

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 2251/11

Paper 11

Key messages

- Learning the meaning of key sociological concepts will help candidates to improve their answers.
- Candidates should pay particular attention to the marks awarded for questions and match the length of their answers to the mark allocation.
- To achieve higher marks candidates need to develop more balanced arguments in the part (d) questions.

General comments

Candidates responded well to this paper and there were answers at all levels. Most candidates answered the correct number, and there were few rushed final answers.

Clear analysis of sociological material was evident in the best answers and candidates from many Centres had been well prepared, especially for the compulsory question. Some candidates were weak on understanding of the terms to be defined and could gain more marks by being aware of the meaning of key sociological concepts.

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

Many excellent responses to part (d) questions outlined detailed arguments on either side of the debates. Others needed to develop a more balanced and less one-sided argument in order to achieve higher marks. Some candidates wrote lengthy introductions before answering the questions and they would have done better to use that time to plan their answers: many of these introductions were interesting but added nothing in terms of answering the question.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) (i) The secret nature of covert observation was well understood. The question did not specify participant observation, so the best answers focused on covert observation only. Some candidates went into a lot of detail and gave examples as well as the definition. Answers to definition questions can be very brief and still gain full marks. Other candidates evaluated the usefulness of the method, which was also unnecessary to get full marks on this question.
- (ii) Many candidates defined this term accurately as one in which research is carried out free from bias or distortion. A number of candidates confused it with the object, aims or even goals of the research.
- (iii) Qualitative data was well understood as data that may be in-depth and that show meanings and feelings. Some candidates described quantitative data or explained what qualitative data is not. It is clearer if candidates describe what the term is rather than what it is not.



- (b) Some candidates gave good examples of strengths and limitations of non-participant observation; others showed some confusion about this method and wrote about interviews. Some candidates assumed that the observation would be explained to the research group, which overlooked the point that non-participant observation can still be covert. A small number of candidates identified two strengths or weaknesses but justified neither of them, so limited themselves to a maximum of two marks.
- (c) The key to answering this question well was to focus on the word 'accepted' in the question. Valid reasons why it might be difficult to be accepted by a group included having the wrong physical characteristics. Some candidates described the influence of the researcher's presence on subjects or the danger that the researcher could put themselves in, which are issues involved in participant observation but were not what this question was asking. Some candidates assumed that the question was asking about either covert or overt participation but this was not specified, so candidates were free to interpret this as they would. The reasons for difficulty in acceptance by the group for covert participation are rather different from those for overt participation.
- (d) This question was answered well by most candidates as long as they understood what was meant by covert. Some candidates identified difficulties such as the observer effect but in this type of study subjects do not know they are being observed. Most wrote about the problems of recording in secret and working from memory as well as becoming involved in the group and losing objectivity. These answers showed good clear understanding of the method.
- (e) The majority of candidates gave accurate explanations of how participants would have difficulty in recording their findings and observations while participating in group activities. Other reasons included the difficulties in retaining objectivity. Some candidates argued that the Hawthorne Effect could happen to influence the accuracy of recording, which would only be a problem if the participation was overt, and this needed to be made explicit if full marks were to be gained.
- (f) Most candidates outlined two strengths and two limitations of using interviews. There was a tendency on the part of some candidates to run similar points together, making it hard to determine if one or two points had been made. Some candidates number their points for this question. This is to be encouraged, as it not only makes it clear to the Examiner that they have made four points but also has the advantage of letting the candidate know that they have made the correct number of responses. The question was about interviews in general but some candidates assumed that these were about personal issues, which was an assumption that need not be true.

Section B

Question 2

- (a) Values are what people base their judgement on when deciding if behaviour is right or wrong. This concept was well understood by the majority of candidates. A small number of candidates confused it with value equalling money or the value placed on an individual.
- (b) Candidates displayed a firm grasp of the meaning of socialisation and when both primary and secondary socialisation take place. Nearly all included agencies of socialisation in their answers. To gain full marks, candidates needed to mention what happens at these different stages that makes them different.
- (c) Most candidates confined themselves to writing about how socialisation happens and how this enables the child to join society. Few addressed the question directly by considering the word 'effectively'.
- (d) Good answers addressed the 'how far' in the question and this was necessary to enter the top mark band. The most successful way to do this was by discussing the nurture-nature debate, although it was not necessary to use these words. Some candidates talked about sociobiology or genetics in contrast to socialisation. There were some very good references made to the experiences of feral children and the way in which socialisation influences behaviour. Other answers explained the nature of socialisation uncritically.

Question 3

- (a) The rights and responsibilities that come with adulthood were well understood but few candidates made specific reference to the time of life that adulthood relates to.
- (b) There was an extensive range of acceptable features offered by candidates and the best ones were clearly different and linked to specific processes such as gender socialisation. The most popular examples referred to a period of dependency and a time to play or be educated. Some candidates only described one feature.
- (c) Most candidates outlined the roles of both children and adults in their answers. A good range of examples of the way the roles are different was given. These included dependency/non-dependency and responsibility/lack of responsibility. There were some good examples of the differences between cultures and between the present and the past in comparing childhood and adulthood.
- (d) The best answers to this question looked at the roles of children in different cultures and at different times. Some, with credit, looked at the social construction of childhood and the very best answers not only pointed out the differences but also the similarities, such as primary socialisation which is always present, as well as outlining how children's rights have changed and the changing 'length' of childhood. Some answers compared the experience of living in a traditional society with a modern society well.

Section C

Question 4

- (a) Definitions of life chances tended to relate to opportunities in a general way but did not develop the ways in which these opportunities could be accessed, such as through education or health care.
- (b) Identifying two ways in which life chances can be improved was successfully done by most candidates, some giving 3 or 4 ways. There was some confusion between ascribed and achieved status, with some candidates arguing that ascribed status could improve their life chances.
- (c) Most candidates gave detailed explanations of how lack of education, educational opportunities and poverty influence the lack of life chances in traditional societies. Some candidates produced excellent essays at the top of the mark range, referring to closed system, ascribed status, the caste system, feudalism, patriarchy and opportunities for women.
- (d) For this question most candidates described the progress made by women in employment. The best answers used a range of evidence that included such examples as the glass ceiling, legal changes, voting behaviour and involvement in politics, as well as dual/triple burden, and referred to feminist theorist as well.

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates clearly understood that this meant the complete lack of all necessities of life. Some candidates showed confusion, defining the term as showing off your wealth or moving down the social ladder.
- (b) Again, most candidates gave clear examples of situations when one individual or a group is poor in relation to another group. Some candidates were confused, giving examples of brand name clothes and luxuries as examples of relative poverty, as well as confusing the term with relatives.
- (c) This question was generally well understood and candidates gave a range of reasons that included marriage, promotion, luck and education. Some candidates wrote about migration, stopping being fatalistic, turning to crime and death as means of escape, which were acceptable, but also investing and selling buildings, which were not.

- (d) Generally this question was interpreted as one of taking advantage of education or not. Many candidates blamed the individual who did not take advantage of their education for their poverty. Answers that were very good looked at the position of women, especially those who were single parents, and other concepts such as the cycle of deprivation and Marxist theories of why some people remain poor, and addressed the 'how far' in the question..

Section D

There were insufficient answers to **Questions 6 and 7** on which to comment.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 2251/12

Paper 12

Key messages

- Learning the meaning of key sociological concepts will help candidates to improve their answers.
- Candidates should pay particular attention to the marks awarded for questions and match the length of their answers to the mark allocation.
- To achieve higher marks candidates need to develop more detailed responses, especially to answers to parts **(c)** and **(d)**.

General comments

Candidates responded well to this paper and all the questions were answered, with answers at all levels. The majority of candidates answered the correct number of questions and there were few rushed final answers. Some candidates only answered three questions, while a few answered them all.

Sophisticated evaluation of sociological material was evident in the very best answers and many candidates had been well prepared, especially for the compulsory question. Others needed to develop more detailed responses, especially to answers to parts **(c)** and **(d)**, with more accurate use of terms and several points made in order to achieve high marks. Most candidates offered excellent explanation and were able to cite numerous ways and give examples. Others needed to include more sociological information instead of common knowledge.

Questions requiring straightforward answers were done well, while questions requiring stretching answers needed to contain more discussion in order to gain good marks.

Candidates should pay particular attention to the marks awarded for questions. Some candidates wrote extensive answers for questions worth just 2 marks and then gave a short answer for a question worth 8 marks. Likewise, if a question asks for two examples, that is all that is needed to gain full marks.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) (i)** The nature of open-ended questions was well understood by almost all candidates, with just a few confusing then with closed questions. Some candidates overcomplicated their answers.
- (ii)** Most candidates were clear that respondents are those who are the subject of interviews or a questionnaire, although a few thought they carried out interviews. Some candidates confused respondents with participants.
- (iii)** In order to gain two marks on this question it was necessary for candidates to address both the 'participation' and 'observation' elements of the question. Participation was explained well. Some candidates went into detail about covert and overt participation which was frequently accurate but gained no extra marks. Although most candidates also referred to the researcher studying the research group whilst they were participating in group activities, other candidates omitted this aspect.

- (b) Many candidates clearly outlined the differences between the qualitative and quantitative data and gave examples of the type of method used by each to distinguish between them. Others needed to be more closely focused on the question, as they gave examples about the nature of the research that could be undertaken rather than the differences between the different approaches. Candidates needed to give two points and briefly develop each to gain the full four marks.
- (c) This question was generally well answered, although some candidates made speculative answers, such as 'people will not tell the truth', without explaining why this might be the case with a questionnaire. Many candidates achieved full marks on this question, giving two clearly different problems faced by researchers when carrying out questionnaires. Some candidates confused reliability and validity.
- (d) The best answers concentrated on the role of the interviewer. Some candidates concentrated on the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires as a method of gathering data rather than of interviews, as specified in the question.
- (e) This question was well done, with most candidates showing clearly that they knew what closed questions were, as well as identifying the advantages and disadvantages associated with them. Many were able to explain that the advantage of being short and easy to collate could also be a disadvantage in that data lack depth.
- (f) Careful reading of the question helped candidates to answer it well, as surveys differ from studies in that they imply something larger. A number of candidates used the word 'studies' in their answers and referred to case studies rather than research involving large numbers of participants. Other candidates gave maintaining contact with the research group and dropout rate as two different examples of limitations and so could only be awarded marks for one limitation. A few candidates did not know what a longitudinal survey is. Some candidates concentrated on problems with only brief reference to advantages. Some candidates wrote about participant observation rather than longitudinal surveys and confused the terms validity and reliability.

Section B

Question 2

- (a) Interaction was correctly defined as all types of verbal and non-verbal connections between people. Candidates who wrote clear answers made two distinct points rather than running them together.
- (b) Primary socialisation is a well-understood term. Many candidates were able to identify early years and the family as two of the key features. Other candidates described the effects of schooling/education, which is an aspect of secondary socialisation. Some answers to this question were very long but the candidates did not separate out two different features and instead wrote it all in one sentence. Candidates need to understand what is meant by the word 'feature'.
- (c) This question was generally well answered, although some candidates devoted over half their response to what happens before school, leaving little time to answer the actual question.
- (d) Many candidates were able to identify nurture/nature as the major debate about the forces that shape human behaviour. There were some excellent descriptions of feral children and how they can illuminate the discussion. Some of these descriptions were very detailed. To reach the higher mark bands, candidates would have done better to have made several different points in less detail.

Question 3

- (a) Some candidates clearly defined social order as the situation that exists when norms and values are accepted and followed, whether this is by coercion or consensus. Some candidates had difficulties defining this.
- (b) Many candidates clearly distinguished between the two types of social control. Some only described informal social control, while others only wrote about formal social control.

- (c) This was generally a well-answered question and there were some excellent responses. Some answers included good discussion of the criminal justice system and a few candidates also looked at the roles of the media and the benefit system.
- (d) Many answers showed detailed analysis, contrasting the sharing of values with the imposing of control. A number of candidates raised the classic Marxist v functionalist debate. Some others were aware of cultural diversity and subcultures, but these were not always related to the question.

Section C

Question 4

- (a) The best answers concentrated on social divisions reflecting different groups in society based on an individual's perceived characteristics, status or power. The most common answer described gender divisions, which is an example of social division rather than an explanation of the term.
- (b) This was a well-understood question, with many candidates explaining processes such as verbal appellation and canalisation. Some confused the process with acquiring a gender position or discrimination.
- (c) The best answers to this question considered how the activities of women in the home limit their opportunities in the work-place rather than describing the work-place hurdles that women have to overcome to gain employment or the inferior employment that they may gain. Some candidates tended to move away from the question and describe how we acquire our values in relation to gender and to make assertive comments about women being lazy and having time off when there is no evidence to support this.
- (d) There were many responses to this question that showed good analysis and the use of such concepts as the glass ceiling. Some excellent candidates showed that the answer to this also depends on the country as there is not just one situation but different experiences in different cultures. Many also looked at status in relation to gender within certain professions. A lot of the material quoted in answers was based on research from the 1970s and 1980s and although this is still quite valid, candidates who wish to do very well should also consider some more contemporary references.

Question 5

- (a) Nearly all candidates gave a clear answer to this question and identified social mobility as the movement both up and down the social scale.
- (b) This question was generally well answered, although a lot of the material seemed to be based on the 1970s and 1980s. To gain the highest marks, candidates needed to be aware of debates in the last 10 years on this topic. Some excellent candidates showed that the answer to this also depends on the country, as there is not just one common experience. They also looked at status within certain professions. There were some responses that identified two barriers to upward mobility for unskilled workers, such as poor employment chances. Sometimes the question was not adequately answered as factors such as education were referenced twice.
- (c) Candidates who focused on ethnic groups produced creditworthy responses, especially those who gave specific examples. Others confined their responses to looking at the problems faced by certain ethnic individuals. Excellent answers noted that some ethnic minorities can have advantageous positions over majorities. Some candidates interpreted gender as a form of ethnicity. Other candidates noted that there are differences between ethnic groups but much of their evidence was unsubstantiated assertion.
- (d) Many candidates offered a range of reasons why working class people can or cannot move into the middle class in modern industrial societies. Fewer candidates were able to analyse both and come to a conclusion about the feasibility of such moves. Most candidates gave a list of possible reasons for mobility but needed to evaluate the likelihood of winning a lottery or the prospect of gaining free education. Few candidates noted the barriers to equal opportunity in education. Some references to structural change were frequently made but embourgeoisement was often misunderstood.

Section D

Question 6

- (a) The term power was understood by the majority of candidates.
- (b) Many candidates stated that having voted for a government was justification for following its authority.
- (c) The majority of candidates recognised the weaknesses of governments which may cause citizens to reject that government's authority. Several appropriate references were made to contemporary events, such as the recent uprisings in the Arab world.
- (d) Some candidates had a firm grasp of the meaning of elite groups and could therefore answer the question regarding the amount of control they exercise in democratic societies. Those candidates who did not have a clear understanding of who the 'elite' are found it difficult to offer a convincing analysis of their relationship to democratic governments. There was much good use made of the pluralist/Marxist debate.

Question 7

- (a) Some candidates were able to explain the meaning of this term but a number struggled to go beyond voting.
- (b) There was generally good knowledge of pressure groups with examples used well to illustrate their features.
- (c) The influence of pressure groups in society in general was described by a number of candidates but the very best answers outlined the ways this influence is directed towards government decisions.
- (d) Most candidates who answered this offered an excellent explanation and were able to cite numerous examples of the ways in which the mass media influence or control the political agenda. Some candidates needed to develop their understanding of how the mass media influence the political process as they found this question challenging.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 2251/13

Paper 13

Key messages

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General comments

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- (ii) Most candidates were clear that respondents are those who are the subject of interviews or a questionnaire, although a few thought they carried out interviews. Some candidates confused respondents with participants.
- (iii) In order to gain two marks on this question it was necessary for candidates to address both the 'participation' and 'observation' elements of the question. Participation was explained well. Some candidates went into detail about covert and overt participation which was frequently accurate but gained no extra marks. Although most candidates also referred to the researcher studying the research group whilst they were participating in group activities, other candidates omitted this aspect.

- (b) Many candidates clearly outlined the differences between the qualitative and quantitative data and gave examples of the type of method used by each to distinguish between them. Others needed to be more closely focused on the question, as they gave examples about the nature of the research that could be undertaken rather than the differences between the different approaches. Candidates needed to give two points and briefly develop each to gain the full four marks.
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Section B

Question 2

- (a) Interaction was correctly defined as all types of verbal and non-verbal connections between people. Candidates who wrote clear answers made two distinct points rather than running them together.
- (b) Primary socialisation is a well-understood term. Many candidates were able to identify early years and the family as two of the key features. Other candidates described the effects of schooling/education, which is an aspect of secondary socialisation. Some answers to this question were very long but the candidates did not separate out two different features and instead wrote it all in one sentence. Candidates need to understand what is meant by the word 'feature'.
- (c) This question was generally well answered, although some candidates devoted over half their response to what happens before school, leaving little time to answer the actual question.
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- (b) Many candidates clearly distinguished between the two types of social control. Some only described informal social control, while others only wrote about formal social control.

- (c) This was generally a well-answered question and there were some excellent responses. Some answers included good discussion of the criminal justice system and a few candidates also looked at the roles of the media and the benefit system.
- (d) Many answers showed detailed analysis, contrasting the sharing of values with the imposing of control. A number of candidates raised the classic Marxist v functionalist debate. Some others were aware of cultural diversity and subcultures, but these were not always related to the question.

Section C

Question 4

- (a) The best answers concentrated on social divisions reflecting different groups in society based on an individual's perceived characteristics, status or power. The most common answer described gender divisions, which is an example of social division rather than an explanation of the term.
- (b) This was a well-understood question, with many candidates explaining processes such as verbal appellation and canalisation. Some confused the process with acquiring a gender position or discrimination.
- (c) The best answers to this question considered how the activities of women in the home limit their opportunities in the work-place rather than describing the work-place hurdles that women have to overcome to gain employment or the inferior employment that they may gain. Some candidates tended to move away from the question and describe how we acquire our values in relation to gender and to make assertive comments about women being lazy and having time off when there is no evidence to support this.
- (d) There were many responses to this question that showed good analysis and the use of such concepts as the glass ceiling. Some excellent candidates showed that the answer to this also depends on the country as there is not just one situation but different experiences in different cultures. Many also looked at status in relation to gender within certain professions. A lot of the material quoted in answers was based on research from the 1970s and 1980s and although this is still quite valid, candidates who wish to do very well should also consider some more contemporary references.

Question 5

- (a) Nearly all candidates gave a clear answer to this question and identified social mobility as the movement both up and down the social scale.
- (b) This question was generally well answered, although a lot of the material seemed to be based on the 1970s and 1980s. To gain the highest marks, candidates needed to be aware of debates in the last 10 years on this topic. Some excellent candidates showed that the answer to this also depends on the country, as there is not just one common experience. They also looked at status within certain professions. There were some responses that identified two barriers to upward mobility for unskilled workers, such as poor employment chances. Sometimes the question was not adequately answered as factors such as education were referenced twice.
- (c) Candidates who focused on ethnic groups produced creditworthy responses, especially those who gave specific examples. Others confined their responses to looking at the problems faced by certain ethnic individuals. Excellent answers noted that some ethnic minorities can have advantageous positions over majorities. Some candidates interpreted gender as a form of ethnicity. Other candidates noted that there are differences between ethnic groups but much of their evidence was unsubstantiated assertion.
- (d) Many candidates offered a range of reasons why working class people can or cannot move into the middle class in modern industrial societies. Fewer candidates were able to analyse both and come to a conclusion about the feasibility of such moves. Most candidates gave a list of possible reasons for mobility but needed to evaluate the likelihood of winning a lottery or the prospect of gaining free education. Few candidates noted the barriers to equal opportunity in education. Some references to structural change were frequently made but embourgeoisement was often misunderstood.

Section D

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- (c) The majority of candidates recognised the weaknesses of governments which may cause citizens to reject that government's authority. Several appropriate references were made to contemporary events, such as the recent uprisings in the Arab world.
- (d) Some candidates had a firm grasp of the meaning of elite groups and could therefore answer the question regarding the amount of control they exercise in democratic societies. Those candidates who did not have a clear understanding of who the 'elite' are found it difficult to offer a convincing analysis of their relationship to democratic governments. There was much good use made of the pluralist/Marxist debate.

Question 7

- (a) Some candidates were able to explain the meaning of this term but a number struggled to go beyond voting.
- (b) There was generally good knowledge of pressure groups with examples used well to illustrate their features.
- (c) The influence of pressure groups in society in general was described by a number of candidates but the very best answers outlined the ways this influence is directed towards government decisions.
- (d) Most candidates who answered this offered an excellent explanation and were able to cite numerous examples of the ways in which the mass media influence or control the political agenda. Some candidates needed to develop their understanding of how the mass media influence the political process as they found this question challenging.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 2251/21

Paper 21

Key messages

Part (a): To score the full 2 marks in these parts, a clear definition of the term is required. A partial definition which shows some understanding will score 1 mark.

Part (b): To score the full 4 marks in these parts, two separate and distinct examples must be given with appropriate explanations/development.

Part (c): To score 4 to 6 marks in these parts, candidates are required to include sociological facts and explanations with sufficient development. Common-sense answers with little or no sociology will be awarded a Level 1 score (0-3 marks).

Part (d): Answers meriting Level 2 scores (4-6 marks) should contain relevant well-reasoned sociological points. For a Level 3 score (7-8 marks), candidates must demonstrate a good understanding of the issues raised by the question and there should be some attempt at assessment.

General comments

The overall performance this session was, as usual, varied both within and across Centres. The most popular questions with candidates were **Questions 1, 2, 3 and 6**, with fewer candidates answering **Questions 4 and 5** and fewer still attempting **Questions 7 and 8**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Family

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates offered a reasonable definition of the term 'divorce'. Those candidates who wrote about legal separation rather than divorce or did not mention the end or termination of a marriage were unable to gain credit.
- (b) This was a well-answered question on the whole. Some candidates gave 'death' as an example of marital breakdown, which did not gain any marks, while others gave 'causes' of marital breakdown (domestic violence and infidelity), which could not gain credit either.
- (c) This question was generally well answered. Many candidates were able to explain why divorce rates in most modern industrial societies had increased. Some candidates discussed divorce in general rather than focusing on increases in the last fifty years.
- (d) Some good answers were offered here, which gained candidates a Level 3 score (7-8 marks). Some candidates provided one-sided answers, which cannot score above Level 2 (4-6 marks).

Question 2

- (a) This question was well answered by most candidates. Candidates needed to make reference to three generations or living in the same household in order to gain both marks.
- (b) Most candidates were able to identify two reasons why traditional ways of life are usually associated with the extended family. To gain full marks, both points needed to be developed.



- (c) The better answers here focused on increased opportunities for social and geographical mobility and the independence of smaller family units. Links with tradition and religion were also made.
- (d) To achieve a Level 3 score, answers needed to focus on whether the family in general has become less important in modern industrial societies. Many candidates tended to focus on the reasons for the decline in extended families, so could only gain limited credit.

Section B: Education

Question 3

- (a) The term 'hereditary intelligence' was generally well defined by most candidates. Candidates who wrote about intelligence passed down through generations without mentioning the genetic links were unable to gain full marks here.
- (b) Many candidates were able to offer two social factors that may influence a person's level of intelligence. The most popular answers were home background, gender and ethnicity.
- (c) This was a reasonably well-answered question in which most candidates were able to provide appropriate factors that may influence educational achievement, other than intelligence. Factors such as home background, cultural and material deprivation, labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy were included in the better answers.
- (d) Most candidates made a reasonable attempt to answer the question.

Question 4

- (a) Many candidates found the term 'functions' difficult to define, with most providing an example rather than a definition. A definition along the lines of 'contributions made to an institution or society' gained 2 marks.
- (b) This was a well-answered question, with the most popular answers being provision of skills/qualifications, socialisation and preparation for work.
- (c) Most candidates were able to explain adequately how schools provide equality of opportunities through policies and practices such as, for example, compensatory education, mixed ability teaching and policies against racism and sexism in schools.
- (d) This was a reasonably well-answered question, although there were some one-sided answers simply stating that there is equality of opportunity in the education systems of modern industrial societies rather than providing discussion of government educational policies or barriers to equality of opportunities caused by disadvantaged backgrounds.

Section C: Crime, Deviance and Social Control

Question 5

- (a) The term 'disadvantaged groups' was generally well defined. Candidates who gave examples, such as the working class or unemployed, rather than a clear definition could not gain credit.
- (b) This proved surprisingly difficult for many candidates with few able to provide examples of crimes associated with young men. Creditworthy examples included vandalism, graffiti and joy-riding.
- (c) This question was generally well answered. Many candidates were able to provide reasonable explanations for why young criminals give up their criminal activity as they get older.
- (d) Most candidates answered this question well. Candidates who gave one-sided answers or who did not address the 'to what extent' part of the question were unable to score Level 3 marks here.

Question 6

- (a) Many candidates found it difficult to give a clear definition of the term 'age group', describing it as 'the age gap' or the difference between age groups.
- (b) This question was mostly answered well, with references made to influences such as the peer group, the media, the family and education.
- (c) Candidates generally found this question challenging. To gain high marks, they needed to link sociological observations directly with the question.
- (d) Candidates who scored Level 3 marks on this question focused on the difference between mainstream and youth cultures. Many candidates offered only a fairly descriptive account of one or two youth subcultures, so could only gain limited credit for their answers.

Section D: Mass Media

Question 7

This question was not chosen by many candidates.

- (a) The term 'audience selection' was well defined by those who attempted this question. Candidates who gave a common-sense answer, such as 'the audience that is selected', rather than the 'targeting of a particular group' could not gain credit.
- (b) Surprisingly few candidates were able to provide examples of how the mass media may influence images of older people. Good answers cited negative images of old people as forgetful, worthless or grumpy.
- (c) Candidates who attempted this question tended to explain reasonably well the pluralist perspective of the role of the mass media.
- (d) Again, this question was well answered by those who chose it.

Question 8

- (a) Most candidates were able to define the term 'bias' correctly.
- (b) This was a well-answered question on the whole. Popular answers included selective or sensationalised reporting, biased or one-sided reporting, gate-keeping and agenda setting.
- (c) Candidates appeared to find this question difficult, with many simply explaining bias in general rather than bias within the process of gathering and editing news reports.
- (d) This was a reasonably well-answered question in which most candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge of the Marxist perspective. To gain Level 3 marks, candidates needed to include evaluation in their answers.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 2251/22

Paper 22

Key messages

Part (a): To score the full 2 marks in these parts, a clear definition of the term is required. A partial definition which shows some understanding will score 1 mark.

Part (b): To score the full 4 marks in these parts, two separate and distinct examples must be given with appropriate explanations/development.

Part (c): To score 4 to 6 marks in these parts, candidates are required to include sociological facts and explanations with sufficient development. Common-sense answers with little or no sociology will be awarded a Level 1 score (0-3 marks).

Part (d): Answers meriting Level 2 scores (4-6 marks) should contain relevant well-reasoned sociological points. For a Level 3 score (7-8 marks), candidates must demonstrate a good understanding of the issues raised by the question and there should be some attempt at assessment.

General comments

The overall performance this session was, as usual, varied both in and across Centres.

The use of candidates' own experiences is to be encouraged, provided that it is linked to appropriate sociological theory rather than assertion or personal bias.

The most popular questions with candidates were **Questions 1, 2, 3 and 6**, with fewer answering **Questions 4 and 5** and fewer still attempting **Questions 7 and 8**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Family

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates offered a reasonable definition of the term 'role'. Some candidates gave a partial answer consisting of an example rather than a definition, so could not gain full credit.
- (b) This was a well-answered question on the whole, although some candidates gave examples which were too similar to gain 4 marks (2x2).
- (c) This question proved to be challenging for many candidates as they were not familiar with the term 'child-centeredness'.
- (d) Some good answers were offered here which gained candidates a Level 3 score (7-8 marks). Some candidates provided one-sided answers, which cannot score above Level 2 (4-6 marks).

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates answered this well. Those who made no reference to children being part of the reconstituted family could only gain 1 mark.
- (b) Most candidates were able to identify two reasons why the number of reconstituted families has increased over the last fifty years. The most popular answers were rising divorce rates and an increasing number of remarriages.
- (c) The better answers here focused on the increasing number of single parents placing a burden on the welfare state and social services, as well as on how poverty, crime and disillusionment in marriage lead to cohabitation and serial monogamy.
- (d) Many candidates tended to focus on the reasons for an increasing divorce rate, with only limited reference to the growing independence of women.

Section B: Education

Question 3

- (a) The term 'official curriculum' was generally well-defined by most candidates. Some candidates confused the term with the 'hidden curriculum'.
- (b) Many candidates were able to offer one way in which schools encourage hard work, such as certificates/qualifications, praise, medals, but few were able to come up with a second example and tended to repeat the first example in a different way. To gain full marks, candidates need to make two distinctly different points and then develop each.
- (c) Most candidates overlooked the question's focus on 'traditional societies', so could only gain limited credit for their answers. Candidates must read questions thoroughly to ensure that their answers address the questions asked.
- (d) Most candidates made a reasonable attempt to answer the question but the 'correspondence principle' was often implicit rather than explicit.

Question 4

- (a) Surprisingly few candidates were able to define 'equality of opportunity' clearly.
- (b) This was a well-answered question, with the most popular answers being working class/poor people and ethnic minorities.
- (c) Many candidates appeared to be unfamiliar with the term 'compensatory education', with some confusing it with comprehensive or compulsory education.
- (d) This was a reasonably well-answered question, although there were some one-sided answers simply stating that there is equality of opportunity in the education systems of modern industrial societies with little or no mention of barriers to equality of opportunities.

Section C: Crime, Deviance and Social Control

Question 5

- (a) The term 'sanction' was generally well defined. Some candidates mentioned positive sanctions, for example rewards, but did not mention negative sanctions, for example punishments, so could only score 1 mark.
- (b) This proved surprisingly difficult for many candidates. Candidates need to understand the different ways in which rewards may be used to encourage social conformity.

- (c) Again, this was generally not well answered. The better answers included both formal sanctions (types of punishments such as fines and prison) and informal sanctions (such as ridicule and ostracisation). Many candidates compared formal and informal social control rather than discussing how sanctions help to ensure conformity in society.
- (d) Some of the better answers to this question included reference to different theories of crime and deviance or the effect of youth subcultures on the dominant values of society. To gain Level 3 marks, candidates needed to address the 'how far' part of the question.

Question 6

- (a) Many candidates struggled to define the term stereotype clearly. Some gave examples rather than a definition and many confused the term with labelling.
- (b) This question was mostly well answered, with candidates making reference to groups such as working class/unemployed, ethnic minorities, young males and those living in poor urban areas.
- (c) Most candidates answered this question reasonably well, with many referring to gender role socialisation, police attitudes to female crime (chivalry thesis) and the constraints of the housewife/mother role.
- (d) Most candidates provided a Level 2 (4-6 marks) answer to this question. To access the highest mark band, candidates needed to offer a two-sided response. Those who focused too much on official crime statistics and their shortcomings and made little or no reference to self-report and victim surveys could only gain limited credit.

Section D: Mass Media

Question 7

Few candidates answered this question.

- (a) When this question was attempted candidates were able to define the term censorship clearly.
- (b) This question proved to be challenging and few candidates were able to describe limits on the freedom of the mass media adequately. To gain full marks, candidates could have mentioned legal acts of parliament, for example Defence Notices, the Race Relations Act or the Prevention of Terrorism Act.
- (c) This was a reasonably well-answered question but often candidates did not develop their answers. The better answers highlighted the importance of television as an influence on political debate, and the potential for bias and manipulation by powerful media moguls.
- (d) Some good, if basic, answers were provided here. To score higher marks, candidates needed to include references to theories of social control in their answers.

Question 8

- (a) Many candidates were able to define moral panic in a general way. To gain full marks, they then needed to link this to an exaggerated or imaginary threat to society.
- (b) This was another reasonably well-answered question. Most candidates cited sensationalised headlines and photographs as examples of how the mass media exaggerate certain behaviours.
- (c) Candidates appeared to understand and were able to give examples of how the mass media use stereotypes to create moral panics but were less familiar with the term scapegoats.
- (d) This question proved challenging to many candidates, who needed a stronger understanding of the links between moral panics and deviancy. Better answers explored the links between moral panics and deviancy amplification.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 2251/23

Paper 23

Key messages

Part (a): To score the full 2 marks in these parts, a clear definition of the term is required. A partial definition which shows some understanding will score 1 mark.

Part (b): To score the full 4 marks in these parts, two separate and distinct examples must be given with appropriate explanations/development.

Part (c): To score 4 to 6 in these parts, candidates are required to include sociological facts and explanations with sufficient development. Common-sense answers with little or no sociology will be awarded a Level 1 score (0-3 marks).

Part (d): Answers meriting Level 2 scores (4-6 marks) should contain relevant well-reasoned sociological points. For a Level 3 score (7-8 marks), candidates must demonstrate a good understanding of the issues raised by the question and there should be some attempt at assessment.

General comments

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- (c) This question proved to be challenging for many candidates as they were not familiar with the term 'child-centeredness'.
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Question 3

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