

AS LEVEL

Examiners' report

SOCIOLOGY

H180

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Version 1

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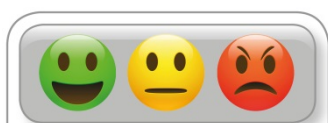


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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 1 series overview

This is the fourth examination of the new Sociology specification, and overall the standard of responses was sound. There was a range of responses, suggesting that the paper differentiated appropriately. The vast majority of candidates attempted to answer all questions of the paper and managed to time their responses well. There were very few rubric errors and candidates seemed reasonably well prepared knowing the assessment objectives of each question. On occasion, some candidates did leave whole questions out perhaps indicating a lack of practice in working under timed conditions. It was also apparent that some candidates did not evaluate in the questions which specifically asked for evaluation; that is, Question 4 on section A and the 20 mark questions on section B. Candidates need to be reminded of the importance of addressing all three assessment objectives, particularly when the question asks to "Outline and evaluate" or to "Briefly evaluate".

Key point call out

Candidates need to be prepared to evaluate on Question 4 and Questions 8, 12 and 16. Evaluation can take the form of a counter-view, going 'against' the question or direct criticism to a previous point. To attain full marks for evaluation, candidates should aim to make two detailed points in Question 4 and four detailed points of evaluation for Questions 8, 12 and 16.

In Section A, there were clear differences between candidates in the use of sources; some candidates made no reference to the source and so lost AO2 marks for application. Using the source is a skill that can be practised and candidates should make sure that they are developing and applying their knowledge from the source instead of copying what they see (paying 'lip service' to the source).

Key point call out

When using the source, candidates must refer to the source twice in Question 2 and at least once in Question 3 to gain full marks. It is good practice to explicitly make reference in your response to signpost you are using the source, e.g. 'In the source we can see a father and son which is representative....'

In Section B, the Family was far and away the most popular topic, followed by Youth Culture. Very few centres chose the Media option. With every question, in order to achieve marks in the highest mark band, candidates need to include a range of sociological evidence and to discuss these with some depth. A large number of responses, particularly for the 12 and 20 mark questions in Section A and Section B did not include the required range and depth of sociological evidence. "Evidence" can include studies, theories, concepts and contemporary examples, although it should be noted that responses which rely heavily on contemporary examples will not score very highly as, on their own, contemporary examples are not good sociology and would only achieve Level 2.

Key point call out

Candidates need to always prioritise sociological evidence over contemporary examples. While contemporary examples can illustrate a point very effectively, it is a study, concept or theory that will elevate the response.

On the whole there was a clear difference between stronger and weaker responses. At the top end, there was a range of sociological evidence contained in responses to all of the questions. Such responses included relevant and detailed explanations including sociological studies, concepts and theories where appropriate. The weaker responses were often unable to provide sociological knowledge and understanding and the responses became very anecdotal suggesting they were relying on common sense. Candidates must be encouraged to back up their responses with sociological evidence; be it concepts, studies, relevant contemporary examples or theory. For example, in responses to Question 3, candidates who discussed how canalisation and manipulation (Oakley) was a key part of primary socialisation scored more highly than other candidates who just recycled the sources and explained what they saw in them.

In terms of assessment objectives, Knowledge and Understanding (AO1) remains the strongest area; stronger responses were able to offer a whole range of sociological knowledge, mainly in the form of concepts and studies, but sometimes making relevant use of contemporary examples and theory. AO2 (application) continues to improve with many candidates signposting their use of the source. AO3 skills of Analysis and Evaluation were moderately successful. It is worth mentioning that when candidates are prepared for this examination, it should be made explicit that Question 4 and Questions 8, 12 and 16 all have AO3 marks with the latter having more AO3 marks than any other skill area. Therefore candidates should be encouraged to evaluate more than what they would write for their AO1 knowledge marks.

Key point call out

Candidates should match the demands of each question to the content and the quantity they write. For example, Questions 6, 10 and 14 only requires two developed paragraphs of knowledge to achieve the full 8 marks whereas Questions 8, 12 and 16 requires 2-3 developed paragraphs of knowledge plus four developed evaluation points to achieve the full 20 marks.

Section A overview

This section comprised of four compulsory questions which all candidates needed to answer. Two questions needed the source to be used and referenced.

Question 1

Source



Father and son



A group of friends

1 Define the concept of ethnic identity.

[4]

This response required a full core meaning and full development to gain the maximum marks. Most candidates answered this question well. Most candidates referred to aspects of ethnic identity such as language, culture, traditions, and gave examples such as Asian or Black British or Brasian. Some used studies such as Ghuman, Gilroy or Modood to support their response. Occasionally a few candidates strayed into a broad response focusing on the idea of 'race' rather than ethnicity or simply repeated or rearranged the words of the question which was not credited.

Exemplar 1

A	1	<p>Ethnic Identity describe how ethnicity influences how you see yourself and how others see you. For ethnic minorities this is very important because it is usually strengthened when living in a country which isn't the dominant ethnicity. That You are socialised (taught norms: patterns of behaviour and values: ideas and beliefs) through primary socialisation which is the family. From a very young age you will be taught celebration, diet, dress etc through religious commitment and how those factors are affect by your ethnicity. An example of an ethnic identity might be ^{an} Asian identity.</p>

As you can see in this response, the candidate has provided full core meaning at the start and then continues in to a full development and is a good example of how to achieve full marks.

Question 2

2 With reference to the source, identify and briefly explain two examples of informal social control.

[6]

Candidates were required to use two picture sources to identify and explain two examples of informal social control. Candidates for the most part completed the question well identifying peers and family and were able to expand each to show how the informal control may take place, referring to sanctions or peer pressure. A few candidates only identified one example of informal social control and a few candidates identified examples not connected to the sources and therefore did not gain any application marks.

Exemplar 2

2	a	<p>Informal Social Control is how someone may be socialised into behaving. In the sources it can be seen a presumably father telling of his child, this could be related to outlets Manipulation & Control, in which young boys and girls are often manipulated to act a certain way. Young boys ^{are} will be told that boys Don't cry and to hide their emotions while girls are told not to act a certain way as it is not lady-like. In relation to the second picture in the source they could be used as girls will often group together and create a social environment of one another for example in Heg's study she found the middle class girls encouraged each other to be more Promiscuous however belittled the working class girls, this shows that peers have a direct influence on informal social control.</p>
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This candidate has clearly referred to the source both times and has fully applied peer groups and the family in relation to informal social control.

Question 3


- 3 Using the source and your wider sociological knowledge, explain the difference between primary and secondary socialisation. **[8]**

This question was answered relatively well with most candidates able to write a point about primary socialisation and one point about secondary socialisation, which was credited. To gain full marks, candidates needed to draw from the source and from their wider sociological knowledge with the most popular responses referring to Parsons or Oakley to illustrate primary socialisation, and Lees, Keddie or Bowles and Gintis to illustrate secondary socialisation. On occasion some candidates missed out on full marks due to lacking any reference to the source at all.

Question 4

- 4 Outline and briefly evaluate the view that individuals with disabilities find it very difficult to create a positive disabled identity. **[12]**

Typical sociological responses to this question were the use of studies that included Shakespeare, Gill, Zola and Barnes as well as reference to labelling, master status and self-fulfilling prophecy with links to Goffman or Becker. References were also made to the medical model and the social model as well as the concept of learned helplessness. However, it was more common to see more basic points with anecdotal evidence of how it was difficult to create a positive disabled identity. These were often confused or inaccurately applied. In evaluation, Murugami was the most common study used as well as examples such as Paralympics, the Last Leg, Invictus games, and changing technology allowing more access. However, it was also notable that a significant number of candidates did not attempt to evaluate and therefore did not gain any AO3 marks.

	AfL	Candidates to follow all command verbs in questions to make sure they are answering questions fully. In the context of this question "Outline and briefly evaluate".
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Exemplar 3

A	A	<p>Individuals with disabilities find it very difficult to create a positive disabled identity as they feel different to to others and may feel as if they cannot fit into society due to a different thing about them; their disability. Society can be very unaccepting of people who look different or identify as things which are different to a concept of normality which people have thought of of. Some see it as embarrassing, too, so they feel as if they cannot open up comfortably to people regarding their disability, therefore feeling as if their disability is negative.</p>
		<p>However, it could be argued that having having a disability is not the state you have to be in to feel inferior. A sociologist studied a a school, where he noticed that the male students were superior to the female students as they they took over most of the space in the playgrounds whilst the female students were separated segregated. Another study shows that the male students controlled the females by using derogatory terms to towards them, making them feel negative. These studies contradict the an idea of disabled people being unable to feel comfortable about their disability, because females feel more uncomfortable in society due to their gender.</p>

This is an example of a basic response paragraph – just relatively common sense and no use of concepts or sociology – this response achieved Level 2.

Section B overview

Candidates had the option to select whether they did further questions on the Family, Youth or the Media. Far and away, the majority of candidates opted for the family. It was noticeable that some candidates were also employing a strategy in approaching higher mark questions first in order to give them the appropriate amount of time and not leave higher mark questions to the end.

Option 1 overview

The Family is the most popular option and it was clear that candidates were well prepared particularly in terms of theory such as functionalism and feminism. A number of candidates struggled with Question 7 and were not able to provide specific sociological evidence to back up their response.

Question 5

OPTION 1

Families and relationships

5 Define and briefly explain family diversity in terms of social class. [5]

Most candidates understood the concept of family diversity, yet not all could apply it to social class. Ideas such as nuclear families being more prevalent among the middle class and single parent families occurring in lower classes were quite common responses with studies by Young and Willmott, or Bourdieu being the most used. On occasion some candidates misinterpreted the question to mean ethnic diversity within one single family and this was not credited.

Question 6

6* Identify and briefly explain **two** ways in which families have become more child-centred. [8]

When answered well, some good ideas were used such as the work of Furedi, Pester power, paranoid parenting, helicopter parenting (Nelson) or the change in role of children historically: Stone, Aries. Some candidates also tried to apply other areas of knowledge to the question such as Young & Willmott and the symmetrical family or the changing nature of fatherhood (Dermott, Hatter) to illustrate how the family had become child-centred and this was credited. However, a significant number of candidates did not use sociological evidence and instead gave common sense responses or left the question out altogether.

Question 7

7* Explain the impact of the ageing population on families. [12]

This question did not get the sociological responses that the mark scheme was looking for with a lot of common sense responses on display such as 'more people to help with childcare' with no evidence to back this up. When sociology was used, concepts and studies such as Brannen (beanpole families), pivot generation, Grundy and Henretta (sandwich generation) and Ross et al on grandparents relationship with teenagers were the most prevalent. Occasionally some candidates did not understand what ageing population meant and focused on people having children later, with reasons for this, rather than increased life expectancy.

Question 8

8* Evaluate the view that the ideology of the nuclear family remains strong.

[20]

This question was answered reasonably well. In terms of knowledge, most candidates used Functionalists such as Parsons or Murdoch to explain why the nuclear family is the ideal type of family and hence remained strong. Some candidates also used the New Right, e.g. Dennis and Erdos, and some applied Popenoe or Chester as well as the use of Leach and his concept of the cereal packet family. In evaluation, Marxist and feminist ideas were used to criticise the notion that the nuclear family was strong. Other evaluation points came from Postmodernists, most often Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, Stacey and Giddens. Data on marriages, divorces, single parent families and same sex families was also used effectively. It was notable that the majority of responses lacked the depth and breadth of evaluation and analysis to achieve the top mark band in this category.

Option 2 overview

Of the candidates that did complete the Youth section, it was generally done well with good use of theory and studies. On occasion, candidates were evaluating in Question 11 which is not necessary and was not credited.

Question 9

OPTION 2

Youth subcultures

9 Define and briefly explain the concept of criminal subcultures.

[5]

This was usually well answered with a full core meaning and examples used. More often than not these would be studies such as Cloward and Ohlin or examples from the work of the CCCS. On occasion, some candidates did not address the 'criminal' element of subculture and veered into general subcultural theory.

Question 10

10* Identify and briefly explain **two** ways in which youth subcultures are related to hybridity.

[8]

This question elicited a mixed response. When done well, studies such as Johal and Brasians or Nayak with white wannabes/ Jafaican were the most common use of sociological evidence. Some candidates also used Postmodernists and neo-tribes as well. However, there were also a number of responses that were purely common sense or just limited in their understanding of what hybridity was.

Question 11

11* Explain the idea that youth subcultures are formed as an expression of masculine identity. [12]

The question provided a mixed response. The good responses used studies such as Messerschmidt and some used anti-school subcultures such as Mac an Ghail's macho lads (3Fs), Archer and Yamashita with hyper heterosexuality or Willis and 'One of the Lads'. Some responses were unsure and weakly applied various CCCS studies to the question such as Clarke and the skinheads. Some weaker responses were evaluating and provided a feminist critique of how women had been excluded from subcultures – as this was evaluation this was not credited.

Question 12

12* Evaluate the view that the media causes an increase in youth deviance.

[20]

The majority of candidates answered this well with appropriate material on interactionism and media labelling being used such as Cohen and moral panics, deviance amplification linked to Wilkins, and the drug takers. Some candidates also used the concept of consumerism linked to Young and the bulimic society. Weaker candidates had anecdotal references to gangsta rap or MTV. Evaluation was usually bordering on juxtaposition, using other theories to say why media wasn't the main cause of deviance, such as Marxist or Functionalist explanations.

Option 3 overview

Only a handful of candidates answered questions on the Media but of those, there was a wide range of knowledge on display. Typically, candidates struggled with Question 14, finding it difficult to apply appropriate concepts and studies to the question.

Question 13

OPTION 3 **Media**

13 Define and briefly explain the two-step flow model of media effects.

[5]

This question proved to be very divisive among the responses seen. When done well, candidates clearly knew what the model was and were articulate in how it worked and gave excellent examples. However on occasion, some candidates did not understand what the question was asking so either described a different model such as the Hypodermic Syringe Model or left the response blank, both of which gained no credit.

Question 14

14* Identify and briefly explain **two** ways in which old age is represented in the media.

[8]

Few candidates answering this question provided sociological evidence as how old age is represented in the media. The ones that did used studies on active ageing or the 'grey pound'. However, more often responses just contained contemporary examples or anecdotal evidence such as descriptions of television shows such as 'One foot in the Grave'.

Question 15

15* Explain how representations of ethnicity in the media are changing.

[12]

This question was answered well with most candidates using sociological evidence to make their points. This often used the work of Van Dijk and how minority ethnic groups are represented or the work of Barker and how EastEnders has changed. Weaker candidates did slip into anecdote at times and talked about greater visibility of black role models on television or did not discuss how media was changing and instead articulated traditional stereotypes, which was not rewarded.

Question 16

16* Evaluate the sociological view that the media merely represents and reflects reality. [20]

This question was generally not very well answered, with a number of responses appearing confused. Responses which used Pluralism to support the view and challenged it with the Marxist perspective were rarely seen. More often, candidates tended to rely on examples or use contemporary news stories such as Donald Trump and his 'fake news' agenda to illustrate their point. On occasion, some candidates did apply theories of gender or ethnicity to question whether the media accurately depicted females or minority ethnic groups, which gained some credit.

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