correct. Better answers used appropriate sociological language to define the term.

(b)   Some candidates answered this question incorrectly by identifying two causes of poverty. Good answers focused on the functions served by poverty, such as contributing surplus value and helping to guarantee the status of other groups in society.

(c)   Weak answers were confined to a few simple points about the nature of poverty. Better answers focused on the relationship between the poor and the wealthy. Candidates who used appropriate concepts and theories to explore the benefits that the rich derive from the existence of the poor gained high marks.

(d)   A small number of candidates demonstrated no understanding of the culture of poverty thesis. A typical response worthy of around half marks consisted of a basic account of Lewis' ideas with no assessment offered. Good answers demonstrated a sound understanding of the culture of poverty thesis and identified some of its weaknesses and/or strengths. Candidates gained particular credit for understanding the significance of the differences between cultural and structural explanations of poverty.

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SOCIOLOGY

General Comments

There continue to be improvements in the exam technique used in answering these structured data response questions. Fewer candidates are wasting time by answering the **(a)** and **(b)** questions at greater length than necessary. A short response of no more than two or three lines is all that is required to answer an **(a)** or **(b)** question. Longer responses are required for the **(c)** and **(d)** questions, though candidates should still be wary of over-writing. A lot of the answers to the **(c)** and **(d)** questions this time were rather too discursive. Higher marks could have been achieved had the answers been more tightly focused on the question set.

There were no common misinterpretations of the questions. **Questions 1** and **2** proved the most popular. There were slightly fewer answers to **Question 3**. **Questions 2** and **3** were answered well by many candidates, while there were a lot of weak answers to **Question 1**. Most candidates were able to answer two questions fully in the time available. There were no common rubric errors.

Question 1

(a)   Quite a few candidates misunderstood the term 'social policy'. Some confused it with socialisation, while others thought it referred to sanctions against criminal behaviour. Good answers noted that social policy refers to the actions taken by the government to maintain and improve the welfare of its citizens.

(b)   Most candidates were able to identify two ways in which a high level of unemployment may threaten the stability of a society. However, many were unable to describe the relationships identified and so failed to gain full marks.

(c)   Weak answers offered a few points about immigration in general without relating the material to the question directly. Better answers identified a range of social tensions that may arise as a consequence of high levels of immigration. The best answers also demonstrated an understanding of the nature of social problems and the role of powerful groups in defining such problems.

(d)   A lot of the answers included material that was somewhat tangential to the question. Good answers contrasted those perspectives that favour a value committed approach to the study of society (i.e. feminists, Marxists, Gouldner, Becker, C Wright Mills) with the arguments of the positivists about the importance of a detached, objective approach to sociological research. Some candidates also made good use of the critique of traditional sociological theory advanced by post modernist writers.

Question 2

(a)   Some candidates gained one mark by defining the term 'sample' without stating what is meant by 'representative'. Good answers noted that a representative sample refers to the selection of a study group that is based on characteristics that are typical of the wider population to which the research project relates.

(b)   Most candidates were able to identify at least one type of sampling other than random sampling. Many identified two sampling methods, but some were unable to describe the features of each method.

(c)   Weak answers were confined to a few simple points about questionnaires, with no clear links to the issues raised by the question. Better answers explained why questionnaires are a good method of collecting standardised data. The best answers also identified those features of questionnaires that facilitate the use of large study groups.

(d) Some answers confused longitudinal surveys with other research methods, particularly participant observation. Responses that were confined to a basic description of the main features of longitudinal studies gained around half marks. Good answers discussed a range of strengths and limitations of longitudinal surveys, covering both practical and theoretical issues. Some candidates impressed Examiners with their knowledge of sociological studies based on longitudinal surveys.

Question 3

(a) Some candidates confused intra-generational mobility with inter-generational mobility. Good answers noted that intra-generational mobility refers to the movement up or down the social scale of an individual within his or her lifetime.

(b) There were quite a few answers that were either misconceived or else rather vague in addressing the issues raised by the question. Good answers described two appropriate problems, such as the difficulty of classifying occupations and the situation of people who are unemployed.

(c) Weaker answers described some of the factors that influence opportunities for social mobility, without relating the material to ethnicity. Better responses focused directly on the links between ethnicity and social mobility. Good answers discussed a range of factors linked to ethnicity that may impact on opportunities for social mobility.

(d) There were a few poor answers that were confined to some simple observations about the nature of social class. Better answers demonstrated knowledge of the concept of meritocracy and its links to functionalist theory. Good answers assessed the idea that modern industrial societies are meritocratic, often drawing on contributions to the debate from the feminist and Marxist perspectives. Well informed use of post-modernist ideas often featured in the best answers. Some candidates also made good use of evidence from recent studies of social inequality.

SOCIOLOGY

> **Paper 9699/31**
> **Essay 31**

General comments

The standard of answers to the paper this session was very pleasing and it was encouraging to see that the majority of candidates were prepared to answer three questions on this paper. There were a very small number of rubric errors and very few scripts that showed signs of a rushed answer to the third question. However, many candidates gave very long introductions to their answers to questions (a) (ii) before giving their two examples and these introductions added nothing to their answer. These candidates would have made better use of time by including more detail and a conclusion to their (b) answers. In terms of length, candidates are free to write as much as they want but it was noticed that the candidates from some Centres wrote very long answers, some as long as 14 sides of A4.Many of these were very knowledgeable, sociologically, but were unfocused on the question that was set. They thus scored less than a well planned, focused answer that was shorter.

What was apparent was that the knowledge that many candidates were able to access in their answers was used with a greater level of understanding than in previous years. Amongst the better candidates there was a marked improvement in the relevance of the material offered as evidence to support arguments, as opposed to giving answers that offered a 'catch all' approach. More candidates are using analysis in their answers and considering the issues raised in the questions, rather than using the title as a topic heading to which they can list all they know. Skills needing further development for those candidates hoping to achieve marks at the highest level are those of evaluation and consideration of conceptual and methodological issues.

Many candidates answered (b) parts to questions before answering the (a) section. Candidates are free to do this if they so wish, but if time at the end of the examination is short they would be advised to remember that it is always easier to get the first marks from any question. Candidates who answer all questions are therefore in a better position to score well.

Examiners noticed that the level of performance from some Centres was excellent for all their candidates, with admirable levels of sociological insight. Strong candidates demonstrated obvious enthusiasm for the subject in their writing and all three questions in their scripts were strong.

There was some evidence of candidates misinterpreting questions and in such cases their answers failed to be very successful. Reading the question carefully to make sure that what is required is understood continues to be good examination technique.

When questions name a topic area, such as the family, then candidates should make sure they include that in their answer. If no area is mentioned, such as in **Question 3**, then the answer should include society in general. The inclusion of education was not necessary in order to do well but candidates may choose to do so if they wish as long as they also include society.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

As usual this was the most popular section on the examination paper with nearly all candidates selecting a question from it.

Question 1

The most answered question on the examination paper and candidates' answers accessed the full range of the mark scheme.

(a) (i) Most candidates had a good understanding, although many did not draw attention to the equal but different aspect of symmetry and some defined egalitarian relationships or nuclear families. Other answers were very long with, over lengthy and largely unnecessary references to Murdock's definition of the family. A few candidates left their answer blank.

(ii) Many candidates defined the family before going on the give examples of households, which was not necessary in order to gain full marks. What the question required candidates to name were two examples of households only, but it was better when the examples were clearly different such as single people and friends sharing. Many candidates gave friends and the candidates and there is overlap here. This is best to be avoided. Others others gave examples such as matriarchal families and unmarried couples with children and these were clearly families and not households. A few candidates only gave one example.

(b) There were some excellent answers to this question that showed a very sophisticated knowledge and understanding and that took examples from a range of theoretical standpoints and societies. Some of these answers had a tendency to become somewhat list like and would have benefited from the introduction of a debate. Other answers somewhat misinterpreted the question as one about the 'ideal' status of the nuclear family as the 'best' type of family, rather than its universal nature or otherwise. These tended to discuss the damaging consequences of not having nuclear families, the relevance of the theory of 'fit' or the loss of function. A few candidates saw the reconstituted family as a different type, many of whom had just given long descriptions of Murdock's definition of the family. Many were almost totally reliant on Murdock although a few had an excellent range of more contemporary data such as Sheeran.

Question 2

Although this question was not as popular as **Question 1**, most of the candidates who answered it had a clear understanding of what was required, particularly in the essay.

(a) (i) Most answers showed clear knowledge and understanding, although a small number referred to status in society rather than in marriage specifically. Some candidates thought it meant 'being married'.

(ii) Most answers were relevant and accurate, with such examples as polygamy and monogamy. Some candidates named polygony and then described polyandry. A very small number of candidates described different types of families and not marriage at all. Others described types of relationships such as strong, weak, empty shell or types of ceremonies.

(b) Most candidates offered sound answers that investigated a range of issues around marriage from the perspective of a range of theorists. A few candidates ignored the modern industrial societies in the question and some appeared to substitute family for marriage. These answers failed to gain many marks. Some candidates produced excellent responses based on the work of such key thinkers as Allan and Crowe and Hart (in terms of recent trends) and Chester (in terms of the continuing importance of the status of marriage). Some candidates offered weak examples because they stressed the religious importance of marriage and lost focus on the question that was set.

Section B

This section was also very popular with most candidates and it was noted that there were many excellent answers to the questions on education.

Question 3

This was the most popular question in Section B.

(a) (i) A well understood concept but a few candidates answered in relation to education, which was not in the question, rather than society which was. The most accurate answers referred to both upward and downward mobility and the way in which the individual's status changes because of that movement.

(ii) There were some very good examples used to answer this question, many of which showed how it could have either a positive or negative effect on mobility. Some candidates talked about marriage as a way of gaining mobility and unless this could be linked to education it was clearly misdirected. Some candidates only gave one example, usually that good educational qualifications lead to increased status.

(b) Although there were many excellent answers to this question, Examiners noted that many candidates are over reliant on the work of psychologists. Much of their work does appear in the text books and it can be used with credit, but their work should not take up the bulk of a sociological answer at the expense of sociological views such as that of the functionalists and Marxists. Some answers focused on the issues of class, gender and ethnicity without any reference to intelligence. However, fuller responses considered a range of other factors in addition to intelligence accounting for educational success or failure, and supported their answer with appropriate sociological evidence and a balanced argument and conclusion.

Question 4

Although not as popular as **Question 3**, a significant number of candidates answered this question. Answers to this question, were generally, more sophisticated and demonstrated clear knowledge and understanding.

(a) (i) Most candidates gave good definitions showing that there are groups of candidates who lack something in relation to other candidates. Deprivation in this sense is not being of low ability which is what some candidates seemed to think. A few candidates wrote very long answers on material and cultural deprivation and then struggled with what to put in their next answer as they sought to bring up different issues.

(ii) Many candidates gave very clear and accurate examples of cultural and material deprivation. If both examples were either material or cultural then they had to be clearly different and well explained, such as language codes and cultural capital, in order to gain full marks. Many candidates gave two examples of material deprivation, such as lack of books and computers, where the explanation was largely the same. Some candidates seemed to think that discrimination is a form of deprivation. Bourdieu and cultural capital figured highly in a large number of answers.

(b) The answers to this question were excellent, using many different theories and making reference to different empirical data. Some answers limited themselves by only considering issues of gender, or conversely dismissing gender as an influence and concentrating on another factor, such as class, instead. Some candidates realised that gender doesn't just refer to girls. Factors such as traditional attitudes, career expectations, socialisation and educational experiences were included, as well as a range of out of School factors. It was noted that in a few responses from weaker candidates there was a tendency to refer to personal experience. Although it is to be encouraged that candidates should try to apply their sociological knowledge to the contemporary world, long descriptions based on personal experience rarely enable candidates to do well.

Section C

This section is not as popular with candidates as in the past but was still answered by a significant number, the majority of whom answered well, with few candidates using their paper as an opportunity to moralise on religious matters. However, a small number still do this and this should be discouraged.

Question 5

Of the two questions on religion this one was the one that the majority of candidates opted to answer.

(a) (i)   This concept was well understood by many candidates and many of them related their answers well to the work of Durkheim. Others struggled to define the term clearly.

(ii)   Most candidates gave two positive examples of the way in which religion promotes stable societies and either prevents or slows down change. There were some extremely good answers that demonstrated the ways in which religion may cause disturbance in society and disrupt stability. Many used Marxist views and contrasted them to functionalist ones and some candidates used the work of Malinowski with credit.

(b)   Candidates had a firm grasp of the factors that link religion and social change. Most candidates relied on the classical theorists and these tended to see religion as a promoter of social stability rather than change. However, there were a number that were able to use more contemporary data and there were some interesting debates about the nature of social change in contemporary societies and whether it is progressive (Civil rights, Solidarity) or reactionary (Iran, Greece under the colonels). Some had difficulty in explaining social change in terms of religion or religious influences. When the question was well answered a meaningful debate was developed. A few gave very lengthy descriptions of the ways in which religion can be defined, which had little relevance to the set question, and a number relied solely on the work of Weber.

Question 6

This question was answered by relatively few candidates.

(a) (i)   Most candidates were able to define the term, but many gave confusing answers and defined other terms connected with religion (such as disenchantment) or interpreted it as secularisation or individuals disengaging from religion.

(ii)   Those who had successfully defined the term were mostly able to give two examples, such as the breaking of the link between religion and education. Those who had not understood the term were unable to give suitable examples, and there was a lot of repetition of material used in the previous answer.

(b)   Many candidates interpreted this question as one of the issues relating to secularisation. This was true to a point, but it was necessary to deal with the issue of worship within the context of secularisation, and many candidates failed to mention it at all. Some candidates seemed to assume that if the individual was not worshipping in public then they must be worshipping in private; others failed to make mention of worship at all in their answers. More sophisticated answers recognised the difficulties of definition and of gaining accurate data on the topic, and many of these used Heelas with credit.

Section D

Questions on crime and deviance remain popular with candidates, most of whom have good knowledge and understanding of this topic.

Question 7

Of the two questions within this section, this was the one that most candidates selected to answer.

(a) (i)   This term was defined well by most candidates, with the clearest answers making reference to norms and values. A few candidates seemed to struggle in understanding the difference between crime and deviance.

(ii)   Candidates who named the societies or culture from which their examples came generally did better than those that did not. If the societies were not named it had to be clear that they were different and in many cases the answers given were vague in this respect. Examples that were deviant were better than ones that were criminal.

(b)   Most candidates were clear in their knowledge and understanding and there were many evaluative answers that began with interactionist studies, police discretion and Cicourel, going on to develop their arguments through a range of other theories and empirical data. Some candidates spent far too long on definitions of deviance and descriptions of deviant acts. Others were over reliant of non-sociological studies such as Lombroso. Again some candidates showed confusion between crime and deviance and many answers relied on commonsensical points. The highest scoring candidates kept to a consideration of deviance.

Question 8

This question was answered by relatively few candidates. Many of the answers to this question were weak.

(a) (i)   Many of the definitions of the dark figure were excellent, but some were not, even including reference to it as a negative superman. Others stated that the dark figure was not seeing who committed the crime.

(ii)   Examples of unreliability of the crime statistics were very good, including reference to unreported and unrecorded crime as well as the difficulties involved with secondary data. It was noted that even when candidates did not give a good definition of the term, some still were able to gain high marks on this section.

(b)   Although there were some very sophisticated answers, it was clear that a number of candidates struggled with this question, as they dismissed locality as a factor and rather went on to look at other possible explanations for criminal behaviour. Many did write about working class crime and its links to subculture, but this then had to be linked to locality to make it relevant to the question. Although other explanations did need to be considered it is always necessary to consider the issue that is raised in the question.

Section E

This remains the section answered by the smallest number of candidates and it still seems, by the answers offered, that some candidates are answering questions about which they have little or no sociological knowledge on the topic.

Question 9

There were very few answers to this question.

(a) (i)   Most candidates struggled to define ageism.

(ii)   Few suitable examples were given. Some candidates gave ageist examples, such as government schemes to place young people in work rather than government actions to prevent ageism.

(b)   Few candidates were able to use appropriate theory and evidence to answer this question. There was some use made of equal pay legislation and the glass ceiling but this was limited.

Question 10

Few candidates answered this question but it was slightly more popular than **Question 9**.

(a) (i)   Few candidates had a clear understanding of this term. One or two had clearly been well taught and were able to give accurate answers.

(ii)   Answers to this question were generally weak, most candidates only able to identify one reason for dissatisfaction and some candidates explaining why employers are dissatisfied with work**.**

(b)   Some candidates made very good use of the different technologies and their influence on work satisfaction and although a few were well referenced many answers lacked this. Many made unsupported generalisations but there were a few who explained alienation, post-fordism, deskilling and the changing nature of work.

Section F

Questions on the mass media continue to grow in popularity and an increasing number of candidates are giving answers that show a sophisticated understanding of the topic. The choice between the questions was fairly evenly spread.

Question 11

This question tended to be more successfully answered in part **(a)** than in part **(b)**.

(a) (i) The definitions of this term were nearly all excellent showing good understanding, and a number of candidates referred to Althusser in their answer. Some answers were rather vague and struggled to apply the term to the media. It was noted that some answers to this question frequently reached a side of A4, whereas other candidates left it blank.

(ii) The examples given to this question were accurate and well explained by those candidates who understood the term. Others named an ISA but were unable to develop the description.

(b) There were many well thought out and evaluative answers to this question and candidates showed that they had a good grasp of the way in which the audience can be influenced. Reference was frequently made to Philo and Whale. However, most candidates adapted other material on the mass media (rather than work linked to the political process) in order to answer the question, and there was little reference to research on the political process and the media. Many candidates used the experience of their own country in their answers, but few answers were evaluative.

Question 12

Although most of the candidates who answered this question have a good knowledge of the topic there were problems of interpretation of the essay question, which limited some responses.

(a) (i) Most definitions were accurate and knowledgeable. Some, however, confused it with deviancy amplification and moral panic.

(ii) Even those candidates who had misunderstood the term were able to give two effects, although a few did give desensitisation as one of their examples. Many were unable to give a convincing description of a correctly identified example. Again Examiners noticed that some candidates gave mini-essay style answers to this question.

(b) Most candidates had an excellent knowledge of the theories and research into violence and the media. However, a number of candidates had failed to read the question accurately: they did not address the value of the research into violence but rather answered a question about violence in the media causing the audience to be violent. Again a number of answers tended to be non-sociological and frequently moralising.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/32
Essay 32

General comments

The standard of answers to the paper this session was very pleasing and it was encouraging to see that the majority of candidates were prepared to answer three questions on this paper. There were a very small number of rubric errors and very few scripts that showed signs of a rushed answer to the third question. However, many candidates gave very long introductions to their answers to **Questions (a) (ii)** before giving their two examples and these introductions added nothing to their answer. These candidates would have made better use of time by including more detail and a conclusion to their **(b)** answers. In terms of length, candidates are free to write as much as they want but it was noticed that the candidates from some Centres wrote very long answers, some as long as 14 sides of A4. Many of these were very knowledgeable, sociologically, but were unfocused on the question that was set. They thus scored less than a well planned, focused answer that was shorter.

What was apparent was that the knowledge that many candidates were able to access in their answers was used with a greater level of understanding than in previous years. Amongst the better candidates there was a marked improvement in the relevance of the material offered as evidence to support arguments, as opposed to giving answers that offered a 'catch all' approach. More candidates are using analysis in their answers and considering the issues raised in the questions, rather than using the title as a topic heading about which they can list all that they know. Skills needing further development for those candidates hoping to achieve marks at the highest level are those of evaluation and consideration of conceptual and methodological issues.

Many candidates answered the **(b)** parts to questions before answering the **(a)** parts. Candidates are free to do this if they so wish, but if time at the end of the examination is short they would be advised to remember that it is always easier to get the first marks from any question. Candidates who answer all questions are therefore in a better position to score well.

Examiners noticed that the level of performance from some Centres was excellent for all their candidates, with admirable levels of sociological insight. Strong candidates demonstrated obvious enthusiasm for the subject in their writing and all three questions in their scripts were strong.

There was some evidence of candidates misinterpreting questions and in such cases their answers failed to be very successful. Reading the question carefully to make sure that what is required is understood continues to be good examination technique.

When questions name a topic area, such as the family, then candidates should make sure they include that in their answer. If no area is mentioned, such as in **Question 3**, then the answer should include society in general. The inclusion of education is not necessary in order to do well, but candidates may choose to do so if they wish as long as they also include society.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

As usual this was the most popular section on the examination paper, with nearly all candidates selecting a question from it.

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Question 1

This was the most answered question on the examination paper and candidates' answers accessed the full range of the mark scheme.

(a)(i) Most candidates had a good understanding, although many did not draw attention to the equal but different aspect of symmetry and some defined egalitarian relationships or nuclear families. Other answers were very long, with over lengthy and largely unnecessary references to Murdock's definition of the family. A few candidates left their answer blank.

(ii) Many candidates defined the family before going on to give examples of households; this definition was not necessary in order to gain full marks. The question required candidates to name two examples of households only, and it was better when the examples were clearly different, such as 'single people' and 'friends sharing'. Many candidates gave 'friends' and 'the candidates' and there is overlap here. This is best to be avoided. Others gave examples such as 'matriarchal families' and 'unmarried couples with children' and these were clearly families and not households. A few candidates only gave one example.

(b) There were some excellent answers to this question that showed a very sophisticated knowledge and understanding and that took examples from a range of theoretical standpoints and societies. Some of these answers had a tendency to become somewhat list-like and would have benefited from the introduction of a debate. Other answers somewhat misinterpreted the question as being about the 'ideal' status of the nuclear family as the 'best' type of family, rather than its universal nature or otherwise. These tended to discuss the damaging consequences of not having nuclear families, the relevance of the theory of 'fit' or the loss of function. A few candidates, many of whom had just given long descriptions of Murdock's definition of the family, saw the reconstituted family as a different type. Many were almost totally reliant on Murdock, although a few had an excellent range of more contemporary data such as Sheeran.

Question 2

Although this question was not as popular as **Question 1**, most of the candidates who answered it had a clear understanding of what was required, particularly in the essay.

(a)(i) Most answers showed clear knowledge and understanding, although a small number referred to status in society rather than in marriage specifically. Some candidates thought it meant 'being married'.

(ii) Most answers were relevant and accurate, with such examples as polygamy and monogamy. Some candidates named polygony and then described polyandry. A very small number of candidates described different types of families and not marriage at all. Others described types of relationships such as strong, weak, empty shell or types of ceremonies.

(b) Most candidates offered sound answers that investigated a range of issues relating to marriage from the perspective of a range of theorists. A few candidates ignored the modern industrial societies in the question and some appeared to substitute family for marriage. These answers failed to gain many marks. Some candidates produced excellent responses based on the work of such key thinkers as Allan and Crowe and Hart (in terms of recent trends) and Chester (in terms of the continuing importance of the status of marriage). Some candidates offered weak examples because they stressed the religious importance of marriage and lost focus on the question that was set.

Section B

This section was also very popular with most candidates and it was noted that there were many excellent answers to the questions on education.

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Question 3

This was the most popular question in *Section B*.

(a) (i)   This was a well-understood concept but a few candidates answered in relation to education, which was not in the question, rather than society in general. The most accurate answers referred to both upward and downward mobility and the way in which the individual's status changes because of that movement.

(ii)   There were some very good examples used to answer this question, many of which showed how it could have either a positive or negative effect on mobility. Some candidates talked about marriage as a way of gaining mobility, but unless this could be linked to education it was clearly misdirected. Some candidates only gave one example, usually that good educational qualifications lead to increased status.

(b)   Although there were many excellent answers to this question, Examiners noted that many candidates are over reliant on the work of psychologists. Much of their work does appear in the text books and it can be used with credit, but their work should not take up the bulk of a sociological answer at the expense of sociological views such as those of the functionalists and Marxists. Some answers focused on the issues of class, gender and ethnicity without any reference to intelligence. Fuller responses considered a range of other factors in addition to intelligence accounting for educational success or failure, and supported this with appropriate sociological evidence and a balanced argument and conclusion.

Question 4

Although not as popular as **Question 3**, a significant number of candidates answered this question. Answers to this question were generally more sophisticated and demonstrated clear knowledge and understanding.

(a) (i)   Most candidates gave good definitions showing that there are groups of candidates who lack something in relation to other candidates. Deprivation in this sense is not being of low ability, which is what some candidates seemed to think. A few candidates wrote very long answers on material and cultural deprivation and then struggled with what to put in their next answer as they sought to bring up different issues.

(ii)   Many candidates gave very clear and accurate examples of cultural and material deprivation. If both examples were either material or cultural then they had to be clearly different and well explained, such as language codes and cultural capital, in order to gain full marks. Many candidates gave two examples of material deprivation, such as lack of books and computers, where the explanation was largely the same. Some candidates seemed to think that discrimination is a form of deprivation. Bourdieu and cultural capital figured highly in a large number of answers.

(b)   The answers to this question were excellent, using many different theories and making reference to different empirical data. Some answers limited themselves by only considering issues of gender, or conversely dismissing gender as an influence and concentrating on another factor, such as class, instead. Some candidates realised that gender does not just refer to girls. Factors such as traditional attitudes, career expectations, socialisation and educational experiences were included, as well as a range of out of school factors. It was noted that in a few responses from weaker candidates there was a tendency to refer to personal experience. Although candidates are encouraged to try to apply their sociological knowledge to the contemporary world, long descriptions based on personal experience rarely enable candidates to do well.

Section C

This section was not as popular with candidates as in the past but was still answered by a significant number, the majority of whom answered well, with few candidates using their paper as an opportunity to moralise on religious matters. However, a small number still do this and this should be discouraged.

Question 5

Of the two questions on religion **Question 5** was the one that the majority of candidates opted to answer.

(a)(i)   This concept was well understood by many candidates and many of them related their answers well to the work of Durkheim. Others struggled to define the term clearly.

(ii)   Most candidates gave two positive examples of the way in which religion promotes stable societies and either prevents or slows down change. There were some extremely good answers that demonstrated the ways in which religion may cause disturbance in society and disrupt stability. Many used Marxist views and contrasted them to functionalist ones and some candidates used the work of Malinowski with credit.

(b)   Candidates had a firm grasp of the factors that link religion and social change. Most candidates relied on the classical theorists and these tended to see religion as a promoter of social stability rather than change. However, there were a number that were able to use more contemporary data and there were some interesting debates about the nature of social change in contemporary societies and whether it is progressive (Civil rights, Solidarity) or reactionary (Iran, Greece under the colonels). Some had difficulty in explaining social change in terms of religion or religious influences. When the question was well answered a meaningful debate was developed. A few candidates gave very lengthy descriptions of the ways in which religion can be defined, which had little relevance to the question, and a number relied solely on the work of Weber.

Question 6

This question was answered by relatively few candidates.

(a)(i)   Most candidates were able to define the term, but many gave confusing answers and defined other terms connected with religion (such as disenchantment) or interpreted it as secularisation or individuals disengaging from religion.

(ii)   Those who had successfully defined the term were mostly able to give two examples, such as the breaking of the link between religion and education. Those who had not understood the term were unable to give suitable examples, and there was a lot of repetition of material used in the previous answer.

(b)   Many candidates interpreted this question as one of the issues relating to secularisation. This was true to a point, but it was necessary to deal with the issue of worship within the context of secularisation, and many candidates failed to mention it at all. Some candidates seemed to assume that if the individual was not worshipping in public then they must be worshipping in private; others failed to make mention of worship at all in their answers. More sophisticated answers recognised the difficulties of definition and of gaining accurate data on the topic, and many of these used Heelas with credit.

Section D

Questions on crime and deviance remain popular with candidates, most of whom have good knowledge and understanding of this topic.

Question 7

Of the two questions within this section, this was the one that most candidates selected to answer.

(a)(i)   This term was defined well by most candidates, with the clearest answers making reference to norms and values. A few candidates seemed to struggle in understanding the difference between crime and deviance.

(ii)   Candidates who named the societies or culture from which their examples came generally did better than those that did not. If the societies were not named it had to be clear that they were different and in many cases the answers given were vague in this respect. Examples that were deviant were better than ones that were criminal.

(b) Most candidates were clear in their knowledge and understanding and there were many evaluative answers that began with interactionist studies, police discretion and Cicourel, going on to develop their arguments through a range of other theories and empirical data. Some candidates spent far too long on definitions of deviance and descriptions of deviant acts. Others were over reliant of non-sociological studies such as Lombroso. Again some candidates showed confusion between crime and deviance and many answers relied on commonsensical points. The highest scoring candidates kept to a consideration of deviance.

Question 8

This question was answered by relatively few candidates. Many of the answers to this question were weak.

(a) (i) Many of the definitions of the dark figure were excellent, but some were not, even including reference to it as a negative superman. Others stated that the dark figure was not seeing who committed the crime.

   (ii) Examples of unreliability of the crime statistics were very good, including reference to unreported and unrecorded crime as well as the difficulties involved with secondary data. It was noted that even when candidates did not give a good definition of the term, some still were able to gain high marks on this section.

(b) Although there were some very sophisticated answers, it was clear that a number of candidates struggled with this question, as they dismissed locality as a factor and rather went on to look at other possible explanations for criminal behaviour. Many did write about working class crime and its links to sub-culture, but this then had to be linked to locality to make it relevant to the question. Although other explanations did need to be considered it is always necessary to consider the issue that is raised in the question.

Section E

This remains the section answered by the smallest number of candidates and it still seems, from the answers offered, that some candidates are answering questions on topics about which they have little or no sociological knowledge.

Question 9

There were very few answers to this question.

(a) (i) Most candidates struggled to define ageism.

   (ii) Few suitable examples were given. Some candidates gave ageist examples, such as government schemes to place young people in work rather than government actions to prevent ageism.

(b) Few candidates were able to use appropriate theory and evidence to answer this question. There was some use made of equal pay legislation and the glass ceiling but this was limited.

Question 10

Few candidates answered this question but it was slightly more popular than **Question 9**.

(a) (i) Few candidates had a clear understanding of this term. One or two had clearly been well taught and were able to give accurate answers.

   (ii) Answers to this question were generally weak, with most candidates only able to identify one reason for dissatisfaction and some candidates explaining why employers are dissatisfied with work**.**

(b) Some candidates made very good use of the different technologies and their influence on work satisfaction and although a few were well referenced many answers lacked this. Many made unsupported generalisations but there were a few who explained alienation, post-fordism, deskilling and the changing nature of work.

Section F

Questions on the mass media continue to grow in popularity and an increasing number of candidates are giving answers that show a sophisticated understanding of the topic. The choice between the questions was fairly evenly spread.

Question 11

This question tended to be more successfully answered in part **(a)** than in part **(b)**.

(a) (i)   The definitions of this term were nearly all excellent showing good understanding, and a number of candidates referred to Althusser in their answer. Some answers were rather vague and struggled to apply the term to the media. It was noted that some answers to this question frequently reached a side of A4, whereas other candidates left it blank.

(ii)   The examples given to this question were accurate and well explained by those candidates who understood the term. Others named an ISA but were unable to develop the description.

(b)   There were many well thought out and evaluative answers to this question and candidates showed that they had a good grasp of the way in which the audience can be influenced. Reference was frequently made to Philo and Whale. However, most candidates adapted other material on the mass media (rather than work linked to the political process) in order to answer the question, and there was little reference to research on the political process and the media. Many candidates used the experience of their own country in their answers, but few answers were evaluative.

Question 12

Although most of the candidates who answered this question have a good knowledge of the topic there were problems of interpretation of the essay question, which limited some responses.

(a) (i)   Most definitions were accurate and knowledgeable. Some, however, confused it with deviancy amplification and moral panic.

(ii)   Even those candidates who had misunderstood the term were able to give two effects, although a few did give desensitisation as one of their examples. Many were unable to give a convincing description of a correctly identified example. Again Examiners noticed that some candidates gave mini-essay style answers to this question.

(b)   Most candidates had an excellent knowledge of the theories of and research into violence and the media. However, a number of candidates had failed to read the question accurately: they did not address the value of the research into violence but rather answered a question about violence in the media causing the audience to be violent. Again a number of answers tended to be non-sociological and frequently moralising.

SOCIOLOGY

| Paper 9699/33 |
| Essay 33 |

General comments

The standard of the answers to the paper this session was very pleasing. There were a very small number of rubric errors and very few scripts that showed signs of a rushed final answer. It is pleasing to see that most candidates were well prepared to answer three questions on this paper. However, there were few scripts submitted in which candidates had made no substantial effort to answer three questions (and in one of two cases only two questions). One difficulty that arose was that in the case of a very small number of candidates they did not number their answers and ran all their work into one long piece, which made it difficult for Examiners to know which part of the answer to credit for which question.

In reply to the short questions, candidates need to pay special attention to see if the definition required is general or related specifically to the topic being studied, such as the family. If it is not related, e.g. in the question requiring a definition about social control, then the answer should be related to society and then religion, but this latter point would not be a necessity to reach full marks. If the definition required is specific, e.g. the question relating to catharsis, then it should be related to the topic named, in this case the mass media. For the examples that are required in the first part of each question, it is better for candidates to offer ones that are clearly different and not ones for which the descriptions are very similar. Candidates need to read questions carefully, as definitions do not require examples but the second part of the question does. Candidates should not expect to be writing the same information twice.

Candidates used a range of theories with skill and accuracy and there were many scripts that included the appropriate use of concepts. Some responses to essays were detailed and evaluative, a trend that it is very pleasing to see. Some of the essay answers tended to be rather list-like and candidates need to develop some notion of a debate in order to access the higher mark bands.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Questions on the family remain popular and most candidates attempted a question from this section. From these Question 1 was the most frequently answered. The standard of answers to this question reflected the full range of the mark scheme.

Question 1

This was the most popular question on the examination paper and it was clear that the vast majority of candidates had a very clear understanding of the topic of the family and the changes that it may/may not be undergoing.

(a)(i)   There were many very accurate definitions of the family as kinship based on blood, marriage and adoption that described the social group very well. Some candidates went into a detailed explanation of Murdock's definition of a family or overly long descriptions of different types of families.

(ii)   Candidates who offered examples that were clearly different (such as support from a family network and kinship) were more successful with this question than those that gave descriptions of different varieties of extended families. It was noted that some candidates struggled to understand what was required to demonstrate a feature of the extended family as having fewer families is not a feature. Some candidates used studies such as that of Young and Willmott successfully to demonstrate features.

(b) This question asked specifically about modern industrial societies and in order to do well candidates needed to concentrate on these societies. Although most candidates did make some reference to them there were many that used their time inappropriately with long descriptions of families such as the Nayer. A few candidates interpreted the question as one about changing patterns of marriage and much of what they wrote did not answer the question. This also applied to answers that were directed to dominant family types and importance of the family. Some answers gave the impression that candidates were insecure in their understanding of the meaning of loss of function.

However, many candidates were clear in their understanding and they debated the loss or changing functions of the family well and supported their answers with evidence form a variety of theorists.

Question 2

Although not as popular as the other question in this section it was still answered by a significant number of candidates. A number of them did not read the question accurately in relation to (a) and failed to get as many marks as they could have.

(a) (i) This question asked candidates to define status but it did not say in relation to the family. It could be appropriate to mention the family but a very good answer would have defined it in relation to society (which is what the best answers did) and then gone on to talk about social position in the family. Full marks could be given without mentioning the family but they could not be gained without mentioning society.

(ii) This question did ask about the family and those candidates who realised this did well, giving examples that related to status changed by marriage, becoming a breadwinner or another example of changing status. A number of candidates gave examples of social position changing in society through education which was not what the question was asking.

(b) This question was well understood and well answered by the vast majority of candidates. Some gave a narrow interpretation and confined their answer to a consideration of the relationship between husband and wife, but a good number opened up the debate to consider other family members as well. There was excellent use made of feminist theories as well as debates about the meaning and the extent of equality.

Section B

This section of the paper was answered by a significant number of candidates.

Question 3

Question 3 was answered by more candidates than **Question 4**. There were a range of answers to the question that accessed the entire mark range.

(a) (i) The best answers to this question gave an accurate definition of the sub groups as those that deviate from mainstream culture and which develop in schools. Some of these answers, though accurate, were very long and candidates would have been better to give a more focused answer and use the time for another part of the paper. Many answers described sub-culture as always being counter-culture and this is not the case.

(ii) There were many excellent examples of candidate cultures that were given to this question. Good use was made of the work of both Hargreaves and Willis. Other candidates took their examples from deviance and these are not examples of candidate sub-cultures. It was noted by Examiners that in many cases candidates repeated in this part of the question what they had already written in their definition.

(b) This was a well understood question by most candidates. There were many answers that looked at a range of material from functionalist, Marxist, interactionist and feminist perspectives as well as a range of factors including class, gender and ethnicity. At the top end of the range there was also good use made of a range of concepts including the myth of meritocracy, marketisation and parentocracy.

Question 4

This question was answered by fewer candidates than **Question 3**, but was still a popular choice. As with Question 3 there was a tendency for candidates to give examples in the definition and then repeat them.

(a) (i) Most candidates understood the term and explained it well, with the best ones referencing gender in their answer.

(ii) There were many good examples given of the way subject choices and expectations can influence educational achievements. Most of these concentrated on the way in which boys benefit but some candidates used recent information that shows how girls are changing stereotypical views.

(b) There were some excellent answers to this question that not only debated the feminist views as opposed to the functionalist ones about the way in which girls may or may not be disadvantaged in education but also a range of other factors that may have more or less influence on what happens in schools. Candidates did, however, have a tendency to see the factors of class, gender and ethnicity as separate and few commented on the cumulative impact of them all.

Section C

The questions in this section are not answered by as many candidates as in the past, since the topic mass media has become more popular. However, this section was still answered by a significant number of candidates, with both questions being of equal popularity.

Question 5

The majority of candidates who answered this question had a good understanding of its requirements and there were many good answers.

(a) (i) The concept of social control was well understood; there was no need to link this to religion as this was not raised in the question. Most responses answered in the way required.

(ii) There were many good examples of answers given to this question using descriptions such as patriarchal control and socialisation.

(b) The essays given in answer to this question showed that candidates had a sound understanding of what the question required, but many candidates limited themselves to the functionalist/Marxist debate and brought in few other references.

Question 6

There were many good answers to this question but a few candidates seemed to be answering a different question to the one that had been set.

(a) (i) Most definitions were accurate; however, there were a few who defined a church rather than a denomination**.**

(ii) Some candidates who had accurately defined a denomination then gave an inaccurate example such as Islam. Others who had defined the organisation inaccurately then gave accurate examples such as Methodism.

(b) Many candidates wanted to answer a question on secularisation and although much of the secularisation debate was appropriate to this question it had to be answered within the context of the power of religious organisations. Many candidates just went into the secularisation debate with no reference to power and organisations.

Section D

The section on crime and deviance remains popular with candidates. Both questions in this section were answered by a substantial number of candidates.

Question 7

This question was well answered by most candidates who selected it.

(a) (i) There were many excellent answers to this question where candidates defined a stereotype as a generalised representation, usually misleading and insulting, that assigns to individuals characteristics based on assumptions of who they are. Some candidates confused this term with labelling and the processes associated with it.

(ii) The question asked for stereotypes of young people and many candidates gave examples that could apply to any age group. The best examples named specific groups such as mods and rockers.

(b) Generally this question was well answered and candidates showed good understanding of the issues of criminality, which were well supported by empirical data. Some candidates have a tendency to be over reliant on the work of psychologists rather than using sociological data. In questions on this topic it is a concern that some (few) candidates do not seem to be clear that all criminal behaviour is illegal. As with a previous question factors of class, gender and ethnicity were seen as separate and their cumulative nature was overlooked. At the top end of the mark range there were excellent essays that included a wide range of factors and evidence.

Question 8

This question was well answered by the majority of candidates who selected it.

(a) (i) There were many excellent answers relating the concept to normlessness, some linked to Durkheim or Merton. A few answers linked the concept to poor socialisation.

(ii) There were many good examples of responses to anomie, many of which used anomic suicide or one of Merton's examples.

(b) The vast majority of candidates gave excellent descriptions of functionalist views of the causes of crime and deviance, although few made reference to the functionalist view of the normality of crime. Most answers juxtaposed one theory against others. The best of answers were organised as a debate as opposed to a list which was what many candidates offered. Very few answers highlighted any limitations of the functionalist view other than showing that there were other views; this is a possible area for improvement.

Section E

Very few answers were submitted for this section of the paper, some were good but others were purely commonsensical and left Examiners with the impression that candidates had not studied this topic.

Question 9

Few answers were given to this question and the standard ranged from excellent to the lower end of the mark range.

(a) (i) Some candidates confused 'assembly line' with 'automation' in this question.

(ii) Those candidates who defined automation accurately were able to give two appropriate examples; those that did not struggled.

(b) There was some excellent use of Taylorism in a few of the answers to this question. Other answers were very weak.

Question 10

Few answers were submitted for this question.

Section F

This section on the mass media continues to have an increased popularity with candidates and the work from some Centres showed that they had been prepared thoroughly and there were a number of outstanding answers.

Question 11

This question was the most popular of the two mass media questions and a great majority of the candidates who chose it answered well.

(a) (i) It was a pleasure to read so many excellent examples of definitions of this term. There were very few answers that had misunderstood its meaning.

(ii) As with the definition most answers to this question showed a good understanding. Good use was made of agenda setting, the control exercised by owners and the profits to be made from advertising as well as other relevant points.

(b) Answers to this essay spanned the mark range but a substantial number of these were excellent. There was good use of theory both from the classical point of view and from that of feminists and post modernists. Good use of concepts was also present with reference made to the logic of capitalism as well as hyperreality. It is worth noting that use may be made of The Simpsons to make a point about the modern media, but that references of this sort should be kept very short and not stretch to a side, as was sometimes the case.

Question 12

Few candidates opted to answer this question.

(a) (i) There were some accurate definitions of catharsis but some candidates, by their answer, showed that they did not understand the meaning of the term.

(ii) A good range of examples were offered for this question: these included issues to do with presentation and gate keeping as well as manipulation. Some examples were overlong in their explanation.

(b) Those candidates who selected this question had a good understanding of the different ways in which the media can affect the way its audience receives messages. Many gave a good range of evidence but many of the answers were list-like and there was little evidence of a debate about the strengths and limitations of the models referred to.