SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/11
Socialisation, Identity and Research Methods

Key messages

- High scoring answers were able to use a wide range of sociological material.
- There was sound knowledge of positivism and interpretivism shown in responses to methods questions especially **Question 5**.
- High scoring responses used sociological material (concepts/theories/research evidence) to support the points made.
- There was a deficit in knowledge in relation to some elements of socialisation and identity (such as the influence of family on ethnic identity formation)
- There was evidence of greater observance of the examination's rubric in *Section A*, some candidates need to adhere more closely to the requirements of some questions, notably **2(a)** and **2(b)**.
- To achieve full marks in **Question 3(a),** candidates need to only provide two clear and developed points. A number of candidates only provided one point.
- Some candidates produced unbalanced essay responses in *Section B*.

General comments

The standard of responses overall was variable. In *Section A* most candidates gave at least one characteristic of youth identity for **Question 1,** although a number were not able to develop these for an additional mark. **Questions 2(a)** and **2(b)** required methodological knowledge. In **2(a)** many candidates were familiar with the role played by a pilot study in sociological research. In **2(b)** there was evidence of a reasonably good knowledge base. Centres should note that the marks for these questions are accumulated on a points-based approach and it is important to follow the rubric as shown in the mark scheme to achieve high marks for these questions. It was commonplace for responses to have undeveloped points, that did not show why a point was a strength. In **Question 3(a)**, most responses did not directly address the idea that family is the main influence on ethnic identity. Many responses made only one point in explaining the view.

Question 4 was the more popular question in *Section B* although it was less well answered. The strongest responses were able to consider the interplay between nature and nurture and to see show that the process may not be as binary as the question suggests. Few were effective at doing this and responses tended to be rather unbalanced. **Question 5** was answered more effectively with candidates paying attention to both sides of the argument. Centres could focus on how to develop an argument from either side of the debate to help improve the structure and explicit evaluation in essays.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This question was answered quite well. In most cases candidates were able to correctly identify at least one characteristic of youth identity and often two. The most common characteristics were *variations of rebellion and the concern with image* and *consumption,* although a range of other examples were present. Many responses confused childhood with youth. Such responses were not rewarded. A reminder that candidates are only required to describe in this question, there is no need to explain or define.

Question 2

(a)   Although there were some good responses to why a researcher might use a pilot study, in many cases candidates had difficulty developing their responses beyond identification of a reason and giving an explanation which meant that no more than 4 marks could be achieved. The most popular ways included identifying *problems with the research design* and *saving the researcher time and money.* Some suggested that a pilot study can be compared to the later, main study. This approach was not rewarded. A number of candidates were not clear as to the role played by a pilot study in sociological research.

(b)   This question was well answered by candidates. Most were able to provide two strengths of questionnaires. A wide range of answers were given with the strongest responses focusing on *reliability, objectivity* and *representativeness* as core strengths. Some candidates tried to demonstrate the strength of a questionnaire by showing the weaknesses of a different method, e.g. an interview. This approach was typically unsuccessful. Answers should be clearly focused on the stated method. A common feature of responses that lost marks was a failure to develop their points to show why a point was a strength. Candidates might benefit from ensuring they complete their answer by stating that 'this is a strength/limitation because' taking care to avoid repetition of their original point.

Question 3

(a)   Few candidates produced strong answers to this question. Many responses outlined the role of the family in the process of socialisation but made little or no attempt to tackle how this influences the formation of ethnic identity. References to sociological material were rare and there was a reliance on common sense understanding and personal experience. Some candidates wrote long introductions without making concrete points. Many only made one point in their response and very few candidates reached the higher levels for their response. To achieve full marks, candidates need to provide two clear and developed points. If these points are made with good reference to concepts, theories and evidence that is directed towards the question a response can achieve 10 marks.

(b)   Most candidates were able to identify an alternative argument to the one stated in the question. Candidates who were able to give a good response to **Question 3(a)** were often able to perform well on this part of the question. Many focused their attention on an alternative agent to the family and described its influence on ethnic identity. Those taking this approach often did not achieve the highest mark because they did not make clear why an alternative agent is a more important influence than the family. Many responses gave more than one argument in their answer. In these cases, only one was rewarded.

Section B

Question 4

This was the more popular of the two essays. Effective answers used a range of arguments to shape their response. The nature side of the argument was most commonly focused on the instinctual elements of behaviour and socio-biological points. The range of arguments evaluating this position tended to be wider with reference to feral children as well as accounts of the role of socialisation as a decisive factor in shaping behaviour. The strongest responses were able to consider the interplay between nature and nurture and to see show that the process may not be as binary as the question suggests. Typically, evaluation was delivered through juxtaposition, so centres may wish to work on the use of more focused evaluation.

Question 5

There were fewer responses to this question but they tended to be stronger. Most responses showed a clear understanding of the view that qualitative methods should not be used in sociological research because they lack reliability and they allied this with the positivist approach. Effective answers demonstrated sound knowledge of qualitative methods (unstructured interviews, participant observation, etc.) and were able to assess the limitations of these methods from a positivist perspective. In evaluation, stronger responses were able to employ the arguments of Interpretivists to good effect. Weaker responses juxtaposed qualitative methods against quantitative ones and simply asserted the superiority of the latter. Less effective responses did not develop their points in sufficient depth and were often lacking in references to key concepts and theory.

SOCIOLOGY

> **Paper 9699/12**
> **Socialisation, Identity and Research Methods**

Key messages

- Candidates showed greater knowledge and understanding of methods of research than socialisation and identity.
- High scoring responses used sociological material (concepts/theories/research evidence) to support points made.
- There was a deficit in knowledge of the meaning of some key concepts (such as socialisation as a one-way process).
- There was evidence of greater observance of the examination's rubric in **Section A**, some candidates need to adhere more closely to the requirements of some questions, notably **2(a)** and **2(b)**.
- To achieve full marks in **Question 3(a),** candidates need to only provide two clear and developed points. A number of candidates only provided one point.
- Some candidates produced unbalanced essay responses in **Section B**.

General comments

The standard of responses overall was variable. In **Section A** most candidates were able to give two features of longitudinal studies for **Question 1,** although some were not able to develop these for an additional mark. **Questions 2(a)** and **2(b)** required methodological knowledge. In both questions there was evidence of a reasonably good knowledge base. Centres should note that the marks for these questions are accumulated on a points-based approach and it is important to follow the rubric as shown in the mark scheme to achieve high marks for these questions. In **Question 3**, most responses did not directly address the idea that socialisation is a one-way process. Many responses made only one point in explaining the view.

In **Section B** there was a fairly even division between those answering each question. In **Question 4.** candidates were able to show some knowledge and understanding of the relative importance of social class identity but provided unbalanced responses. A number of candidates produced general identity responses not directly focused on class. These received limited marks. Centres could focus on how to develop an argument from either side of the debate to help improve the structure and explicit evaluation in essays. **Question 5** was answered more effectively with candidates paying attention to both sides of the argument. There was a tendency in a number of responses to simply outline quantitative methods with few links to the question.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates had some knowledge of longitudinal studies and were able to access one or two marks but few were able to develop their points sufficiently to gain further marks on this question. The most popular features were the *length of time taken* and *regular intervals between researches taking place*. A number of answers gave generic features that could be applied to many other methods, (e.g. it's time consuming). Some candidates wrote at great length for this question which is unnecessary. A reminder that candidates are only required to *describe* in this question.

Question 2

(a)   Responses to this question varied, with a number of candidates discussing causes of bias in research generally. Such approaches were not rewarded. The strongest responses clearly identified a feature, explained it, selected relevant sociological material, and then showed how the material supported the point. Popular ways included the *impact of values on choice of topic* and in the *conduct of research*. Less effective responses often lacked relevant sociological material to support points made. In some responses candidates simply repeated their identified point when showing how their selected material supported the reason, hence losing the last available mark. Weak responses lacked focus on the question and the impact of the researcher's values. For example, some wrote about other sources of bias, such as funding, or personal characteristics, which were not linked to values. A number of candidates identified a methodological perspective (positivist of interpretivist) as a way that values may lead to bias in research findings. This approach was not rewarded.

(b)   Most candidates were able to identify two strengths of using a covert approach to participant observation. The most common strengths identified were the *avoidance of the Hawthorne effect*, and the *ability to study groups that might otherwise be inaccessible*. The first two marks were achieved by most candidates. Many did not go on to explain why an identified point was a strength. Some responses overlooked the 'covert' part of this question and discussed strengths of participant observation in general. As such, some candidates focused on how this method produces in depth, rich data etc., but did not address the covert element directly. This approach was not rewarded. Candidates might benefit from ensuring they complete their answer by stating that 'this is a strength/limitation because' as a trigger to focus on this final part of their answer.

Question 3

(a)   Few candidates produced strong answers to this question. The most successful approaches included identifying structural perspectives that supported the view that socialisation is a one-way process, e.g. functionalism and Marxism. The best responses linked these to ideas such as imitation, sanctions and indoctrinations. Other good responses made reference to the role of agents of socialisation in reinforcing early experiences. Weaker responses simply outlined the process of socialisation but made little or no attempt to tackle the idea it is a one-way process. Many candidates made only one point in their response which limited the marks they were awarded. Some candidates wrote long introductions without making concrete points. To achieve full marks, candidates need to only provide two clear and developed points. If these points are made with good reference to concepts, theories and evidence and applied to the question, a response can achieve full marks.

(b)   Overall, this question produced stronger responses than **3(a)**. Most candidates were able to identify an argument against the proposition that socialisation is a one-way process. Many used interactionism as a vehicle for doing so, focusing on concepts such as agency and non-conformity. Some responses gave good accounts of arguments against but did not apply their point to the question to achieve a fully developed point. This meant many responses were unable to access the top mark band. Weaker responses often misunderstood the question and described the role played by secondary agents of socialisation. Some candidates gave more than one argument in their response. In these cases, only one was rewarded.

Section B

Question 4

The quality of responses to this question was mixed with many candidates producing unbalanced accounts. The best answers understood that it is difficult to come to any conclusion about whether social class shapes identity because classes are no longer as distinctive as they once were. The postmodernist perspective and concepts such as blurring, fragmentation and increased choice were cited in support of this argument. Many responses used appropriate sources such as Peele and Pakulski. Good responses showed an awareness of the arguments put forward by Marxists that class remains a key source of identity, e.g. consumption patterns are based on class position. Others referred to Savage's point that despite change there are still social class differences. Most responses were more comfortable providing evidence for the view, than in support of it. There was a notable tendency to see this is a general identity question. This often meant that many candidates paid insufficient attention to social class and instead focused on gender, age and ethnic identities, without linking their points back to the question.

Question 5

Overall, the standard of responses to this question were stronger than for **Question 4**. Most candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge of the scientific approach to sociological research and correctly framed their responses in terms of positivism and interpretivism. Strong answers unpicked the debate by carefully contrasting sociological views on issues such as the extent to which research can be value free, and also the merits of using quantitative methods in order to achieve a scientific approach. Weaker responses treated the question as simply one about the strengths and limitations of quantitative methods, which sometimes meant outlining practical and ethical considerations that made few or no links to the question. A number of candidates were unclear about the difference between validity and reliability. In evaluation, most used ideas from interpretivism, and some also brought in realism. Weber was often referred to and concepts such as verstehen, validity, subjectivity and rapport were cited. Sometimes these ideas were just presented in a descriptive/ juxtaposed manner, without engaging with the debate or explaining why they show that a scientific approach should not be used.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/13

Socialisation, Identity and Research Methods

Key messages

- High scoring answers were able to use a wide range of sociological material.
- High scoring responses used sociological material (concepts/theories/research evidence) to support the points made.
- In **Section A** there was evidence of greater observance of the examination's rubric but some candidates need to adhere more closely to the requirements of some questions, notably **2(a)** and **2(b)**.
- Candidates showed limited knowledge and understanding of the concept of marginalisation **3(a)**.
- To achieve full marks in **Question 3(a)**, candidates need to only provide two clear and developed points. A number of candidates only provided one point.
- In **Section B** essay responses could be improved with greater application of supporting material to support points.
- Some candidates produced unbalanced essay responses in **Section B**. Centres could focus on how to develop an argument from either side of the debate to help improve the structure and explicit evaluation in essays.

General comments

The standard of responses overall was fairly good. In **Section A**, candidates had some difficulties with **Questions 2(a)** and particularly **3(a)**. For **Question 2(a)**, many candidates treated the question as primarily one about interpretivism or about participant observation. They struggled to make the connection between the two. Centres might want to practise constructing answers for this question that link theoretical approaches and a range of methods. Centres should note that the marks for **2(a)** and **2(b)** are accumulated on a points-based approach and it is important to follow the rubric as shown in the mark scheme to achieve high marks for these questions. For **Question 3(a)**, most candidates showed a lack of knowledge and understanding of the term marginalisation and were not able to successfully link it to deviant behaviour. **Questions 1**, **2(b)** and **3(b)** tended to produce the strongest responses.

In **Section B**, **Question 4** was the most popular. Many candidates were able to offer a range of evidence on both sides of the debate showing good knowledge and understanding of sociological material on changing gender identity. Points against the view were often stronger than those supporting it. In **Question 5** many responses juxtaposed the two methods (qualitative interviews and questionnaires) rather than directly comparing them or applying knowledge to the specific wording of the question.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This question was answered well by the majority of candidates. In most cases, candidates correctly identified two negative social sanctions, and could describe these effectively. Nearly all candidates registered at least one or two marks from this question with the majority scoring three or four.

Question 2

(a)   The strongest answers to this question clearly explained two separate reasons linking interpretivism to the use of participant observation. The most common interpretivist concepts were:

validity, verstehen and *rapport*. The most effective responses clearly identified a reason, explained it, selected relevant sociological material and then showed how the selected material supported the point. Weaker answers did not adequately explain the concepts used or simply repeated the same points used in the first explanation in the second. A number of candidates answered the question in terms of the strengths of participant observation alone, rather than outlining the interpretivist rationale for using this method. Others made general points about the interpretivist approach but did not make a connection to participant observation. This question requires candidates to link the two together.

(b)   This question was generally answered well by candidates. The most frequently identified strengths were *ease of access/existing data saving the researcher time*. Most candidates gained two marks per point made by identifying a strength and explaining it, but many did not go on to secure the third mark by explaining 'why' an identified point is, in fact, a strength. Candidates might benefit from ensuring they complete their answer by stating that 'this is a limitation (or strength) because.' as a trigger to focus on this final part of their answer.

Question 3

(a)   There were only a few high scoring answers that developed two clear points supported by appropriate sociological material. The most successful approaches identified aspects of groups that are socially excluded such as: unemployment, disability, poverty etc., and the best linked these to deviant outcomes. Many responses only had a limited knowledge and understanding of the relationship between marginalisation and deviant behaviour. There were many responses that included lengthy descriptions of the disadvantages experienced by marginalised groups but with little or no explanation as to how these linked to deviant behaviour. Many candidates made only one point in their response which limited the marks they were awarded.

(b)   Most candidates fared better in this question than in **3(a)**. Nearly all responses outlined an alternative sociological explanation for deviance but simply asserted its greater importance than marginalisation. Only a few candidates attempted to show how the alternative was better than marginalisation. This meant that many candidates were not able to reach the higher level. Under-socialisation was the most common explanation given although some candidates drifted into lengthy descriptions of cases of feral children that were not relevant. A number of candidates gave more than one argument in their answer. In these cases, only one was rewarded.

Section B

Question 4

This question was the more popular of the two essays. Strong responses to this question were supported by well-developed sociological material (Oakley, Connell – supportive of the view and Sharpe, Wilkinson arguing that gender identity has changed). These answers also used an impressive array of concepts such as: patriarchy, normative/passive femininity, hegemonic/marginalised masculinity, new man, metrosexual, laddettes etc. Weaker answers lacked sociological material and tended to use basic arguments that were sometimes merely assertive or common sense observations. A number of candidates offered sound evaluation points but often were less effective when discussing the idea that little change has occurred. This meant a number of responses were not well balanced. Some candidates treated this as a general identity question. This often meant that they paid insufficient attention to gender and instead focused on social class/age/ethnic identities without linking their points back to the question.

Question 5

There were some good answers to this question with the best ones able to refer to a range of studies to support their points. The strongest answers to this question discussed qualitative interviews and questionnaires together, using sociological theory, concepts and material to support their arguments. There were also some responses that dealt with each methodology separately but were able to show good knowledge and understanding of both the strengths and the weaknesses of each one. Evaluation was present and often developed. Weaker answers lacked development and/or sometimes drifted into discussions of structured interviews or other methods not relevant to the question. Only a few recognised the strengths of both approaches or argued that much depended on the context and specific goals of a research study.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/21
The Family

Key messages

- Candidates should ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination – familiarisation through use of past exam papers/marks schemes would be of benefit.
- Candidates should focus responses on the context of **the family**, as this is the unit focus.
- More successful responses applied relevant sociological theories, concepts, and research to demonstrate sociological knowledge and understanding.
- Candidates should ensure essay responses **(Question 4/5)** engage in competing views, looking at different sides of the issue in the question and apply relevant sociological material.
- Candidates need to ensure responses reflect marks available (*see comments below*).

General comments

Overall, very few candidates achieved in the higher marks, with the majority demonstrating limited sociological knowledge and understanding, as well as skills of application and analysis. A significant number of candidates relied on common sense/anecdotal evidence. Many candidates appeared unprepared for the demands of particular questions.

The majority of candidates were able to name relevant sociological concepts/studies; less successful candidates did not *apply* these to develop their response, often relying on simply stating them or defining/describing them rather than applying them in a way that engages the question. This was particularly noticeable within essay responses (**Question 4/5**). Any rubric errors tended to occur within **Questions 2(a)** and **3(b)**, whereby candidates provided more points than were required.

The more successful candidates produced responses that a/ reflected the requirements of the question and b/ applied relevant sociological material to support their responses. Candidate responses that achieved lower marks tended not to answer the question set, and/or tended to be descriptive, lacking an application of relevant sociological material in providing evidence of analysis and assessment. These often relied more on common sense/general knowledge. The extended writing questions were excellent discriminators for candidates to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding, interpretation and application, and analysis and evaluation. Few candidates explicitly evaluated the question, often relying on juxtaposition of opposing points. Less successful candidates provided one-sided responses to the sociological debate in question.

In general, candidates need to be more aware of their use of time reflecting the marks available. For example, in **Question 1** lengthy introductions and conclusions are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions. The majority of candidates answered the questions in order; some perhaps could have benefitted from answering the essay first.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The majority of candidates were able to identify two ways children are protected from adult life. The most common responses included *child labour laws, age restriction laws, media/parental censorship of inappropriate material*, with relevant descriptions.

Less successful candidates did not provide relevant descriptions of the identified way, or their responses were too vague, often not making clear what aspect of adult life children are protected from. A small number of candidates provided incorrect/irrelevant responses, seemingly misunderstanding what the question was asking of them. For example, providing ways children are prepared for adult life, or why children need protecting.

There were a few examples of candidate responses containing introductions and conclusions.

Note: *Candidates should be encouraged to structure their **Question 1** responses as two bullet points or numbered 1/2, avoiding introductions and unnecessarily lengthy answers. Also provide just the two responses required.*

Question 2

(a) The majority of candidates were able to provide at one relevant way and relevant explanation of how family life can be harmful to some members. Many candidates provided two ways.

Candidates should be encouraged to structure their responses in a clear and structured way:

- *Identified way/point*
- *Way explained*
- *Relevant supporting sociological material*
- *Application of this material to demonstrate the original point.*

Common responses included *domestic violence (women/children) and oppression of women.* The more successful responses clearly demonstrated two ways, supported with the application of appropriate sociological material. Many candidates relied on common sense rather than a demonstration of sociological awareness. This limited the marks awardable. Where sociological material was used in support, this tended to rely on *patriarchy* and *dual burden/triple shift.*

To improve, candidates need to support points using appropriate sociological material e.g. concepts, studies, relevant sociologists etc. and apply these in demonstrating the original point made.

Some candidates wasted valuable time providing lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of the family – ***these are not required.*** Candidates occasionally provided more than the two ways required.

Note: *Candidates should be encouraged to structure responses as two separate paragraphs identified as 'The first…. The second….' for clarity and only provide the **two points required**.*

(b) Candidates in general appeared unprepared for the demands of this question, showing little understanding of radical feminism. Candidates tended to perform better in identifying a relevant limitation than a strength e.g. *that it was outdated due to family diversity/growth of matriarchal families*, or that it *failed to show the progress women have made in the family.*

Common errors candidates made were discussing liberal feminism, patriarchy in society rather than in the family, and making statements that reflected a consequence of radical feminism rather than a strength/limitation of it. For example, *it creates single parents / feminists think women should be equal/women avoid the oppression of patriarchy.*

Note: *Candidates would benefit from using the mark schemes to create a table of strengths and limitations of the key theoretical stances in relation to the family during their studies, to aid their learning and revision.*

Centres should encourage candidates to adopt a clear and structured approach to answering **2(b)**: *A strength / limitation is…. / X have this as a strength / limitation because they… / This is a strength / limitation because…*

Question 3

(a) Most candidates provided a response to this question, many seemed confused by it. Some candidates did not apply their responses to the question, instead discussing the importance of the nuclear family, or the functions of the family.

Relevant responses tended to be simplistic, stating the nuclear family is the *most common/popular*. Sociological material was limited predominantly to *Murdoch and the universality of the nuclear family*. Occasionally, responses cited *government support for the nuclear family* (but tended not to give examples to illustrate), and *media representations.*

Note: *a small number of candidates wasted time providing an unnecessary evaluation of the claim. This is <u>not</u> a requirement of the question (they do this in 3(b). Furthermore, lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of the nuclear family are unnecessary, and candidates should be discouraged from doing this on this question.*

(b) Candidates tended to perform better here than on **3(a)**, with common responses including the *increase in other family types due to greater freedom of choice in postmodern societies, the impact of changes in the lives of women, or the impact of secularisation.*

Weaker responses were those that did not support their arguments with sociological material. Non-awardable responses included those that discussed functions of the family, the role of the family or, how the nuclear family is oppressive towards women.

Note: *Many candidates to be an assumption that reconstituted/step families are not nuclear, when of course they can be.*

Section B

Question 4

This was the slightly more popular option of the two essays, and generally speaking responses were weak. Responses very much relied on anecdotal evidence/common-sense with little sociological material used to support claims made.

Stronger responses gave supporting arguments, commonly, using *free childcare and financial support* to agree that grandparents play a positive role in the family. Opposing arguments focused on grandparents as a *financial or physical burden*. Many candidates only examined one side of the debate, therefore losing out on evaluation marks. Many of those that did examine both sides, relied on juxtaposition of points rather than explicit evaluation.

Often weak responses were those that became simply sentimental reflections of lives with grandparents based on candidate's own life, or how life with grandparents should be.

Note: *candidates need to be more aware of the importance of assessment/evaluation within essays, given its weighting in the mark scheme.*

Question 5

This was in general, the stronger answered of the two essay questions, however knowledge and understanding of Marxism was somewhat limited, with an over reliance on functionalist material. Some candidates that confused Marxism with functionalism.

The more successful responses tended to discuss within supporting arguments, *reproduction/providing future workers, the family as an ideological state apparatus, and consumerism*. Counter arguments tended to be from a *functionalist perspective on how the family supports the greater needs of society, or how it supports family members e.g., primary socialisation, warm bath, or from a radical feminist view that it is to serve patriarchy.* However, most candidates relied upon simple statements or description rather than developing their points made. *Very few candidates focused on the context of **main role**, instead simply discussing other (important) roles the family carries out.*

Weak responses included those that discussed within the context of schools rather than family, or critiqued capitalism. As with **Question 4**, too many candidates provided one-sided discussions, perhaps suggesting they were not prepared beforehand for the requirements of essay writing.

Note: *candidates need to be more aware of the importance of assessment/evaluation within essays, given its weighting in the mark scheme.*

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/22
The Family

Key messages

- Candidates should ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination – familiarisation through use of past exam papers/marks schemes would be of benefit.
- Candidates should focus responses on the context of **the family**, as this is the unit focus.
- More successful responses applied relevant sociological theories, concepts, and research to demonstrate sociological knowledge and understanding.
- Candidates should ensure essay responses **(Question 4/5)** engage in competing views, looking at different sides of the issue in the question and apply relevant sociological material.
- Candidates need to ensure responses reflect marks available (*see comments below*).

General comments

A range of candidate performance was demonstrated. Some candidates produced very good comprehension of both the requirements of the questions, and the sociological knowledge and understanding to answer them effectively. There were clear indications that some centres have taken on board comments and guidance issued from Principal Examiner Reports and elsewhere. In particular, there was some improvement in how some candidates approached **2(a/b)**, presenting responses in a logical and clear way.

Candidates in general showed a reasonable level of sociological knowledge and understanding of Marxist/Marxist feminist ideas, as well as factors leading to the increase in diversity, however the loss of functions debate and the impact of social class on childhood experiences, less so. There were some instances of candidates confusing Murdoch (functionalist) with Marxism/Marxist ideas, and Marxist feminism with radical feminist ideas.

The majority of candidates were able to name relevant sociological concepts/studies; less successful candidates did not *apply* these to develop their response, often relying on simply stating them or defining/describing them rather than applying them in a way that engages the question. This was particularly noticeable within essay responses **(Question 4/5)**. Any rubric errors tended to occur within **Questions 2(a)** and **3(b)**, whereby candidates provided more points than were required.

The more successful candidates produced responses that a/ reflected the requirements of the question and b/ applied relevant sociological material to support their responses. Candidate responses that achieved lower marks tended not to answer the question set, and/or tended to be descriptive, lacking an application of relevant sociological material in providing evidence of analysis and assessment. These often relied more on common sense/general knowledge. The extended writing questions were excellent discriminators for candidates to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding, interpretation and application, and analysis and evaluation. Few candidates explicitly evaluated the question, often relying on juxtaposition of opposing points. Less successful candidates provided one-sided responses to the sociological debate in question.

In general, candidates need to be more aware of their use of time reflecting the marks available. For example, in **Question 1** lengthy introductions and conclusions are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions. The majority of candidates answered the questions in order; some perhaps could have benefitted from answering the essay first.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The majority of candidates were able to identify two reasons why women are now marrying at a later age. The most common responses included *greater economic independence/results in less pressure to marry early for security, now place greater importance on marriage/will take their time in finding the right person they want to marry, greater career opportunities/will delay marriage until they establish their career first.*

Less successful candidates did not provide relevant descriptions of the identified reason, or their responses were too vague or did not address why marriage was at a later age/delayed. Some candidates did not address the question, for example focussed on *women prefer to cohabitate rather than marry/financially independent so do not need to marry a man.*

There were a few examples of candidate responses containing introductions and conclusions.

Note: *Candidates should be encouraged to structure their **Question 1** responses as two bullet points or numbered 1/2, avoiding introductions and unnecessarily lengthy answers. Also provide just the two responses required.*

Question 2

(a) Most candidates provided two appropriate ways and relevant explanation. There were some very good answers that achieved full marks, with some candidates seemingly following a logical and well thought structure of:

- *Identified way/point*
- *Way explained*
- *Relevant supporting sociological material*
- *Application of this material to demonstrate the original point.*

The more successful responses clearly demonstrated two ways, commonly *women soaking up frustrations of men/worker*, often applying Parsons' warm bath' as opposed to a more Marxist 'safety valve' approach, however still valid, *reproduction of workforce*, and how *women perform free domestic labour*.

Weaker responses tended not to support their point with sociological material, therefore at most were awarded half the marks available to them. Some candidates gave a point/way, for example women have triple shift/dual burden, but did not *explain how* capitalism benefits from this.

Incorrect responses focused on the family in general benefitting capitalism for example, it acts as an ISA, or how men benefit capitalism for example, by working for capitalists, without linking to the role of women.

To improve, candidates need to support points using appropriate sociological material e.g. concepts, studies, relevant sociologists etc. and apply these in demonstrating the original point made.

Some candidates wasted valuable time providing lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of the family – ***these are not required.*** Candidates occasionally provided more than the two ways required.

Note: *Candidates should be encouraged to structure responses as two separate paragraphs identified as 'The first…. The second….' for clarity and <u>only provide</u> the **two points required**.*

(b) Valid responses tended to focus on how Marxist feminist views of the family…*recognise the relationship the woman's role in the family has with capitalism/the importance of women in the family to capitalism*. The more successful candidates were able to provide a valid strength, show why it is a strength and the value of their contribution to our understanding of the family.

Common errors included those that discussed weakness of opposing theories (rather than strengths of Marxist feminism), those that confused with liberal/radical feminism. A fairly common mistake was in discussing women within the workplace rather than within the context of family.

Note: *Candidates would benefit from using the mark schemes to create a table of strengths and limitations of the key theoretical stances in relation to the family during their studies, to aid their learning and revision.*

Centres should encourage candidates to adopt a clear and structured approach to answering **2(b)**: *A strength / limitation is…. / X have this as a strength / limitation because they… / This is a strength / limitation because…*

Question 3

(a) Most candidates had some understanding of the family losing functions, relatively few demonstrated a sound sociological knowledge. The most common response was how functions of *education and health care have been taken over by external institutions of schools and hospitals.* Where sociological material was applied, this tended to be limited to Parsons and the idea that the family now *only performs primary socialisation and stabilisation of adult personalities.*

There was a tendency for candidates to provide protracted and unnecessary historical accounts of how the family has changed from agricultural to industrial times, rather than address the statement of 'The family has experienced a loss of functions'. *Whilst some social context can be provided for the shift in family and its functions, far too many responses become descriptive historical accounts and missed the focus of the question.*

Some alternative valid responses included how *lone parent mothers cannot carry out the socialisation function effectively/cannot socialise children correctly which leads them to crime*, whilst weaker responses included for example, how the increase in same sex families has led to a loss of functions, but <u>without actually discussing</u> what those lost functions could be/are. A number of candidates provided only one point, therefore limiting responses to half marks at the most.

Note: *a small number of candidates wasted time providing an unnecessary evaluation of the claim. This is <u>not</u> a requirement of the question (they do this in **3(b)**). Furthermore, lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of the nuclear family are unnecessary, and candidates should be discouraged from doing this on this question.*

(b) Candidates tended to perform better here than on **3(a)**, with common responses including how the family *still maintains the primary socialisation function, how the family still carries out the function of caring for less serious health issues,* and with less frequency, *Fletcher's notion that the family actually now has more responsibilities.*

Weak responses included those that turned this into a discussion of how the extended family is the dominant form, with no connection to how the family has not experienced a loss of functions or, simply stated functions of the family (especially Murdock's 4 functions) with no reference to how the family still performed these functions.

Section B

Question 4

A fairly equal number of candidates answered this question compared to **Question 5**. Most candidates were able to demonstrate a reasonable level of knowledge and understanding of the view that social class is the main factor affecting the experiences of children in the family. In the main, candidates were more successful in arguing against the claim (commonly citing gender and ethnicity), than in support of it. The more successful responses explicitly debated the question, using relevant sociological material/evidence to support points. Whilst the majority of candidates examined both sides of the debate, only a few explicitly evaluated the claim, relying more on juxtaposition.

Weak responses included those that provided limited sociological evidence to support, relying more on common sense/anecdotal evidence. Social class discussions were often limited to simply *they can afford more trips and leisure activities, or better education*. More sociological responses cited *cultural/economic capital* and *concerted cultivation*. Other weaker responses discussed Marxist views on social class, with no context of the experiences of children in the family. Occasionally, responses provided lengthy and unnecessary descriptions of the different social classes or how the family serves capitalism, whilst a major issue for some was that responses neglected the context of family, discussing peer groups, media, and school rather than the family.

Note: *candidates need to be more aware of the importance of assessment/evaluation within essays, given its weighting in the mark scheme.*

Question 5

Candidates opted for this question in fairly similar numbers to **Question 4** and provided a range in performance. Most candidates were able to identify alternative family forms (e.g., lone parent and families of choice), and recognise reasons for the growth in family diversity, such as *changes in the lives of women, secularisation, growth of individualism, and changes in laws.*

Stronger responses approached the counter argument with an understanding of the context of *no longer dominant,* with claims that the nuclear family remains dominant through its numerical popularity. Common points here tended to be how *family diversity is exaggerated, the nuclear family is universal (Murdoch), it forms the basis of all other family types, and how it has simply evolved to become a dual earner nuclear family*. A significant error by candidates, was in focusing responses on the importance of the nuclear family as it carries out certain functions, or that it is the best type of family to have, or that it should be dominant. This is not evidence of its dominance, rather theoretical idealism.

Other weaker responses included those that for example, simply stated and described different family types with no attempt to apply them in addressing the question, as well as those that criticised family diversity e.g., how single parent mothers cannot socialise children correctly. A few irrelevant responses confused dominance to mean for example, the elderly in the family being powerfully dominant.

Notably, there was a common misconception that reconstituted/step families are an example of diversity, when of course they can still be nuclear.

Note: *candidates need to be more aware of the importance of assessment/evaluation within essays, given its weighting in the mark scheme.*

SOCIOLOGY

Key messages

- Candidates should ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination – familiarisation through use of past exam papers/marks schemes would be of benefit.
- Candidates should focus responses on the context of **the family**, as this is the unit focus.
- More successful responses applied relevant sociological theories, concepts, and research to demonstrate sociological knowledge and understanding.
- Candidates should ensure essay responses **(Question 4/5)** engage in competing views, looking at different sides of the issue in the question and apply relevant sociological material.
- Candidates need to ensure responses reflect marks available (*see comments below*).

General comments

A range of candidate performance was demonstrated. Some candidates produced very good comprehension of both the requirements of the questions, and the sociological knowledge and understanding to answer them effectively. There were clear indications that some centres have taken on board comments and guidance issued from Principal Examiner Reports and elsewhere. In particular, there was some improvement in how some candidates approached **2(a/b)**, presenting responses in a logical and clear way.

Candidates in general showed a reasonable level of sociological knowledge and understanding of Marxist/functionalist ideas, gender and roles in the family, as well as factors leading to the increase in divorce, however the impact of the improved social position of women and childhood less so.

The majority of candidates were able to name relevant sociological concepts/studies; less successful candidates did not *apply* these to develop their response, often relying on simply stating them or defining/describing them rather than applying them in a way that engages the question. This was particularly noticeable within essay responses (**Question 4/5**). Any rubric errors tended to occur within **Questions 2(a)** and **3(b)**, whereby candidates provided more points than were required.

The more successful candidates produced responses that a/ reflected the requirements of the question and b/ applied relevant sociological material to support their responses. Candidate responses that achieved lower marks tended not to answer the question set, and/or tended to be descriptive, lacking an application of relevant sociological material in providing evidence of analysis and assessment. These often relied more on common sense/general knowledge. The extended writing questions were excellent discriminators for candidates to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding, interpretation and application, and analysis and evaluation. Few candidates explicitly evaluated the question, often relying on juxtaposition of opposing points. Less successful candidates provided one-sided responses to the sociological debate in question.

In general, candidates need to be more aware of their use of time reflecting the marks available. For example, in **Question 1** lengthy introductions and conclusions are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions. The majority of candidates answered the questions in order; some perhaps could have benefitted from answering the essay first.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The majority of candidates were able to identify two reasons why people may stay in an unhappy marriage. Most common responses included *financial dependence* and *for the sake of the children,* with relevant descriptions. Other popular responses included *religious/family pressures* with the description relating to *bringing shame.*

Less successful candidates did not provide relevant descriptions of the identified reason, or their response was too vague. A small number of candidates provided incorrect responses, seemingly misunderstanding what the question was asking of them. For example, providing reasons why marriages become unhappy e.g., domestic violence or inequality in conjugal roles, why people divorce, and why people marry.

There were a few examples of candidate responses containing introductions and conclusions.

Note: *Candidates should be encouraged to structure their **Question 1** responses as two bullet points or numbered 1/2, avoiding introductions and unnecessarily lengthy answers. Also provide just the two responses required.*

Question 2

(a)   Most candidates provided two appropriate ways and relevant explanations of how the family prepares children for the workplace. There were some very good answers that achieved full marks, with some candidates seemingly following a logical and well thought structure of:

- *Identified way/point*
- *Way explained*
- *Relevant supporting sociological material*
- *Application of this material to demonstrate the original point.*

Common responses included *the family instils ruling class ideology into the children,* and *the family socialises children with social norms/skills*. Another fairly common response was *socialisation into gender roles, with boys prepared for the instrumental role as breadwinner*, supported with the application of appropriate sociological material for example, *ideological state apparatus, primary socialisation, canalisation.*

Less successful candidates whilst able to provide two relevant reasons, did not support with sociological material, therefore at most were awarded half the marks available to them. Incorrect responses focused on the role of the family/women e.g. promotes consumerism or acts to pass on inheritance.

To improve, candidates need to support points using appropriate sociological material e.g. concepts, studies, relevant sociologists etc. and apply these in demonstrating the original point made.

Some candidates wasted valuable time providing lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of the family – ***these are not required.*** Candidates occasionally provided more than the two ways required.

Note: *Candidates should be encouraged to structure responses as two separate paragraphs identified as 'The first…. The second….' for clarity and <u>only provide</u> the **two points required**.*

(b)   Common responses included, *Marxism fails to recognise free will in the socialisation of children/assumes children are passive recipients of ruling class ideology*, also *fails to recognise the positive side of the family/focuses too much on the oppression that takes place within the family…Too deterministic* was also common. Few candidates identified a limitation of Marxist views of the family as economically deterministic.

Common errors included those that discussed the strengths of opposing theories (rather than limitations of Marxism), how the nuclear family is bad as it disadvantages women (this is a criticism of the nuclear family, NOT a limitation of Marxism), and criticising capitalism (again NOT a limitation of Marxism).

Note: *Candidates would benefit from using the mark schemes to create a table of strengths and limitations of the key theoretical stances in relation to the family during their studies, to aid their learning and revision.*

Centres should encourage candidates to adopt a clear and structured approach to answering **2(b)**: *A strength / limitation is…. / X have this as a strength / limitation because they… / This is a strength / limitation because…*

Question 3

(a) Most candidates were able to provide a relevant response to this question, demonstrating a reasonable understanding of how women's social position has improved and how this is the main reason for the increase in divorce. By far the most common response, was how *women's social position has improved by being able to gain a good education leading to a career, which gives them financial independence/security and as such, would be inclined to divorce if unsatisfied as they can support themselves/don't need a husband for financial security.* Supporting sociological material tended to be Sue Sharpe, Equal Pay Act and individualism.

Occasionally, *greater expectations of marriage* was used, however candidates struggled to provide further relevant points beyond this. Therefore, few candidates achieved marks within the top band. Weaker responses included how divorce is cheaper and a generous welfare system.

Note: *a small number of candidates wasted time providing an unnecessary evaluation of the claim. This is not a requirement of the question (they do this in 3(b). Furthermore, lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of the nuclear family are unnecessary, and candidates should be discouraged from doing this on this question.*

(b) Candidates tended to perform better here than on **3(a)**, with common responses including the *impact of secularisation, introduction of Divorce Act 1969 making divorce easier to achieve/more accessible to women*, and *changing social attitudes reducing the stigma attached to divorce.*

Weak responses tended to be those that simply gave a reason why people divorce e.g., domestic violence, rather than addressing the main reason for the *increase* in divorce. Sevel candidates provided irrelevant responses, including *people choose to cohabit rather than get married…why people do not get divorced…the improved social position of women leads them to not get married…*and discussing *why women don't get divorced.* This perhaps suggested a lack of preparation/comprehension of the question requirements.

Section B

Question 4

More candidates opted for this question than **Question 5**, and generally speaking saw a range in performance. The more successful response explicitly debated the view that gender no longer influences roles within the family, and used relevant sociological material/evidence to support points. The majority of candidates examined both sides of the debate, only a few explicitly evaluated the claim, relying more on juxtaposition.

Weaker responses included those that provided limited sociological evidence to support, relying more on common sense/anecdotal evidence, whilst irrelevant responses discussed why there should not be inequality/there should be equality, rather than discussing the specifics of the question. A few weak responses focused too much on how things were 'in the past', with little/no acknowledgement of the present and whether gender influences roles or not.

Note: *candidates need to be more aware of the importance of assessment/evaluation within essays, given its weighting in the mark scheme.*

Question 5

Candidates opted for this question in significantly fewer numbers than **Question 4**, and generally speaking answered it less successfully. Stronger responses applied relevant sociological material to support points made, largely *laws protecting children e.g., labour laws/compulsory education, child centredness,* versus *medieval childhood/treated as mini adults and the contemporary notion toxic childhood.* There was some over reliance on Aries.

Many candidates did appear to have a limited sociological knowledge, often providing a basic argument and relying on common sense/anecdotal evidence for the supporting claim. The counter argument candidates were generally stronger on, however this tended to be a juxtaposition of points rather than explicit evaluation of the question.

Weaker responses included those that simply discussed childhood/experiences of childhood, without addressing the question of it being a period of innocence and protection or not. Furthermore, there were a small number of candidates who provided one-sided responses, often describing how childhood should be.

Note: *candidates need to be more aware of the importance of assessment/evaluation within essays, given its weighting in the mark scheme.*

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/31

Education

Key messages

- Candidates should read each question carefully and check that they have answered the question being asked.
- Sociological material should be used and its relevance to the question should be explained.
- Essay evaluation was often juxtaposed rather than explicit.

General comments

To gain good marks candidates must use relevant sociological evidence in the form of studies, theories, and concepts. This will only gain credit if the material presented is related to the question asked. Candidates should be encouraged to explain how it is related, e.g., 'this study supports the argument that…' this will both help candidates to check the relevance of the material and demonstrate clearly to the Examiner that they know why it is relevant.

In **Question 3** candidates are arguing against a given statement. They do not need to give any arguments supporting it. Arguments against it can include criticisms of the logic or evidence on which it is based, as well as presenting alternative points of view.

In **Question 4** candidates should be encouraged to present balanced essays, which include arguments from both sides. As well as presenting the two opposing arguments, the strongest responses will evaluate each of them. This means looking critically at the evidence used on both sides and showing that an argument need not be completely true or false. It may be more or less applicable for different people at different times and in different places. A conclusion should be given. This should briefly explain how far the issue stated in the question is useful. To weigh this up, candidates may consider all of the evidence used and the points of view discussed in their response.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates were able to identify at least one example of how education reinforces social values. School rules and obedience were most successfully used to link a school process to a social value. Some candidates relied on the idea of a value 'being taught' but without specific examples of *how* this might be done. Others were not able to describe how the 'in school' example *reinforced* values.

Question 2

This question produced a range of answers. Candidates tended to focus on the way gender roles are modelled or encouraged in the family, other answers included reference to toys and games. Many candidates did not focus on *primary* socialisation when answering this question. They were not awarded marks for discussion of gender differences in attainment caused by *school* factors. Some candidates did not include any sociological material to support the points they made. This limited marks to four out of eight. Those who did include material tended to focus on Oakley.

Question 3

Good answers were able to link treatment of ethnic groups in schools, to the ethnocentric curriculum or to labelling, setting and streaming. However, often points lacked development and full application to the question. As with other questions, there was a lack of sociological evidence to support points, and this limited the marks given. Points about poverty and cultural background rather than treatment by the school could not be rewarded. In some cases, only one point was made. This limited marks awarded.

Question 4

Stronger answers showed some knowledge of functionalist theory and evaluation from Marxist theory. Some also had reference to relevant policies, such as compensatory education. Many answers were brief and undeveloped. Often there were explanations of social mobility and its meaning, but without linking these to education. Some candidates focused on mobility in general rather than for working-class pupils. These answers suggested how middle-class pupils could gain mobility but lacked reference to working-class pupils and so showed limited application to the question.

Weaker responses lacked sociological material and tended to focus on common-sense points about opportunity in education and how it can help in gaining jobs. Candidates should be aware that their general knowledge will not gain them many marks in an Advanced Level Sociology essay. Specific sociological knowledge and practice applying it in logically constructed arguments, are required for higher level responses.

SOCIOLOGY

| Paper 9699/32 |
| Education |

Key messages

- Candidates should read each question carefully and check that they have answered the question being asked.
- Sociological material should be used and its relevance to the question should be explained.
- Essay evaluation was often juxtaposed rather than explicit.

General comments

To gain good marks candidates must use relevant sociological evidence in the form of studies, theories, and concepts. This will only gain credit if the material presented is related to the question asked. Candidates should be encouraged to explain how it is related, e.g., 'this study supports the argument that…' this will both help candidates to check the relevance of the material and demonstrate clearly to the Examiner that they know why it is relevant.

In **Question 3** candidates are arguing against a given statement. They do not need to give any arguments supporting it. Arguments against it can include criticisms of the logic or evidence on which it is based, as well as presenting alternative points of view.

In **Question 4** candidates should be encouraged to present balanced essays, which include arguments from both sides. As well as presenting the two opposing arguments, the strongest responses will evaluate each of them. This means looking critically at the evidence used on both sides and showing that an argument need not be completely true or false. It may be more or less applicable for different people at different times and in different places. A conclusion should be given. This should briefly explain how far the issue stated in the question is useful. To weigh this up, candidates may consider all of the evidence used and the points of view discussed in their response.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Many candidates successfully identified how schools provide specialist skills which enable individuals to make a more significant contribution to the economy. Common responses included how schools sift and sort the talented, or how they provide a docile obedient workforce who work effectively without complaint. A minority of candidates did not identify a relevant educational process or did not make a clear link to the economy. A mark was not rewarded for describing an individual advantage (e.g., of mobility, income or profit) rather than an effect on the economy as a whole.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to give two good examples of the impact of material deprivation on educational achievement. Most suggested lack of resources such as textbooks or poor living conditions/diet leading to ill health and absenteeism. Others referred to the inability to afford private teachers, having to work to support families or being afraid of debt thus missing out on higher education. Some candidates cited either cultural factors or 'in school' processes such as labelling. These could not be rewarded unless they were explicitly shown to be a consequence of material deprivation. Many candidates were unable to move beyond a score of four marks owing to the absence of sociological material in their answers. Some candidates cited mainstream evidence such as that of Smith and Noble or Waldfogel and Washbrook. Many also used Ramchandran on Indian schools in deprived areas.

Question 3

This question was generally well answered. The most common responses involved arguments suggesting that schools promote social inequality rather than social solidarity in terms of class (Bordieu, Bowles and Gintis, Althusser), reproduce the labour force (Bowles and Gintis), reinforce patriarchy (subject choices, radical feminism) or create ethnic inequalities through the ethnocentric curriculum. Some candidates offered alternative functionalist explanations such as acting as a bridge to wider society (Parsons on particularistic versus universalistic values) or role allocation (Davis and Moore). Some candidates did not give two distinct arguments and some stated relevant points but without development. A few candidates evaluated each argument which is not necessary for this question.

Question 4

Several candidates misunderstood the wording of the question, focusing on how educational practices in general can contribute to social inequality rather than on how the *school curriculum* reflects this social inequality. Successful responses referred to Marxist arguments, particularly Bowles and Gintis and Bourdieu, as well as the work of Bernstein, the ethnocentric curriculum, and the gendered curriculum. Less common were references to Young and how the curriculum is socially constructed by the powerful.

Many responses gave accounts on the structures, processes or interactions in education which may reflect inequalities in society, such as teacher labelling and streaming based on class. This could only be rewarded if the resulting inequalities were linked to the curriculum. A significant number of weaker candidates wrote at length about the tripartite system, as if it were a widespread current influence.

Good evaluation pointed out how girls and ethnic minorities do achieve well within the education system despite experiencing a gendered and ethnocentric curriculum or explained how curricula have changed to be less biased, and equality is encouraged through policies such as GIST. Functionalist accounts of meritocracy could also be valid evaluation, and better responses included social democratic, (equal opportunity for all) New Right (inequality a product of individual failings) and Postmodern arguments (old inequalities no longer exist, more diversity and choice). Simple juxtaposition of other functions of education would not achieve the higher mark bands.

SOCIOLOGY

| Paper 9699/33 |
| Education |

Key messages
- Candidates should read each question carefully and check that they have answered the question being asked.
- Sociological material should be used and its relevance to the question should be explained.
- Essay evaluation was often juxtaposed rather than explicit.

General comments

To gain good marks candidates must use relevant sociological evidence in the form of studies, theories, and concepts. This will only gain credit if the material presented is related to the question asked. Candidates should be encouraged to explain how it is related, e.g., 'this study supports the argument that…' this will both help candidates to check the relevance of the material and demonstrate clearly to the Examiner that they know why it is relevant.

In **Question 3** candidates are arguing against a given statement. They do not need to give any arguments supporting it. Arguments against it can include criticisms of the logic or evidence on which it is based, as well as presenting alternative points of view.

In **Question 4** candidates should be encouraged to present balanced essays, which include arguments from both sides. As well as presenting the two opposing arguments, the strongest responses will evaluate each of them. This means looking critically at the evidence used on both sides and showing that an argument need not be completely true or false. It may be more or less applicable for different people at different times and in different places. A conclusion should be given. This should briefly explain how far the issue stated in the question is useful. To weigh this up, candidates may consider all of the evidence used and the points of view discussed in their response.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates were able to give examples of how schools contribute to the socialisation process. The more specific an example the more likely it was to gain both available marks. Good answers used examples such as gendered curriculum to reinforce gender roles or the correspondence between obeying teachers and obeying employers. Overall, quite a wide range of examples were used, and many were appropriately described.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to give two reasons why educational attainment might be influenced by school subcultures. Most answers focused on anti-school subcultures, and many used Willis as an example of how subculture could reduce attainment. A few used examples of pro-school subcultures and their positive influence, some using Fuller's study to show how subcultures can overcome negative aspects of school.

In some cases, there were relevant points, but these were not supported by any material which limited the marks to two per point. In other cases, there was only explanation of material and no explanation of the point made. This limited the marks that candidates could achieve.

Question 3

Most candidates were able to give at least one point against the view that gender is no longer an influence on educational attainment. The gendered curriculum was a popular point and was generally reasonably well developed to explain how this was relevant to the question. Other responses used examples of boys' underachievement to show how gender is an influence.

In some cases, there was confused use of Sharpe's study. This often tended to show that gender influences had been overcome and so agreed with the view in the question rather than arguing against the view.

Question 4

A significant number of candidates ignored the key word 'legitimise' in the question, and therefore only explained the reproduction of inequality or the impact of education on inequality rather than explicitly focussing on the legitimising processes in education.

Strong responses demonstrated a wide range of sociological knowledge. Many candidates were able to outline Marxist views of education (Bowels and Gintis, Althusser, Bourdieu) and use functionalist views (Parsons, Davis and Moore) to demonstrate evaluation. Feminism was also present on both sides, with some appropriate recycling of material used in Question 3. Some candidates explored subcultural resistance to the attempt to legitimise inequality (e.g., Willis). Most answers were able to give a range of points on each side of the debate.

SOCIOLOGY

<div style="border:1px solid black">

Paper 9699/41
Globalisation, Media, Religion

</div>

Key messages

- Good knowledge of relevant sociological material demonstrated in many of the scripts.
- High-quality answers made sustained use of relevant concepts and theories.
- Higher marks could be achieved by including more analysis and evaluation.
- Some low-scoring responses lacked focus on the key terms in the question.
- References to appropriate research evidence was lacking in some of the answers.

General comments

The standard of the scripts overall was good, with most candidates demonstrating a sound understanding of the issues raised by the questions. High-scoring answers combined detail knowledge of relevant sociological material with skillful analysis and evaluation of the case for and against the view stated in the question. Answers in the middle of the mark range often made good points in support of the view stated in the question, but omitted to consider possible counter arguments and contrary evidence. To gain high marks for AO3, it is essential to challenge and test the view expressed in the question as part of the process of reaching an overall conclusion about the merit of the stated view. Focusing on the key terms in the question is a further requirement for success in the examination. Some candidates wrote about the broad topic raised by the question rather than focusing on the key terms. For **Question 4**, for example, some of the responses omitted to mention the concept of ideological control. Candidates are recommended to make a note of the key terms in the question before starting to answer and then refer back to these terms at regular intervals in the course of the answer. Higher marks could also be gained by making more use of appropriate research evidence to illustrate important points and to support analysis and evaluation.

Examples of rubric error were rare. Some candidates answered more than the two questions required, with the extra answers rarely contributing to an improvement in the overall mark. Failure to reference answers with the appropriate question number occurred in the case of a few scripts. Candidates may disadvantage themselves by omitting the question number or writing the number illegibly, as it makes it difficult for the examiner to be certain which question is being attempted.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

High quality responses to this question demonstrated a good understanding of what is meant by globalisation and its cultural impact on communities. Good answers discussed how cultural convergence might come about, including the idea of creeping Westernisation. Evaluation was often provided by considering the contrasting view that globalisation is leading to greater cultural divergence. Some candidates questioned the reductionism and over-generalisation in the cultural convergence thesis. The concept of globalisation was also used to describe how global cultural influences are modified and adapted to local culture and needs. Lower scoring answers were often characterised by a few simple points about globalisation in general with no clear reference to cultural impacts.

Question 2

There were a few high scoring responses to this question that made good use of relevant concepts and theories to examine the impact of globalisation on levels of poverty worldwide. Good answers considered reasons why globalisation might help to reduce poverty and this was often supported with insights drawn

from modernisation theory. Some candidates made effective use of examples to show how globalisation appears to have led to a reduction in poverty in some countries, through the impact of international aid programmes for instance. Evaluation was often delivered through contrasting the claims of modernisation theory with perspectives such as dependency theory and world systems theory that view globalisation as leading to greater exploitation and impoverishment in developing societies in particular. Lower scoring responses were often confined to observations about poverty in general, with little analysis of how globalisation might affect the plight of the poor.

Section B

Question 3

Good answers to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of the cultural effects model of how the media influences behaviour. High quality responses also considered the possible limitations in the cultural effects model, often using references to alternative models of media effects to deliver the points. Some candidates linked their analysis to contrasts between the Marxist and pluralist theories of the media. Credit was also awarded for referencing studies that illustrate the strengths and/or limitations of the cultural effects model. Low-scoring responses often lacked references to sociological material and offered only personal opinion about how the media influences behaviour.

Question 4

High scoring responses to this question demonstrated a good understanding of how the media may act as an agent of ideological control. Marxist theory often featured in the points made in support of the view expressed in the question, but some candidates also made useful references to feminist ideas about the role of the media in shaping patriarchy. Some candidates used examples from relevant studies to illustrate the ideological impact of agenda setting and other features of the modern media. Evaluation often took the form of questioning the extent to which powerful groups control the media. Some candidates also considered theories of the media that are critical of the Marxist and feminist perspectives. Pluralist theory was frequently cited in this respect. Contrasts between the traditional media and the new media featured well in some analytical responses. Lower scoring answers lacked references to relevant concepts and theory, and often accepted uncritically the view that the media is an agent of ideological control.

Section C

Question 5

Most candidates recognised that the question provided an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of the functionalist theory of religion and to draw contrasts with alternative perspectives that would be critical of the view expressed in the question. Durkheim's ideas often featured in points supporting the functionalist theory of religion. The contributions of Parsons, Radcliffe-Browne and Malinowski were also mentioned in some of the responses. Evaluation was often provided by using examples of where religion challenges the existing social order and leads to social change, and some answers linked this line of analysis to the work of Max Weber. Credit was also awarded for contrasting the functionalist theory of religion with the Marxist view that religion is an agent of ideological control serving the interests of the ruling class. There were some lower scoring answers that outlined different theories of religion without linking the material well to debates about how religion might contribute to social order.

Question 6

This question provided an opportunity for candidates to discuss the position of women within religious organisations. High quality responses demonstrated a detailed understanding of the feminist view that religion has close associations with patriarchy, and religious organisations are male dominated. Some answers made good use of research evidence to support the view expressed in the question. Credit was also awarded for answers that considered different world religions and how the position of women may differ between particular religious organisations. Good evaluative responses challenged the view that women have little power in the religious context, advancing counter arguments and citing evidence of where women have a more liberated role in religious organisations. The extent to which the declining power of religion in some countries may be leading to a greater feminisation of religion was also considered in some strong analytical responses. Lower scoring answers were often confined to a narrow range of points illustrating the view that religion contributes to sexual inequality.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/42
Globalisation, Media, Religion

Key messages

- Good answers combined detailed sociological knowledge with sustained analysis and evaluation.
- More candidates are making effective use of references to concepts and theories.
- Higher marks could be gained by making more use of references to relevant sociological studies.
- Some candidates attempted to answer the questions without use of sociological material.
- Some answers lacked focus on the wording of the question.

General comments

The overall standard of the scripts remains high and many candidates succeeded in demonstrating the higher order skills of analysis and evaluation. Some responses are still too descriptive, relying on a summary of relevant knowledge without providing any related evaluation. High scoring answers often included detailed references to relevant concepts and theories. Some candidates also made good use of relevant examples to support key arguments and analysis. Lower scoring responses lacked references to appropriate sociological material, relying instead on assertion and general knowledge. Some answers addressed the general topic of the question, but neglected the issues raised by the specific wording. More use of evidence, from sociological studies and other appropriate sources, would be one way in which candidates could gain higher marks.

Most candidates answered two questions in the time available and there were few rubric errors. A few candidates answered more than two questions, though they appeared to derive no benefit from this strategy in terms of marks achieved. The questions from the sections on Religion and Media proved most popular, with those on Globalisation less frequently attempted.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

High quality responses to this question demonstrated a good understanding of the possible links between capitalism and the growth of global crime. Examples of global crime were often used to support arguments about the impact of capitalism. High scoring answers also provided a sustained evaluation of the idea that capitalism is the main cause of the rise in global crime. In many cases, the evaluation included discussion of a range of possible reasons for the increase in global crime. There were some low-scoring answers that discussed global crime in general terms, without reference to any links to capitalism.

Question 2

There were a few high scoring responses to this question that combined references to relevant concepts and theories with well sourced evidence about why some countries remain poor. Good answers were balanced in considering both strengths and limitations of modernisation theory. Contrasting theories of global poverty was used as the basis for a sustained evaluation in many answers. Some answers demonstrated little understanding of modernisation theory, with some candidates confusing the theory with the general concept of modernisation and technological advancement. Weaker responses offered only a few simple points about poverty with no use of relevant sociological theory.

© 2023

Section B

Question 3

High scoring responses to this question demonstrated a good understanding of sociological arguments and evidence supporting the view that media content is shaped by the interest of the ruling class. Some candidates distinguished between different types of media, arguing that ruling class interests are more powerful in relation to some types than others. Good answers also included a sustained evaluation of the view expressed in the question. This often took the form of considering contrasting theories about who controls media content, with pluralist theory frequently cited as an alternative to the Marxist perspective. Lower scoring responses lacked references to study evidence and accepted uncritically that media content reflects ruling class interests.

Question 4

Most candidates recognised that the question provided an opportunity to discuss contrasting models of media effects. Good answers demonstrated a clear understanding of the two-step flow model, often citing the work of Katz and Lazarsfeld. Some candidates discussed the strengths and limitations of the model directly, others used references to contrasting models of media effects to provide an evaluation of the view expressed the question. Both approaches were generally well done. Relevant study evidence appeared in some well-formed answers. Weaker responses lacked references to sociological material and demonstrated little understanding of the two-step flow model.

Section C

Question 5

Good answers to this question often included examples of where religion has been associated with conflict. Some candidates also used relevant sociological theory to illustrate the debates about the role of religion, with the Marxist and feminist perspectives applied to particularly good effect. High scoring responses also included a sustained evaluation of the view expressed in the question. Functionalist theory was well applied in questioning the idea that religion is a source of conflict. Useful distinctions were also made between religions that support the status quo and those that challenge the existing social order and seek change. There were some lower scoring answers that outlined different theories of religion without linking the material well to the debate about whether religion is a source of conflict.

Question 6

This question provided an opportunity for candidates to discuss the secularisation thesis, with specific reference to the idea that resacrilisation is occurring. High quality responses demonstrated a detailed understanding of the view that some societies may be experiencing a religious revival that runs counter to the idea that the influence of religion is declining. This was supported by reference to relevant concepts, theories, and study evidence. Good answers often also considered the difficulties in defining and measuring secularisation and resacrilisation in order to draw comparisons between today and the past. Some candidates made good use of distinctions between different religions and/or cultures to warn against over-generalising about trends in religious belief and practice. Weaker responses were confined to a narrow range of points about religious belief today, with only limited reference to recognisable sociological content.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/43
Globalisation, Media, Religion

Key messages

- Good answers combined detailed sociological knowledge with sustained analysis and evaluation.
- More candidates are making effective use of references to relevant research studies.
- Use of assertion rather than sociological arguments was a common feature of low scoring answers.
- Some candidates discussed the general topic underpinning the question rather than focusing on the specific wording.
- Higher marks could be achieved by making more use of sociological concepts and theories.

General comments

The overall standard of the scripts remains high and many candidates succeeded in demonstrating the higher order skills of analysis and evaluation. Some responses were too descriptive, relying on a summary of relevant knowledge without providing any related evaluation. To gain high marks for AO3, it is essential to challenge and test the view expressed in the question as part of the process of reaching an overall conclusion about the merit of the stated view. High scoring answers often included detailed references to relevant concepts and theories. Some candidates also made good use of evidence from research studies to support their arguments and analysis. Weaker responses tended to rely on assertion rather than references to relevant sociological arguments and evidence. Lower scoring answers were also often characterised by lack of focus on the key terms in the question.

Examples of rubric error were rare. Some candidates answered more than the two questions required, with the extra answers rarely contributing to an improvement in the overall mark. Failure to reference answers with the appropriate question number occurred in the case of a few scripts. Candidates may disadvantage themselves by omitting the question number or writing the number illegibly, as it makes it difficult for the examiner to be certain which question is being attempted.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

High quality responses to this question demonstrated a good understanding of the arguments supporting the view that only the rich and powerful benefit from globalisation. Marxist perspectives on development often featured in this part of the answer, including Wallerstein's world systems theory. Good evaluative responses considered other groups who might benefit from globalisation, such as migrants and their families, women, the poor, and the middle classes. Some candidates made good use of modernisation theory to challenge the idea that only the rich benefit from globalisation. Lower scoring answers often discussed globalisation in general terms without considering whether or not it is only the rich who benefit.

Question 2

Good answers to this question demonstrated a good understanding of how aid programmes seek to alleviate poverty and improve educational and health facilities in developing countries. Some candidates made useful references to specific aid programmes and aid agencies such as Oxfam, Save the Children, and World Vision. Studies that show the impact of aid programmes were also cited in some instances. Evaluative responses examined arguments for and against the view expressed in the question. In defence of the claim that aid programmes are ineffective, candidates often referred to the Marxist perspective, with dependency

theory often mentioned. A range of empirical evidence was often used to support the counter-argument that aid programmes can be successful in reducing poverty. This included references to countries and regions where aid appears to be making a difference over the long-term to living standards and health outcomes. Low scoring answers were often confined to a description of the types of aid provided to developing countries, with little or no analysis of the effectiveness of that aid.

Section B

Question 3

High scoring responses to this question demonstrated a good understanding of the factors influencing media content. Some candidates made a helpful distinction between traditional and new media when discussing the extent to which audiences are able to influence content. A range of material was used to support the view expressed in the question, including studies claiming to show the power of elite groups over the media and arguments about the extent of government control over media content. Pluralist theory often featured as part of the evaluation. Some candidates also gave reasons why audiences may have more power to influence content than often assumed. Lower scoring responses lacked references to relevant concepts and theory, and often accepted uncritically the view that audience have little influence on the media.

Question 4

Strong responses to this question demonstrated a detailed understanding of the ways that women, past and present, have been represented in the media. Concepts that featured in well-informed answers included hyperreality, social construction, media representations, gender stereotypes, male agenda setting, sexism, and patriarchy. Feminist studies of the media were often cited in support of the view expressed in the question. Some candidates argued that representations of women vary between different media, with some more likely to reflect patriarchal values than others. Evaluation was often provided by considering possible changes in the way women are represented in the media. Some candidates pointed to a shift towards coverage of women that could be considered positive and liberating, as opposed to negative and sexist. Weaker responses lacked detail about how women are represented in the media and instead addressed the issues through a few general observations about stereotyping in the media.

Section C

Question 5

Most candidates recognised that this question provided an opportunity to consider the Marxist theory of religion and to discuss broader debates about the role of religion in society. Good answers demonstrated a detailed understanding of the arguments supporting the view that religion acts as an instrument of social control. Some candidates also made good use of references to particular examples of where religion may have been used as an instrument of social control. This was often complemented by an analysis of contrasting views of the role of religion, including the functionalist, Weberian, feminist, and post-modern. There were a few low scoring answers that discussed the role of religion in general terms, with little or no reference to the impact of religion in relation to social control.

Question 6

This question provided an opportunity for candidates to discuss the secularisation thesis with particular reference to evidence and debates about religiosity. Strong responses demonstrated a detailed understanding of the view that people are just as religious today as in the past. This was supported by reference to relevant concepts, theories, and study evidence. Good evaluative answers questioned whether religious belief today is as strong and/or as widespread as in the past, again using a mix of evidence and arguments to support the analysis. Some candidates also considered the difficulties in defining and measuring religious belief and practice in order to determine whether or not religion has lost its influence in society today. Some candidates made good use of distinctions between different religions and/or cultures to argue that the extent of religious belief today varies between different groups and societies. Lower scoring answers were often confined to a narrow range of points about religious belief, with only limited reference to recognisable sociological content.