

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 2251/11

Paper 1

General comments

The work produced by candidates for this paper was very pleasing. Nearly all candidates selected the correct number of questions, with very few candidates answering more questions than the paper required. The standard of answers to the compulsory question was very good, showing sound preparation. Candidates need to prepare thoroughly to ensure that they can sustain this good practice throughout the paper. Although it was noticeable that **Questions 2** and **4** were very popular, all questions on the paper were attempted.

Some candidates needed to divide their time up more evenly. There was evidence of some rushed answers towards the end, leaving candidates unable to do themselves justice on their final question. Candidates could save time by not writing out questions and explaining what they are planning to do. As this practice does not add to the marks gained, the time could be better used at the end of the examination, or for reading work through before it is submitted.

When two examples are asked for, it would help to make answers clearer if candidates could indicate where one example ends and the other begins. To gain high marks, it is better that examples are clearly different and that there is no overlap between examples.

In order to gain higher marks in part **d** of **Questions 2** to **7**, candidates should demonstrate evaluation skills by showing at least two views in relation to the proposition outlined in the question.

It is important that candidates should read questions carefully. There was some evidence of candidates who had misinterpreted the nature of the question and therefore failed to score well.

However, most candidates had been prepared well by Centres and produced clear answers.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates produced their best answer for this compulsory question and answered all parts. It may help some candidates to number the different points that they are making within part questions, as a small number gave more examples than they were asked to.

- (a) (i) 'Semi-structured interviews' were well understood by most, although some candidates outlined the aims of semi-structured interviews and others confused them with unstructured interviews. While most candidates noted that some open-ended questions are to be found in this type of interview, this element was overlooked by a number of candidates.
- (ii) Most of the answers to this question were clear. To gain the highest marks, candidates needed to refer specifically to qualitative methods, since all sociologists are looking for data.
- (iii) There was some confusion with the observer effect in the answers to this question. Other candidates described the effect the interview had on the researcher rather than the effect of the researcher on the outcome of the interview.



- (b) In order to score highly on this question, it was necessary to reference both types of interview and not just describe one. Many candidates did this well. Those candidates who explained reasons why you would undertake research rather than the differences between structured and unstructured interviews could not be rewarded.
- (c) There were some excellent descriptions of the ways in which characteristics like ethnicity and gender can influence the outcome of research. Some candidates just identified these, when they also needed to explain how they could influence research. Many candidates described the type of question to be asked or why individuals were carrying out research rather than the personal characteristics of the interviewer. The characteristics chosen had to be about the researcher and not the position they hold.
- (d) Some candidates identified clearly both an advantage and disadvantage of group interviews. Many candidates, though, confused group interviews with individual interviews: the advantages and disadvantages had to apply to the group interviews only. Others confused group interviews with participant observation.
- (e) This question was answered well by nearly all candidates. They showed a sound grasp of the quantitative method and the advantages and disadvantages of using the data it produces. A small number assumed that they must be official statistics.
- (f) While this was a high-scoring question with a large number of candidates doing very well, some gave reasons that could apply to any type of interview and not just unstructured ones. Limitations also had to apply to the method and not the skill of the researcher. Some candidates used reliability as both a strength and a limitation of unstructured interviews.

Section B

Nearly all the candidates who took this paper answered a question from this section of the paper.

Question 2

Apart from the compulsory question, this was the most popular one on the paper.

- (a) This concept was well understood by most candidates. To gain full marks, it was necessary to say more than that it is a role based on gender. Many candidates did not refer to sex or biology, while a large number included information that would have been better saved for the next answer.
- (b) This was a very well-answered question. Some candidates included several examples and not just two, for which they could gain no extra credit.
- (c) This was also well answered, although a number of candidates strayed too far into the area of psychology in their answers.
- (d) There was a lot of good use of concepts, such as life chances, segregated and joint roles and the symmetrical family, in this answer. Some candidates needed to fix their answers more in modern industrial societies as the question asked, as opposed to societies from any era, such as the Nayer.

Question 3

This question was answered by a smaller number of candidates.

- (a) Many candidates misunderstood the meaning of this concept, with some candidates describing socialisation instead. Appropriate examples should have highlighted values, beliefs or customs varying between cultures.
- (b) Several candidates did not attempt this question. Of those that did, there were many excellent answers. Good examples compared modern and medieval societies as well as families and also the socialisation of children in the Kibbutz. Others misunderstood and described primary and secondary socialisation, or gave generic examples rather than explaining how the process of socialisation can be different for children in different societies.



- (c) This question was well answered, with many candidates describing how young people could feel rejection. Others gained credit for using the media and the development of black gangs based on labelling as examples.
- (d) Although there were very many competent answers to this question, very few were well developed and there was almost no reference to the social construction of childhood. Some candidates gained credit for describing the economic benefits in the past of having children and contrasting that with child abuse. A few answers described how they thought families should treat children. These could not gain credit.

Section C

Many candidates answered a question from this section.

Question 4

This was a popular and well-answered question.

- (a) 'Ascribed status' was understood in a general way, with many candidates using kingship as an example. More candidates needed to use gender and make reference to the normally fixed nature of ascribed status to gain higher marks.
- (b) This was a well-answered question, including examples such as education leading to higher-status employment or winning the lottery. More candidates could have made reference to marriage as a means of gaining higher status.
- (c) Most candidates made reference to the material benefits to be gained from having a higher status, though some misread the question and talked about the advantages to be gained from gaining upward social mobility by contrasting the life before and after rather than the benefits of high social status.
- (d) Again, most candidates understood the requirements of this question well and outlined the opportunities and difficulties involved. Some misread the question as one involved in issues of gender.

Question 5

This was a reasonably popular question that was well understood by most candidates.

- (a) This was a well-understood and clearly-explained concept.
- (b) There were some very good answers to this question, although some candidates thought that the women had to be in an ethnic minority to be discriminated against. Good use was made of concepts such as the glass ceiling.
- (c) Most candidates quoted caring for families as part of their answer but other reasons given often related to class rather than gender.
- (d) There were some very good debates to this question, most of which came down on the side of class and then linked that to gender. There were some good answers about the position of working class women compared with middle class women. There were few references to legal changes in relation to employment.

Section D

Although this was the least popular section on the paper, a number of candidates answered these questions and some of these answers were amongst the best on the paper.



Question 6

This was the more popular of these two questions.

- (a) This concept was not clearly understood by a number of candidates, as many thought this could only apply to a single ruler.
- (b) This section was well understood, with the vast majority of candidates giving two clear examples, usually voting and taking part in a political party or pressure group. Some candidates thought that these types of regimes only come about through violence. Although this is frequently true, it is not always so.
- (c) There was a variety of responses to this question and some used Nazi Germany to good effect in their answers. Some mentioned keeping power through heredity but although this applies to some, it does not apply to all authoritarian regimes.
- (d) There was good use made of age, gender and ethnicity in this question, as well as pressure groups. More candidates needed to refer to elites in their answers.

Question 7

Not as many candidates answered this question compared with **Question 6**.

- (a) 'Political influence' confused many candidates, as they did not relate it to the way the actions of individuals can influence the political process.
- (b) This was a well-answered question but one for which many candidates gave more than two answers. Others explained why individuals get involved in political activity rather than how.
- (c) Many candidates gave good descriptions of what pressure groups are and how they work. More candidates needed to refer to their role in informing politicians either about public feelings or giving them information, rather than focusing on the way they organise public opinion.
- (d) There were many good answers to this question about the way governments in democracies are limited by elections and the work of pressure groups. A few excellent answers used both pluralist and Marxist views to assess their answers.



SOCIOLOGY

Paper 2251/12

Paper 12

General comments

Candidates responded well to the paper and answers were at all levels. Most candidates answered the correct number of questions and there were very few rushed final answers. Some candidates only answered three questions and a few answered parts from different questions rather than all parts of one question.

Sophisticated evaluation of sociological material was evident at the top end of the answers and candidates from many Centres had been well prepared, especially for the compulsory question. However, a number of candidates needed a deeper understanding of the terms they were asked to define.

Candidates should pay particular attention to the marks awarded for questions and match their answer to the number of marks to be awarded. Some candidates wrote at length for a question worth just 2 marks and then only gave short answers for questions worth 8 marks. Likewise, if a question asks for two examples, giving more than two does not gain additional marks.

Many candidates wrote out all questions before answering them but there is no need to do that if answers are clearly numbered, especially as this uses time that would better be spent answering the questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This was a question for which candidates were mostly well prepared, with many gaining full or nearly full marks. Some candidates wrote out the data before answering the question, which was a misuse of the time.

- (a) (i) Secondary data was well understood by almost all candidates, although a surprising number thought it had to be collected by sociologists.
- (ii) Most candidates were clear that positivist sociologists are those who collect data using quantitative methods in a scientific way. Answers that suggested they were always positive in their research, that they used content analysis or that confused them with qualitative sociologists could not gain credit.
- (iii) This was the least well-understood term, with very few candidates noting that trends show change over time, although it was clear that these trends were to do with social behaviour. Candidates who argued that social trends are fashion could not gain any credit.
- (b) This was a well-understood question, with nearly all candidates offering two reasons why official statistics can be unreliable. Some candidates needed to focus on the accuracy of official statistics rather than talking about their suitability or appropriateness.
- (c) The advantages of using official statistics were not so clearly explained. Some candidates misread the question and thought it was about why they should be used. Candidates needed to give advantages that were specific to using official statistics, rather than ones that could apply to any research method. They also need to understand that official statistics do not only cover crime.
- (d) The majority of answers to this question displayed a weak understanding of the meaning of content analysis and a significant number of candidates chose not to answer this question at all.



- (e) Historical documents also gave candidates some concern and they need to understand that these are not simply documents compiled by sociologists in the past. A strength is that historical documents exist for a time for which we have no other data to consult and therefore can be used to compare social behaviours of the past with today. One problem mentioned was that historical documents are subject to the Hawthorne effect, but this was difficult to justify.
- (f) Candidates who knew the difference between quantitative and qualitative research methods did this question well and many gained full marks. Candidates needed to ensure that they gave an advantage/disadvantage that could be applied specifically to qualitative research rather than generically to any research.

Section B

Most candidates answered questions from this section of the paper and nearly all of these answered **Question 2**.

Question 2

- (a) Primary socialisation was clearly understood but some candidates need to understand that this happens at the start of life, in the family, and it is this that marks it out from socialisation in general.
- (b) Almost all candidates correctly identified two agencies of secondary socialisation and explained how they help to socialise individuals. Again, there was some misreading of the question and a small number of candidates thought they were being asked to describe two aspects of secondary socialisation and consequently described the process. Some answers were very long: candidates should make sure that the length of their answer matches the number of marks available.
- (c) Most candidates confined themselves to writing about how material circumstances advantage and disadvantage young people, with a small number including material about aspiration and the different child-rearing practices that may be found in different social classes. Candidates needed to increase the range of their answers as they limited themselves to toys and education. Few talked about nannies or boarding schools in their answers.
- (d) To enter the top band, candidates needed to address the 'to what extent' in the question. On this occasion, few candidates did this. Other answers explained the nature of socialisation uncritically. However, there was some good reference made to the experience of feral children.

Question 3

This question was answered by a large number of candidates.

- (a) Social norms were generally well understood, though some candidates need to remember that they are expected forms of behaviour, and not just behaviour occurring in different societies.
- (b) There was an extensive range of acceptable behaviours offered by candidates and the best ones were clearly different and linked to specific societies rather than being generic. A few candidates tried to define social norms or crimes rather than give examples, so could not gain credit.
- (c) Most candidates outlined the role of the family, school and peer group in controlling the behaviour of young people. With this question, candidates needed to make sure that they focussed on how young people's behaviour is controlled rather than on ways in which young people break social norms.
- (d) The best answers to this question looked at the role of early socialisation on the behaviour of young people, rather than focussing simply on the way in which formal and informal control can be exercised over teenagers. Other successful answers were broader and looked at control of people. A few answers were misdirected into looking at which sort of social control was preferable.

Section C

There were many answers to this section of the paper but not as many as for **section B**

Question 4

- (a) Scape-goating was not a well-understood term and many candidates who chose to answer this question did not answer this part of it. Candidates need to understand that it does not just apply to ethnic minorities.
- (b) Identifying two ways in which ethnic minorities experience discrimination in work was well understood and well answered. Candidates need to ensure that their answer is focussed on the question: candidates who described general discrimination rather than specifically that experienced in work could not gain full credit.
- (c) The best answers to this question talked about language and culture. Those that simply talked about being different could not gain full credit. It is worth noting that you do not have to be black to belong to an ethnic minority.
- (d) For this question, most candidates described the difficulties faced by ethnic minorities. Few fully understood that the question was asking them to identify that there are some ethnic minority groups that suffer less than others or even that, in some situations, the ethnic minority can be the advantaged one.

Question 5

Few candidates answered this question.

- (a) This term did not seem to have been fully understood. Candidates must ensure that they read the questions carefully. Here, a number of candidates missed “unequal” in the question and thereby changed the meaning of the question completely.
- (b) Again, this was a question that seemed to cause some candidates difficulties in that they described how you can get wealth, e.g. by marriage, rather than what it is.
- (c) This question was generally well understood and candidates gave a range of reasons that included marriage, promotion, luck and education amongst others. Answers that talked about mobility generally rather than about ways of achieving upward mobility could not gain full credit.
- (d) Generally this question was interpreted as one of material deprivation and answers that argued this were usually supported with a range of ways that this can affect life chances. More developed answers also explored the way in which opportunities can be available in open societies for poor people. Again, the ‘how far’ in the question was not addressed by many candidates.

Section D

This was the least popular section on the paper.

Question 6

Few candidates selected this question to answer.

- (a) Elite group was not a widely-understood term and a lot of the candidates who answered this question omitted this part.
- (b) As few understood the term, few were able to identify correctly a powerful group.
- (c) Most candidates were able to describe campaigns and policies that would please the electorate.
- (d) Many answers to this question only referred to the role of elections, rather than taking a broader approach. Some candidates made a basic reference to Marxist theory in their answers, which gained credit.



Question 7

Few candidates opted to answer this question.

- (a) This term was not widely understood. Candidates should remember to phrase their answers in their own words rather than reusing or reordering the words from the question.
- (b) Most candidates selected two appropriate examples such as freedom of speech and elections to illustrate their answer.
- (c) Most candidates demonstrated that they knew what political parties and pressure groups were but then needed to outline how they differ, rather than simply describing them separately.
- (d) Good answers looked at the role of both insider and outsider groups, with the best answers making reference to lobbying, though there was a tendency for some candidates to express an exaggerated view of the power of pressure groups. Candidates should make sure they do not repeat information given in a previous answer.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 2251/13

Paper 13

General comments

Candidates responded well to the paper and answers were at all levels. Most candidates answered the correct number of questions and there were very few rushed final answers. Some candidates only answered three questions and a few answered parts from different questions rather than all parts of one question.

Sophisticated evaluation of sociological material was evident at the top end of the answers and candidates from many Centres had been well prepared, especially for the compulsory question. However, a number of candidates needed a deeper understanding of the terms they were asked to define.

Candidates should pay particular attention to the marks awarded for questions and match their answer to the number of marks to be awarded. Some candidates wrote at length for a question worth just 2 marks and then only gave short answers for questions worth 8 marks. Likewise, if a question asks for two examples, giving more than two does not gain additional marks.

Many candidates wrote out all questions before answering them but there is no need to do that if answers are clearly numbered, especially as this uses time that would better be spent answering the questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This was a question for which candidates were mostly well prepared, with many gaining full or nearly full marks. Some candidates wrote out the data before answering the question, which was a misuse of the time.

- (a) (i) Secondary data was well understood by almost all candidates, although a surprising number thought it had to be collected by sociologists.
- (ii) Most candidates were clear that positivist sociologists are those who collect data using quantitative methods in a scientific way. Answers that suggested they were always positive in their research, that they used content analysis or that confused them with qualitative sociologists could not gain credit.
- (iii) This was the least well-understood term, with very few candidates noting that trends show change over time, although it was clear that these trends were to do with social behaviour. Candidates who argued that social trends are fashion could not gain any credit.
- (b) This was a well-understood question, with nearly all candidates offering two reasons why official statistics can be unreliable. Some candidates needed to focus on the accuracy of official statistics rather than talking about their suitability or appropriateness.
- (c) The advantages of using official statistics were not so clearly explained. Some candidates misread the question and thought it was about why they should be used. Candidates needed to give advantages that were specific to using official statistics, rather than ones that could apply to any research method. They also need to understand that official statistics do not only cover crime.
- (d) The majority of answers to this question displayed a weak understanding of the meaning of content analysis and a significant number of candidates chose not to answer this question at all.



- (e) Historical documents also gave candidates some concern and they need to understand that these are not simply documents compiled by sociologists in the past. A strength is that historical documents exist for a time for which we have no other data to consult and therefore can be used to compare social behaviours of the past with today. One problem mentioned was that historical documents are subject to the Hawthorne effect, but this was difficult to justify.
- (f) Candidates who knew the difference between quantitative and qualitative research methods did this question well and many gained full marks. Candidates needed to ensure that they gave an advantage/disadvantage that could be applied specifically to qualitative research rather than generically to any research.

Section B

Most candidates answered questions from this section of the paper and nearly all of these answered **Question 2**.

Question 2

- (a) Primary socialisation was clearly understood but some candidates need to understand that this happens at the start of life, in the family, and it is this that marks it out from socialisation in general.
- (b) Almost all candidates correctly identified two agencies of secondary socialisation and explained how they help to socialise individuals. Again, there was some misreading of the question and a small number of candidates thought they were being asked to describe two aspects of secondary socialisation and consequently described the process. Some answers were very long: candidates should make sure that the length of their answer matches the number of marks available.
- (c) Most candidates confined themselves to writing about how material circumstances advantage and disadvantage young people, with a small number including material about aspiration and the different child-rearing practices that may be found in different social classes. Candidates needed to increase the range of their answers as they limited themselves to toys and education. Few talked about nannies or boarding schools in their answers.
- (d) To enter the top band, candidates needed to address the 'to what extent' in the question. On this occasion, few candidates did this. Other answers explained the nature of socialisation uncritically. However, there was some good reference made to the experience of feral children.

Question 3

This question was answered by a large number of candidates.

- (a) Social norms were generally well understood, though some candidates need to remember that they are expected forms of behaviour, and not just behaviour occurring in different societies.
- (b) There was an extensive range of acceptable behaviours offered by candidates and the best ones were clearly different and linked to specific societies rather than being generic. A few candidates tried to define social norms or crimes rather than give examples, so could not gain credit.
- (c) Most candidates outlined the role of the family, school and peer group in controlling the behaviour of young people. With this question, candidates needed to make sure that they focussed on how young people's behaviour is controlled rather than on ways in which young people break social norms.
- (d) The best answers to this question looked at the role of early socialisation on the behaviour of young people, rather than focussing simply on the way in which formal and informal control can be exercised over teenagers. Other successful answers were broader and looked at control of people. A few answers were misdirected into looking at which sort of social control was preferable.

Section C

There were many answers to this section of the paper but not as many as for **section B**.

Question 4

- (a) Scapegoating was not a well-understood term and many candidates who chose to answer this question did not answer this part of it. Candidates need to understand that it does not just apply to ethnic minorities.
- (b) Identifying two ways in which ethnic minorities experience discrimination in work was well understood and well answered. Candidates need to ensure that their answer is focussed on the question: candidates who described general discrimination rather than specifically that experienced in work could not gain full credit.
- (c) The best answers to this question talked about language and culture. Those that simply talked about being different could not gain full credit. It is worth noting that you do not have to be black to belong to an ethnic minority.
- (d) For this question, most candidates described the difficulties faced by ethnic minorities. Few fully understood that the question was asking them to identify that there are some ethnic minority groups that suffer less than others or even that, in some situations, the ethnic minority can be the advantaged one.

Question 5

Few candidates answered this question.

- (a) This term did not seem to have been fully understood. Candidates must ensure that they read the questions carefully. Here, a number of candidates missed “unequal” in the question and thereby changed the meaning of the question completely.
- (b) Again, this was a question that seemed to cause some candidates difficulties in that they described how you can get wealth, e.g. by marriage, rather than what it is.
- (c) This question was generally well understood and candidates gave a range of reasons that included marriage, promotion, luck and education amongst others. Answers that talked about mobility generally rather than about ways of achieving upward mobility could not gain full credit.
- (d) Generally this question was interpreted as one of material deprivation and answers that argued this were usually supported with a range of ways that this can affect life chances. More developed answers also explored the way in which opportunities can be available in open societies for poor people. Again, the ‘how far’ in the question was not addressed by many candidates.

Section D

This was the least popular section on the paper.

Question 6

Few candidates selected this question to answer.

- (a) Elite group was not a widely-understood term and a lot of the candidates who answered this question omitted this part.
- (b) As few understood the term, few were able to identify correctly a powerful group.
- (c) Most candidates were able to describe campaigns and policies that would please the electorate.
- (d) Many answers to this question only referred to the role of elections, rather than taking a broader approach. Some candidates made a basic reference to Marxist theory in their answers, which gained credit.



Question 7

Few candidates opted to answer this question.

- (a) This term was not widely understood. Candidates should remember to phrase their answers in their own words rather than reusing or reordering the words from the question.
- (b) Most candidates selected two appropriate examples such as freedom of speech and elections to illustrate their answer.
- (c) Most candidates demonstrated that they knew what political parties and pressure groups were but then needed to outline how they differ, rather than simply describing them separately.
- (d) Good answers looked at the role of both insider and outsider groups, with the best answers making reference to lobbying, though there was a tendency for some candidates to express an exaggerated view of the power of pressure groups. Candidates should make sure they do not repeat information given in a previous answer.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 2251/21

Paper 21

General comments

The overall performance this session was comparable with previous sessions in that answers ranged from the low-scoring commonsensical to those showing excellent sociological knowledge and understanding. There was a limited number of candidates achieving marks over 40, while many answers were typified by single-point responses and assertion. The rubric was largely adhered to, however, there was some misreading of the questions.

Candidates need to read all parts of the question before attempting an answer, as many were able to provide good answers to parts **a**, **b** and **c** but struggled to provide anything more than common-sense answers to part **d**, with little sociological evidence to support their points.

Candidates should focus on up-to-date sociological theory and evidence rather than relying on 'classic' studies from the 1960s and 1970s.

Some candidates spent too much time answering parts **a** and **b**. However, refreshingly few wasted time on writing out the question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) 'Serial monogamy' was on the whole well defined. Candidates who simply defined monogamy were not rewarded.
- (b) Candidates were able to provide two reasons why divorced people remarry. Popular reasons cited were economic factors and help with rearing children. Other possible reasons include, for example, the search for romantic love, companionship and the ideal that two-parent families are better than one-parent families.
- (c) This was another well-answered question in which candidates identified a range of reasons why divorce rates are high in many industrial societies. To gain full marks, candidates need to highlight several relevant factors in a detailed way, demonstrating evidence of good sociological understanding.
- (d) This was a less well-answered question, as candidates tended to focus on the psychological consequences on family members, with few references to the diversity of family types or the higher cost of welfare provision.

Question 2

- (a) The term 'equal roles' did not appear to be well understood, as many candidates were unable to provide an adequate definition. A correct definition would be 'the sharing of household tasks between men and women'.
- (b) This was a better-answered question in which candidates offered a range of ways in which family roles have changed as societies have modernised. Examples included the sharing of child-rearing, household tasks and decision-making.
- (c) The better answers to this part discussed equal pay and sex discrimination laws, which have failed to help women in some families to achieve equality. Many answers relied on assertion and over-



generalisation, which could not be rewarded. In order to gain more marks, candidates need to provide a clear attempt to assess the extent to which women still experience inequality in the home.

- (d) This part of the question was on the whole well answered, with some good accounts of the symmetrical family and the reasons for its emergence. Better answers were more detailed and developed.

Question 3

- (a) Some candidates correctly defined 'gender' as the socially expected behaviour patterns of males and females, although some talked about biological sex, which was not rewarded.
- (b) Factors such as subject choices and parent/teacher expectations were cited and some candidates talked about peer group pressure and the macho image of boys. Better answers identified and described ways in which gender socialisation may affect educational achievement.
- (c) Candidates were able to provide a good range of ways in which boys and girls may be treated differently at school, including uniforms, subject choices and careers advice. Some of the better answers recognised that there have been recent changes in the treatment of gender issues within schools.
- (d) This was another well-answered question in which candidates discussed labelling, streaming and the self-fulfilling prophecy. Candidates gaining top marks discussed the extent to which teachers and schools may affect a pupil's educational achievement.

Question 4

- (a) Most candidates were able to define the term 'peer group' adequately.
- (b) This question proved more problematic for some candidates as they were only able to come up with one characteristic of the peer group. Good answers cited similar interests in fashion and music, a distinct language code and a desire to conform to the group.
- (c) On the whole this was not well answered, with few candidates able to discuss Bernstein's language codes and the middle class nature of the curriculum. To gain higher marks, candidates need to focus on the links between language and educational performance.
- (d) This question was not well understood and only a few candidates addressed the question directly. Some of the better answers discussed compensatory education, the ethnocentric curriculum, streaming and catchment area. Answers at the top of the band included a range of points with some attempt at assessment.

Question 5

- (a) The term 'labelling' was generally well defined.
- (b) Most candidates identified two groups who are more likely to be labelled but only a few discussed why.
- (c) This did not appear to be well understood by most candidates. Some provided a very basic account of labelling without directly referring to crime, which could only gain limited credit.
- (d) Again, this was not widely understood. The better answers discussed prejudice, discrimination and marginalisation. At the top of the band, there was some recognition, implicit or explicit, of the idea of deviancy amplification.

Question 6

- (a) Most candidates were able to define the term 'juvenile delinquency' correctly. Better answers made specific reference to crimes committed by young people under the age of 18.

- (b) Some good answers were offered by many candidates, including poverty, unemployment, and more opportunity for crime in inner city areas. To gain full marks, candidates need to provide examples.
- (c) This was another reasonably well-answered question in which candidates discussed gender role socialisation, police attitudes to female offenders and girls being more closely supervised by parents, reducing their opportunities to commit crime.
- (d) Candidates were able to provide good answers to this part of the question, although a few discussed statistics in general with no reference to crime. The better answers included references to self-report and victim surveys.

Question 7

- (a) Most candidates were able to define the term 'censorship' adequately.
- (b) Some good answers were offered here, although candidates should ensure that they read questions carefully, as some talked about media influence on people in general rather than on 'young people'.
- (c) This part of the question was not answered so well. Better answers discussed the potential for bias and manipulation by media moguls, owners and political parties.
- (d) There were some good candidate answers here about the manipulation of the media and its effects on people's behaviour. The best answers included reference to the various models, e.g. the hypodermic syringe model and the cultural approach. At the top of the band, candidates made some attempt to assess the main explanations.

Question 8

- (a) 'Agenda setting' was well defined by those candidates who chose this question. Better answers referred to the criteria used by journalists to decide what information and events are worth reporting.
- (b) This question did not appear to be well understood, as few candidates were able to provide two features of the pluralist view of the media. Candidates need to provide examples of the features of the pluralist view.
- (c) Candidates need to develop their understanding of the Marxist view of the media, as there were few good answers to this part of the question. Some knowledge and understanding of theory is needed here.
- (d) This part of the question was well answered, with candidates citing relevant sociological material such as voting behaviour and the influence of opinion polls. Answers at the top of the band attempted to discuss the debates surrounding the Marxist and pluralist views of the influence of the media on political attitudes.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 2251/22

Paper 2

General comments

The overall performance this session was comparable with previous sessions in that answers ranged from the low-scoring commonsensical to those showing excellent sociological knowledge and understanding. There was a limited number of candidates achieving marks over 40, while many answers were typified by single point responses and assertion. The rubric was largely adhered to. However, there was some misreading of the questions.

Candidates need to read all parts of the question before attempting an answer, as many were able to provide good answers to parts **a**, **b** and **c** but struggled to provide anything more than common-sense answers to part **d**, with little sociological evidence to support their claims.

Candidates should focus on up-to-date sociological theory and evidence rather than relying on 'classic' studies from the 1960s and 1970s. Some candidates spent too much time answering parts **a** and **b**. However, refreshingly few wasted time on writing out the question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Many candidates were able to define 'traditional society' with reference to religion and customs. Some indicated pre-industrial or undeveloped society, which was appropriately rewarded. A few made statements about society 'long ago' where extended families were the norm but these were not rewarded.
- (b) This question was well answered by most candidates, with socialisation and reproduction being the most popular functions stated. Other possible answers include, for example, the regulation of sexual behaviour and any form of economic support. To gain full marks on this question, candidates should describe and/or provide an example of their chosen function.
- (c) Good answers included references to the sharing or transferring of functions to the state or other organisations. Some candidates focused on 'roles' within the family rather than 'functions' and few were able to discuss changes to or loss of functions.
- (d) There were some good responses here showing detailed knowledge of recent changes and reference to theory. Issues such as rising divorce rates, loss of functions and the decline in first marriages were discussed, along with the increasing number of remarriages. To gain marks in the top band, candidates need to include some assessment. The weaker answers tended to repeat material from part **c**.

Question 2

- (a) The term 'symmetrical family' was generally well answered by most candidates, although there was some confusion between the terms 'symmetrical family' and the reconstituted family.
- (b) Most candidates answered this question well, although some talked exclusively about domestic tasks with little reference to decision-making or leisure pursuits. Some candidates confused the two terms. Good answers provided examples of joint and segregated roles both in the home and in wider society.



- (c) Most candidates' responses focused mainly on the changing role and status of women, while better answers referred to male unemployment and the emergence of the new man. Other issues that could be discussed here include, for example, the decreasing dependence of women on the male partner, improved living standards leading to shared leisure pursuits and the changing attitudes of society due to policies such as the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act.
- (d) Many candidates saw this question in terms of nuclear versus extended family but also needed to mention more recent diversity in family types. To gain marks at the top of the band, candidates need to provide clear arguments for and against the view that the nuclear family is in decline in modern industrial societies.

Question 3

- (a) Many candidates provided only a partial definition of 'informal curriculum' and some implied it referred to 'out of school' learning or primary socialisation, which was not rewarded.
- (b) Most candidates were able to provide one route to social mobility, citing qualifications leading to a good job, but few were able to come up with a second way. Possible answers include: free education and school equipment, compensatory education, socialisation and social control.
- (c) This was well answered by most candidates, who made reference to material and cultural deprivation and the low expectations of parents and teachers. In order to reach the top of the band and gain full marks, candidates should provide a range of relevant factors rather than concentrating on just one or two points.
- (d) Many candidates referred to the impact of labelling and streaming, which was rewarded appropriately. This question was not well understood by some candidates, who simply repeated material from part **b** and so could not gain further credit. More marks can be gained by discussing a wider range of factors. To reach the top of the mark scale, candidates should address the 'how far' part of the question, stating clearly other influences that may impact on the educational performance of children from poor families, such as home background and parental attitudes.

Question 4

- (a) Some candidates correctly defined 'ethnic minorities' as groups sharing a common culture that is different from the majority culture. Those who provided an example rather than a definition were awarded one mark.
- (b) Many candidates talked about influences of peer groups but did not address the 'at school' part of the question, so could not be rewarded fully. Good answers described both negative and positive influences of the peer group.
- (c) Some candidates gave good examples, including poverty, unemployment, language and culture clashes and parental attitudes. Those candidates who did not refer to the issue of ethnicity and so repeated material from part **b** could not gain credit. To reach the top of this band, candidates need to discuss several relevant points which are directly linked to education, home background and ethnicity.
- (d) Good answers referred to positive discrimination and anti-racist policies, although there were a few candidates who dealt with a wider range of factors. Other relevant issues include, for example, compensatory education, educational priority areas and the hiring of teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds. To gain full marks candidates need to address the 'how far' aspect of the question along with the 'in what ways' teachers and schools can help to improve the educational performances of ethnic minority pupils aspect.

Question 5

- (a) Candidates need to improve their understanding of the term 'deviancy amplification', as many were unable to provide an adequate definition.

- (b) There was a general misunderstanding of the term 'moral panic' and many candidates believed it to be a personal dilemma. Better answers provided examples such as, for example, drug misuse, paedophilia and HIV. A good up-to-date example given was moral panic concerning Muslims and terrorism.
- (c) This was generally well answered. Marks were awarded for reference to increased police activity and media exaggeration leading to an increase in the recording of particular crimes. Better answers gave examples of particular crimes and areas where moral panics are likely to take place.
- (d) This part of the question was less well answered. Better answers referred to ethnic minorities and women. Few candidates mentioned groups from particular areas or social classes where more crimes were likely to be committed.

Question 6

- (a) The 'dark figure' was reasonably well defined by most candidates who chose this question. Some candidates referred to either unreported or unrecorded crimes rather than both, which gained just one of the two possible marks.
- (b) This was a particularly well-answered part of the question with a range of good answers, including the triviality of some crimes, fear of repercussions and mistrust of the police.
- (c) Most candidates understood the meaning of white-collar crime but there was too much reliance on bribery and corruption as possible reasons why such crimes go unrecorded. Better answers gave examples of white-collar crimes, along with the reasons these crimes often go unrecorded. Reasons included, for example, ignorance that a crime has been committed and police discretion in recording some crimes.
- (d) Better answers considered the nature of policing and new technology, while weaker answers included too much repetition of part c, with reliance on bribery and corruption. In order to reach the top of the band, some reference to stereotyping or labelling needs to be made.

Question 7

- (a) The term 'news values' was generally well defined.
- (b) Factors that influence the content of the news included: the views of editors and owners, dramatic and unexpected news and events that the government deems important. To gain full marks, candidates need to identify and describe two factors.
- (c) This part of the question was less well answered. Some of the better answers included factors relating to the process of gathering and presenting news, the political stance of the media source and the influence of politicians and celebrities. They also included a range of reasons why news reports may contain bias.
- (d) Good answers to this question used relevant sociological material, such as media stereotyping/labelling, the use of advertising and celebrity role models. To gain top marks in this question, answers need to be well developed and there should be some attempt at assessment.

Question 8

- (a) Few candidates were able to define correctly the term 'folk devils' and therefore struggled with parts b and c.
- (b) Possible examples of groups more likely to be used as folk-devils by the media include ethnic minorities, young people, drug users and various subcultures.
- (c) Few candidates attempted this question. Those that did tended towards the commonsensical rather than sociological explanations. Some of the better answers made reference to stereotyping, scapegoating and deviancy amplification.



- (d) Better answers discussed links with culture, popular music, fashion and the advertising industry. Many candidates talked about the influence of the media on people's behaviour rather than the influence specifically on young people's behaviour, so could not gain full credit. Few candidates addressed the 'how far' part of the question.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 2251/23

Paper 23

General comments

The overall performance this session was comparable with previous sessions in that answers ranged from the low-scoring commonsensical to those showing excellent sociological knowledge and understanding. There was a limited number of candidates achieving marks over 40, while many answers were typified by single point responses and assertion. The rubric was largely adhered to. However, there was some misreading of the questions.

Candidates need to read all parts of the question before attempting an answer, as many were able to provide good answers to parts **a**, **b** and **c** but struggled to provide anything more than common-sense answers to part **d**, with little sociological evidence to support their claims.

Candidates should focus on up-to-date sociological theory and evidence rather than relying on 'classic' studies from the 1960s and 1970s. Some candidates spent too much time answering parts **a** and **b**. However, refreshingly few wasted time on writing out the question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Many candidates were able to define 'traditional society' with reference to religion and customs. Some indicated pre-industrial or undeveloped society, which was appropriately rewarded. A few made statements about society 'long ago' where extended families were the norm but these were not rewarded.
- (b) This question was well answered by most candidates, with socialisation and reproduction being the most popular functions stated. Other possible answers include, for example, the regulation of sexual behaviour and any form of economic support. To gain full marks on this question, candidates should describe and/or provide an example of their chosen function.
- (c) Good answers included references to the sharing or transferring of functions to the state or other organisations. Some candidates focused on 'roles' within the family rather than 'functions' and few were able to discuss changes to or loss of functions.
- (d) There were some good responses here showing detailed knowledge of recent changes and reference to theory. Issues such as rising divorce rates, loss of functions and the decline in first marriages were discussed, along with the increasing number of remarriages. To gain marks in the top band, candidates need to include some assessment. The weaker answers tended to repeat material from part **c**.

Question 2

- (a) The term 'symmetrical family' was generally well answered by most candidates, although there was some confusion between the terms 'symmetrical family' and the reconstituted family.
- (b) Most candidates answered this question well, although some talked exclusively about domestic tasks with little reference to decision-making or leisure pursuits. Some candidates confused the two terms. Good answers provided examples of joint and segregated roles both in the home and in wider society.



- (c) Most candidates' responses focused mainly on the changing role and status of women, while better answers referred to male unemployment and the emergence of the new man. Other issues that could be discussed here include, for example, the decreasing dependence of women on the male partner, improved living standards leading to shared leisure pursuits and the changing attitudes of society due to policies such as the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act.
- (d) Many candidates saw this question in terms of nuclear versus extended family but also needed to mention more recent diversity in family types. To gain marks at the top of the band, candidates need to provide clear arguments for and against the view that the nuclear family is in decline in modern industrial societies.

Question 3

- (a) Many candidates provided only a partial definition of 'informal curriculum' and some implied it referred to 'out of school' learning or primary socialisation, which was not rewarded.
- (b) Most candidates were able to provide one route to social mobility, citing qualifications leading to a good job, but few were able to come up with a second way. Possible answers include: free education and school equipment, compensatory education, socialisation and social control.
- (c) This was well answered by most candidates, who made reference to material and cultural deprivation and the low expectations of parents and teachers. In order to reach the top of the band and gain full marks, candidates should provide a range of relevant factors rather than concentrating on just one or two points.
- (d) Many candidates referred to the impact of labelling and streaming, which was rewarded appropriately. This question was not well understood by some candidates, who simply repeated material from part **b** and so could not gain further credit. More marks can be gained by discussing a wider range of factors. To reach the top of the mark scale, candidates should address the 'how far' part of the question, stating clearly other influences that may impact on the educational performance of children from poor families, such as home background and parental attitudes.

Question 4

- (a) Some candidates correctly defined 'ethnic minorities' as groups sharing a common culture that is different from the majority culture. Those who provided an example rather than a definition were awarded one mark.
- (b) Many candidates talked about influences of peer groups but did not address the 'at school' part of the question, so could not be rewarded fully. Good answers described both negative and positive influences of the peer group.
- (c) Some candidates gave good examples, including poverty, unemployment, language and culture clashes and parental attitudes. Those candidates who did not refer to the issue of ethnicity and so repeated material from part **b** could not gain credit. To reach the top of this band, candidates need to discuss several relevant points which are directly linked to education, home background and ethnicity.
- (d) Good answers referred to positive discrimination and anti-racist policies, although there were a few candidates who dealt with a wider range of factors. Other relevant issues include, for example, compensatory education, educational priority areas and the hiring of teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds. To gain full marks candidates, need to address the 'how far' aspect of the question along with the 'in what ways' teachers and schools can help to improve the educational performances of ethnic minority pupils aspect.

Question 5

- (a) Candidates need to improve their understanding of the term 'deviancy amplification', as many were unable to provide an adequate definition.
- (b) There was a general misunderstanding of the term 'moral panic' and many candidates believed it to be a personal dilemma. Better answers provided examples such as, for example, drug misuse,



paedophilia and HIV. A good up-to-date example given was moral panic concerning Muslims and terrorism.

- (c) This was generally well answered. Marks were awarded for reference to increased police activity and media exaggeration leading to an increase in the recording of particular crimes. Better answers gave examples of particular crimes and areas where moral panics are likely to take place.
- (d) This part of the question was less well answered. Better answers referred to ethnic minorities and women. Few candidates mentioned groups from particular areas or social classes where more crimes were likely to be committed.

Question 6

- (a) The 'dark figure' was reasonably well defined by most candidates who chose this question. Some candidates referred to either unreported or unrecorded crimes rather than both, which gained just one of the two possible marks.
- (b) This was a particularly well-answered part of the question with a range of good answers, including the triviality of some crimes, fear of repercussions and mistrust of the police.
- (c) Most candidates understood the meaning of white-collar crime but there was too much reliance on bribery and corruption as possible reasons why such crimes go unrecorded. Better answers gave examples of white-collar crimes, along with the reasons these crimes often go unrecorded. Reasons included, for example, ignorance that a crime has been committed and police discretion in recording some crimes.
- (d) Better answers considered the nature of policing and new technology, while weaker answers included too much repetition of part c, with reliance on bribery and corruption. In order to reach the top of the band, some reference to stereotyping or labelling needs to be made.

Question 7

- (a) The term 'news values' was generally well defined.
- (b) Factors that influence the content of the news included: the views of editors and owners, dramatic and unexpected news and events that the government deems important. To gain full marks, candidates need to identify and describe two factors.
- (c) This part of the question was less well answered. Some of the better answers included factors relating to the process of gathering and presenting news, the political stance of the media source and the influence of politicians and celebrities. They also included a range of reasons why news reports may contain bias.
- (d) Good answers to this question used relevant sociological material, such as media stereotyping/labelling, the use of advertising and celebrity role models. To gain top marks in this question, answers need to be well developed and there should be some attempt at assessment.

Question 8

- (a) Few candidates were able to define correctly the term 'folk devils' and therefore struggled with parts b and c.
- (b) Possible examples of groups more likely to be used as folk-devils by the media include ethnic minorities, young people, drug users and various subcultures.
- (c) Few candidates attempted this question. Those that did tended towards the commonsensical rather than sociological explanations. Some of the better answers made reference to stereotyping, scapegoating and deviancy amplification.
- (d) Better answers discussed links with culture, popular music, fashion and the advertising industry. Many candidates talked about the influence of the media on people's behaviour rather than the influence specifically on young people's behaviour, so could not gain full credit. Few candidates addressed the 'how far' part of the question.

