

# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 9699/11

Essay

## General Comments

The paper elicited a high level of response from the candidates overall. The examiners were pleased to note further improvement from the last exam session in the accuracy with which the questions were interpreted and in the ability of the candidates to select appropriate sociological arguments and evidence as a base for their answers. One area where many candidates could improve their marks is clarity of expression. There were a lot of answers where the candidate clearly knew quite a lot about the subject, but struggled to explain ideas and debates intelligibly. More practice at accurately summarising sociological ideas and theories may help candidates overcome this limitation.

There were relatively few cases of rubric error and most candidates appeared to have sufficient time to complete the examination paper. Some candidates mistakenly seemed to think that they were required to answer two questions from each of two sections of the paper. There were also a few candidates who answered only one question.

## **Question 1**

This was a popular question. Most candidates demonstrated some understanding of the functionalist theory of socialisation, though some were unable to make appropriate links with the concept of determinism. Good answers drew clear contrasts between the functionalist and interactionist views of socialisation. At the top of the mark range, the responses made explicit use of the concept of determinism to highlight key differences between the functionalist and the interactionist perspectives.

## **Question 2**

Weak answers to this question were confined to a few simple observations about the nature of social order. Better answers focused on Durkheim's work and demonstrated a good understanding of the notions of organic/mechanical solidarity and the collective conscience. Some candidates rightly situated Durkheim's work in the context of a wider discussion of the functionalist contribution to the analysis of social order. To reach the higher mark bands, candidates also needed to contrast the Durkheimian perspective with the ideas of those sociologists who emphasise the role of ideology and power in the maintenance of social order. Some candidates impressed the examiners with their knowledge of the work of Foucault, Althusser and Gramsci.

## **Question 3**

There were some limited answers to this question that were confined to a descriptive account of different quantitative methods. Better answers combined a discussion of individual methods with consideration of the value of the quantitative approach in general. It was pleasing to note some candidates using references to relevant sociological studies to support their points about the strengths and limitations of quantitative research. The best answers provided a sustained assessment of the view that quantitative research methods have more limitations than strengths.

## **Question 4**

Some answers to this question covered the strengths and limitations of official statistics only. While this approach was sufficient to gain a little over half of the marks available, to gain higher marks it was also necessary to contrast official statistics with other sources of secondary data. A significant characteristic of the best answers was a concerted attempt to assess the value of official statistics within the context of secondary research in general. A lot of credit was also awarded to candidates who drew appropriate links between different types of secondary data and the debate between positivists and interpretivists.



### Question 5

This question attracted quite a few general, non-sociological type responses where the candidates made a lot of assertions about the nature of class inequality with little evidence to support their claims. There were also some very good answers though that made excellent use of the contributions of sociologists such as Dahrendorf, Parkin, Goldthorpe and Poulantzas. Answers that were based around a strong understanding of the post-modernist perspective on changes in social class particularly impressed the examiners.

### Question 6

Weaker answers to this question discussed the causes of poverty in general without relating the material to specific sociological theories. Better answers outlined Lewis' culture of poverty thesis and went on to discuss the strengths and limitations of that writer's ideas. Candidates who explicitly contrasted cultural and structural theories of poverty gained marks at the top end of the range. Examiners were also impressed by a few of the candidates questioning the value of general, over-arching explanations of poverty by, for instance, pointing out that there are many groups in poverty and the circumstances of each group, to some extent, is different.



# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 9699/12

Essay

## General Comments

The standard of response for this paper overall continues to improve marginally. In particular, the examiners noted further improvement in the accuracy with which the questions were interpreted and in the ability of the candidates to select appropriate sociological arguments and evidence as a base for their answers. One area where many candidates could improve their marks is clarity of expression. There were a lot of answers where the candidate clearly knew quite a lot about the subject, but struggled to explain ideas and debates intelligibly. More practice at accurately summarising sociological ideas and theories may help candidates overcome this limitation.

There were relatively few cases of rubric error and most candidates appeared to have sufficient time to complete the examination paper. Some candidates mistakenly seemed to think that they were required to answer two questions from each of two sections of the paper. There were also a few candidates who answered only one question.

## **Question 1**

Weaker answers to this question were often confined to a simple account of Marxist theory in general. Better answers focused on Marxist views about the nature of social order. Good responses demonstrated a sound understanding of the role that ideology plays in maintaining social control. Some candidates also impressed the examiners with their knowledge of how state power may be used to subordinate and direct subordinate groups in society. An assessment of the strength and limitations of the Marxist perspective on social order was required to reach the higher mark bands.

## **Question 2**

There were some weak answers to this question that amounted to no more than a summary of different theories of socialisation. Better answers made use of the post-modernist arguments about the declining influence of social class and cultural traditions as influences on social identity. To trigger high marks, answers also needed to include some assessment of the view that traditional social identities are less prevalent today. Some candidates impressed with their knowledge of the influence of globalisation on traditional social identities in non-western societies.

## **Question 3**

Some candidates wrote about the strengths and limitations of participant observation in general and failed to refer to covert observation specifically. While this approach merited some credit, the higher marks were reserved for answers that focused on the value of covert observation specifically. The best answers combined a discussion of the practical strengths and limitations of covert participant observation with an understanding of the relevant theoretical issues. Some candidates also made good connections between covert participant observation and the debate between positivists and interpretivists.

## **Question 4**

There were some tangential responses to this question that examined the strengths and limitations of different research methods. Better answers focused directly on the factors that influence choice of research method, though some candidates only considered the theoretical perspective of the sociologist. The best answers showed a good understanding of the ways in which theoretical perspective may influence the choice of research method and then also considered the influence of other factors, such as a range of practical and ethical issues.



### Question 5

Some weaker answers discussed feminist theory in general without making relevant links to the concept of patriarchy or to the existence of gender inequality in employment. Better answers demonstrated a good understanding of the importance of the concept of patriarchy in feminist theory and linked this to an analysis of the factors influencing gender inequality in employment. To gain high marks, it was also necessary to assess the usefulness of feminist explanation of gender inequality in employment. Some candidates impressed examiners with their knowledge of different strands of feminist theory.

### Question 6

Some candidates based their answers on a discussion of class inequality and so failed to address the main issues raised by the question. There were some slightly better answers that described various forms of ethnic inequality without examining the causes of this type of inequality. Better answers described a number of explanations of ethnic inequality. However, it was only answers that explicitly distinguished between cultural and economic explanations of ethnic inequality that reached the top mark band. There were a few outstanding answers that rightly warned against accepting simple conclusions, favouring one particular type of explanation or approach when seeking to understand the causes of ethnic inequality.



# SOCIOLOGY

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**Paper 9699/21**  
**Data Response**

## General Comments

The scripts once again were a pleasure to mark, with many signs that the candidates continue to improve in their mastery of the skills required to merit the award of high marks. It was pleasing to note that many candidates had heeded the advice of the Principal Examiner to avoid writing over-long answers to the (a) and (b) questions, and to focus most of their effort on responding to the (c) and (d) questions that carry the majority of the marks for the paper and require answers that are detailed and well developed. Some candidates still need to work much harder to acquire the basic knowledge of sociological concepts and theories that is a prerequisite for success in the examination. Without that basic knowledge, regrettably the aspiration of the candidate to gain a satisfactory mark is inevitably forlorn.

There were relatively few cases of rubric error and most candidates appeared to have sufficient time to complete the examination paper. Some candidates mistakenly seemed to think that they were required to answer all three questions. There were also a few candidates who answered only one question.

## **Question 1**

- (a) Most of the candidates demonstrated some understanding of the term 'hypothesis', though many struggled to construct a sufficiently accurate definition to merit the award of full marks.
- (b) Some candidates referred to types of logic, such as induction and deduction, rather than considering types of research method. Most candidates though were able to gain some marks by identifying one or two research methods favoured by positivists.
- (c) Some weaker answers were confined to a few simple observations about bias in relation to sociological research. Better explanations highlighted some of the theoretical background to the belief in a value free sociology, and this often included sound references to the positivist perspective. Some candidates also gained credit by outlining Weber's views on value freedom.
- (d) Most of the candidates demonstrated some relevant knowledge about the value of using scientific methods in sociological research. However, weaker answers tended to rely on a simple descriptive account of the positivist perspective. Better answers demonstrated a fuller understanding of positivism and also offered some assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of using scientific methods in sociological research.

## **Question 2**

- (a) Some candidates confused reliability with validity. However, the majority of candidates were able to define reliability accurately for two marks.
- (b) There were a lot of thoughtful answers to this question which gained full marks by describing two reasons why postal questionnaires may have a low response rate. A few candidates mistakenly discussed the consequences of a low response rate rather than focusing on the reasons why the low response rate occurs.
- (c) There were a lot of answers, meriting around half of the marks available, which described the limitations of questionnaires without linking their points to the concept of validity or the interactionist perspective. Better answers focused on validity specifically and demonstrated a sound understanding of the reservations that interactionists have about the use of questionnaires in sociological research.



- (d) Weaker answers tended to focus on the practical strengths and limitations of interviews. Good answers combined a discussion of practical issues with a sound understanding of theoretical issues related to the use of interviews in sociological research. The best answers also included an assessment of the relative value of using interviews and questionnaires respectively in sociological research.

### Question 3

- (a) Most of the candidates were able to give an accurate definition of social mobility.
- (b) This question was well answered, with the majority of the candidates able to describe two ways in which an individual might achieve upward social mobility.
- (c) There were quite a few weaker answers that discussed changes in class divisions generally rather than focusing on the post-modernist contribution to the debate about social identities today. Good answers demonstrated a sound grasp of the post-modernist perspective, with references to relevant theorists such as Pakulski and Waters.
- (d) It was pleasing to note that almost all of the candidates understand the concept of meritocracy and the context in which it is a subject of debate in sociology. Weaker answers went little further than describing what meritocracy means. Slightly better answers explained the links between the concept of meritocracy and the functionalist view of social stratification. Better answers identified a range of evidence and arguments about how far meritocracy exists in modern industrial societies. Good use of relevant statistical data about income and wealth was a feature of some high quality answers.



# SOCIOLOGY

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**Paper 9699/22**  
**Data Response**

## General Comments

There continues to be improvement in terms of the skill shown by the candidates in handling structured data response questions. However, a few candidates still allocate their time poorly and spend too long answering the shorter **(a)** and **(b)** questions at the expense of responding well to the **(c)** and **(d)** questions that carry the most marks for the paper. It was pleasing to see more evidence of the candidates using references to relevant sociological evidence, studies and theories. Some candidates still need to work much harder to acquire the sound knowledge of subject content that is a prerequisite for success in the examination. Without that basic knowledge, regrettably the aspiration of the candidate to gain a satisfactory mark is inevitably forlorn.

There were relatively few cases of rubric error and most candidates appeared to have sufficient time to complete the examination paper. Some candidates mistakenly seemed to think that they were required to answer all three questions. There were also a few candidates who answered only one question.

## **Question 1**

- (a)** A few candidates wrongly conflated the concept of determinism with the notion of people being determined to achieve goals in society. There were a lot of good answers though that, in various ways, recognised that determinism refers to the idea that human behaviour can be explained in terms of the controlling influence of factors that are external to the individual.
- (b)** Most of the candidates were able to identify two limitations of using laboratory research in sociology, but quite a few answers failed to describe those limitations adequately and so failed to gain full marks.
- (c)** There were a lot of weaker answers that described the characteristics of scientific method without noting the possible limitations in terms of the issues of objectivity and value freedom. Good answers referred to the work of relevant theorists such as Kuhn, Medawar and Popper.
- (d)** There were a lot of answers that merited marks in the middle of the range by providing a basic account of the interpretivist critique of positivism. Better answers demonstrated a more detailed understanding of the interpretivist perspective and also identified some of the strengths and limitations of that perspective. A few candidates impressed examiners by using post-modernist ideas to challenge some of the assumptions of both the positivist and the interpretivist perspectives.

## **Question 2**

- (a)** Some candidates confused validity with reliability. However, most candidates were able to give an accurate definition of the term for two marks.
- (b)** A few candidates gave examples of secondary data rather than describing the advantages of that type of data. Some candidates identified relevant advantages, such as cost saving and time saving, but failed to describe how those advantages arise or in what way they benefit the sociologist, and so full marks could not be awarded.
- (c)** A few candidates clearly had no understanding of what case studies and life histories involve. Some answers in the middle of the mark range identified limitations of case studies and life histories, but failed to make relevant links with the positivist perspective. Good answers demonstrated a sound understanding of positivism and why positivists are sceptical about the use of case studies and life histories in sociological research.



- (d) There were some weaker answers that discussed the limitations of secondary data in general. Better answers focused directly on the usefulness of official statistics, with some candidates making good use of references to Durkheim's use of suicide statistics. Good use of references to the limitations of official crime statistics was also a feature of many answers.

### Question 3

- (a) Some answers gained one mark for noting that class consciousness refers to awareness of the existence of class divisions in society. Better answers added that class consciousness refers more specifically to awareness of common class interests and of exploitation by dominant class groups.
- (b) Most candidates were able to describe two examples of social class inequality, though there were some answers that wrongly gave examples of gender inequality.
- (c) A lot of candidates failed to demonstrate a clear understanding of the concept of proletarianisation and wrote only in general terms about changes in class divisions in modern industrial societies. Good answers often referred to the work of Braverman and the concept of deskilling among white-collar workers.
- (d) Some weaker answers described different views of social class without linking the material to the issue of class identities. Better answers recognised that the question provided an opportunity to discuss post-modernist ideas about the decline in the influence of class on social identities. Some candidates also gained marks by considering the embourgeoisement thesis and the research by sociologists such as Goldthorpe and Lockwood.





# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 9699/31

Essay 2

## General comments

Most candidates selected their answers from the family, education and either religion or crime and deviance sections. Virtually no candidates answered from work and leisure but a small number selected a question from the mass media.

Candidates would be well advised to take care with their answers to **(a) (i)** parts of the questions. In order to gain most credit it is necessary give an accurate definition but not to give examples as these are a necessary part of section **(a) (ii)**, however, the definition that is given should be detailed if the full 3 marks are to be gained. A few candidates gave appropriate examples in **(a) (i)** and then failed to offer them in **(a) (ii)** where the marks were available. Some candidates had a tendency to run their examples together in part **(a) (ii)** and if these are somewhat similar then that can be difficult for Examiners to judge and award marks.

A continuing cause of difficulty to many candidates is the lack of understanding of sociological concepts. This was shown in both the definitions and in the extended essays. Some candidates continue to offer a generalised answer to the question rather than answer the question that was set. Candidates with an in-depth knowledge and understanding of specific topic areas gave intelligent and insightful answers and there was some useful evaluation of the work of key thinkers.

In order to improve marks candidates must make sure that they spend at least some part of the answer directly answering the central issue that has been outlined in the question as well as looking at contextual issues. There was some evidence of candidates answering the question they wished had been set rather than the one that had. It is good examination practice to spend about a third of the essay on this prior to extending the answer to other areas.

Many questions make reference to modern industrial societies, candidates are well advised to focus their answers on these types of society and remember that theorists like Durkheim and Weber were not describing societies that could be described as modern.

Some candidates displayed confusing numbering on their papers and this made the task of marking one of unravelling candidates meaning. Some candidates also produced unnecessary detail that did not gain them any marks. They did this by lengthy introductions to their essays which ended with 'in this essay I will discuss these issues'. In most cases this time could have been used more productively elsewhere.

There were a small number of rubric errors in this examination, a few candidates answered both questions in one section or answered four instead of three questions. A small number of candidates displayed a sound sociological knowledge for two answers then struggled to produce a convincing answer for their third. A more significant problem was one of candidates answering from part **(a)** on one question and then part **(b)** on another. However, the tendency for an increasing number of candidates to display the skills of analysis and evaluation was continued in this paper.



## Comments on specific questions

### Section A

#### Question 1

A very popular and mostly well understood question.

- (a) (i) A well understood concept for which most candidates gave a good definition but some answers were too generalised.
- (ii) Most candidates gave two appropriate examples from two societies but too score well answers needed to describe child rearing practices and not other issues such as the role of the family. A few candidates took examples from sub-cultures rather than societies. Higher scoring responses often contrasted 'traditional Indian' with 'Western societies' or the Nayar.
- (b) Many candidates referenced Parsons and explained the continued importance of the two basic and irreducible functions he claimed the nuclear family provides.

Many saw this as an opportunity to write about the work of Murdock, but there was a tendency to move along the path of explaining different types of family existing alongside/instead of the nuclear family which strayed away from the question set. Some weaker candidates described what they saw as the problems with families today.

More successful answers were able to offer supported debate about loss or otherwise of key functions of the family. These answers frequently included feminist references and/or more modern functionalist views. There was much evidence of the use of up to date theory and empirical data.

#### Question 2

This question was very popular with candidates and there were a number of exceptional answers to it.

- (a) (i) There were many good definitions to this part of the question although some candidates included reasons for lone parenthood rather than a description of what it is.
- (ii) To answer this question well there had to be a focus on increase but many candidates gave reasons for lone parent families with no link to this. Death was only an appropriate answer if it was related to a specific event such as the AIDs epidemic in some countries.
- (b) Many candidates did not focus on the set question, but gave general accounts of the rise of the nuclear family often adding descriptions of different alternative types of family. Some did the above, but were able to offer some relevant discussion/debate on the question of 'threat' such as divorce and diversity. The evidence used varied; there was some good use of feminist material but mainly candidates focused on Fletcher/Parsons/Oakley/Leach/Laing and Cooper/Murray. The vast majority of candidates correctly interpreted this question as it related to diversity in family types. In order to do well answers needed to be specific to modern industrial societies.

### Section B

#### Question 3

This was a popular question with candidates.

- (a) (i) This principle was well understood by many candidates although there were a number of weak responses that talked about taking qualifications by post. A number of candidates who struggled to give a convincing definition then, by their examples in (b), showed that they knew what it was.
- (ii) There were many good examples named and described in the answers to this question both by candidates who had, and had not defined the term well. Most showed that they were familiar with the work of Bowles and Gintis.



- (b) Most answers to this question showed a sound understanding but the majority were limited to Functionalist/Marxist explanations. There was room for the inclusion of more contemporary material. However, a number of responses were excellent.

More developed responses tended to offer additional supported debate concerning gender and/or ethnicity as equally important areas as social class

#### Question 4

This was the less popular question in this section.

- (a) (i) Although many candidates knew what compensatory education is, a number did not. Some answers appeared to be guesses whilst others were confusing compensatory education with comprehensive education.
- (ii) To do well it was necessary to name specific programmes like operation Headstart. Many candidates described remedial programmes in a general way.
- (b) The concept of social mobility was well understood by most candidates who attempted this question. There were many 'standard' or prepared type answers which were of the 'on the one hand/on the other' type. A few candidates took the opportunity to express their personal bias regarding education. Some candidates made good use of Interactionist and Feminist evidence to gain the upper mark bands.

#### Section C

#### Question 5

This was the least popular question in this section and there were a significant number of candidates who only answered the essay presumably because they did not know what the term meant.

- (a) (i) If the term was understood it was defined well apart from those candidates who defined the loss of religiosity.
- (ii) If defined appropriately two accurate examples were given by most candidates, some only gave one.
- (b) Secularisation was a topic that was well understood and there were some excellent answers to this question. However, there was a tendency for some candidates to give answers based on common sense observations of society that contained no sociological details. Others were over reliant on the classical theorists. Weaker candidates concentrated on personal beliefs. Stronger answers included such evidence and arguments as Martin/Wilson/Wallis/Bruce. One or two used more up to date examples to illustrate both evidence of revivalism and secularisation.

#### Question 6

The most popular of the questions on religion questions.

- (a) (i) Most candidates had a good understanding of the nature of a religious sect.
- (ii) This was well understood by most candidates and there were many sound examples of the difficulty in knowing what people believe. A few answers describe other types of religious organisations, presumably because the question had not been read with accuracy.
- (b) Many candidates produced good answers by comparing and contrasting Functionalist-Marxist ideas versus those of Weber frequently giving additional supporting evidence such as Maduro and Polish revivalism. Some candidates struggled with understanding what was meant by conservative force. The debate about religion promoting social change or keeping continuity in society was one that was well understood and there were some excellent answers to this question.



## Section D

### Question 7

In this section this was the question that was answered by the smallest number of candidates.

- (a) (i) This was a concept that was not understood by all the candidates who attempted to define it. Few gave accurate sociological descriptions linked to normlessness.
- (ii) Excellent answers to this question used the work of such key thinkers as Merton. Those who offered vague generic examples tended to be less successful. Few were able to describe appropriate studies and many candidates struggled to produce a second example.
- (b) Most answering this were able to compare and contrast Functionalist approaches with conflict approaches to crime and some added references to e.g. interactionist approaches and/or studies based on gender/ethnicity/class. The issue of crime and social control was well understood by the vast majority of candidates. However, some candidates struggled to understand the difference between deviance and crime.

### Question 8

The more popular of the two questions in this section.

- (a) (i) There were many weak attempts to define delinquency by candidates who were clearly defining crime. Most candidates were able to offer a definition that was clearly linked to norms.
- (ii) Most candidates gave two examples but candidates needed to be clear about the difference between crime and delinquency. However a significant number of candidates simply described two crimes or two acts of deviancy not associated with 'delinquency' e.g. killing someone, rape.
- (b) Labelling, and its relation to delinquency, was well understood and there were some excellent examples of this given with candidates covering a wide range of arguments. Some candidates made use of studies like that of Willis and although these may have been very good pieces of research for a question on crime and deviance candidates are much better advised to rely on research into that topic.

## Section E

### Question 9

This question was answered by very few candidates and most of the answers given were weak.

- (a) (i) Described simply as taking action by all cases by candidates.
- (ii) Only one or two candidates were able to accurately name and give examples of conflict in the workplace. Most were not.
- (b) Candidates who answered this question produced generalised and assertive responses without supporting evidence or appropriate theory.

### Question 10

As with question nine there were very few answers to this question and most of the ones that were given were weak.

- (a) (i) There were some reasonable attempts to define the term but many that were not.
- (ii) Knowledge about categories of workers proved difficult for candidates to answer.
- (b) Most responses to this question were weak.



## Section F

### Question 11

In this section this question was the most popular.

- (a) (i) Most candidates struggled to get more than two marks as they clearly struggled to understand the concept. Interpretations tended to be broad.
- (ii) Again most candidates struggled to give two appropriate examples the better responses referred to content selection. The better responses referenced content 'selection' and presentation/political interference.
- (b) Most candidates were able to compare and contrast several 'models' appropriately for making use of Philo and the Glasgow Media Group and several used Bagdikian. There were some interesting answers that were able to utilise examples from their own or neighbouring societies.

### Question 12

In this section very few answers were offered for this question.

- (a) (i) Most candidates struggled to gain any marks for this section of the question as representation was not well understood.
- (ii) Most candidates answered this part fully describing the way in which two appropriately named examples were negatively portrayed, mainly 'women' and 'ethnic minorities'
- (b) The few examples of this question seen managed to gain marks usually by contrasting at least one feminist approach with at least one other, usually pluralist. Able candidates gave thoughtful responses whereas weaker ones had a tendency to be uncritical. A number of candidates seemed to struggle to use the concept of patriarchy.



# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 9699/32

Essay 2

## General comments

The standard of answers was maintained across the range of responses with many candidates displaying detailed sociological knowledge. Most candidates selected their answers from the first two sections of the examination paper with a very small number answering questions on work and leisure.

It was noticed that the recent trend to make reference to feminism continued and this was to be seen in a wide range of contexts. Furthermore, many candidates were able to discuss feminist critiques in a sophisticated and up-to-date way, for example by distinguishing between the different branches of feminism. This was very pleasing to see.

Candidates need to take care when answering the definition and example parts of questions. There were several instances of over-lengthy introductions and definitions that included examples. Examples should be kept for the second part of **Section A**. However, the definition that is given should be detailed if the full 3 marks are to be gained. Once again a few candidates gave appropriate examples in **(a) (i)** and then failed to offer them in **(a) (ii)** where the marks were available. Some candidates had a tendency to run their examples together in **(a) (ii)** and if these are somewhat similar then that can be difficult for examiners to judge and award marks.

A continuing cause of difficulty for some candidates is the lack of understanding of sociological concepts; this was shown in both the definitions and in the extended essays. This was particularly noticeable this year in the questions on crime and deviance. Some candidates continue to offer a generalised answer to the question rather than the one that was set.

In order to improve marks candidates must make sure that they spend at least some part of the answer directly answering the central issue that has been outlined in the question and then go on to examine contextual issues. Another improvement that some candidates could make is to be specific about the societies that they are referring to and to be able to show that they have a chronological understanding of the development of research. A few candidates were referring to some research of the 1950s as if it was contemporary.

There were a small number of rubric errors in this examination but some candidates who displayed a sound sociological knowledge for two answers then struggled to produce a convincing answer for their third.

## Comments on specific questions

### Section A

#### Question 1

A question that most candidates who answered it understood, but the essay was generally better done than the definition.

- (a) (i)** The majority of candidates showed an understanding of the concept and were familiar with the work of Althusser but very few were able to successfully relate it to the family as the question required.
- (ii)** Control of the behaviour of family members was well understood and most candidates gave two sound examples, frequently linked to socialisation and punishment.



- (b) Many candidates choose to relate their answer to loss of function or, alternatively, to describe the functions of the family. These answers were able to gain some credit but they did not get to grips with the central focus of the question. Those that were more skilled concentrated on the ways that families may, or may not, fulfil positive functions. The best were able to distinguish between different feminist viewpoints. The question was asking candidates to assess the impact of functions for both society and its members. In order to do very well candidates had to do both, and few did this successfully.

## Question 2

This was the most popular of the family questions and answered by the vast majority of candidates. It was noted that in answers to that many (a) ii had lengthy introductions that added nothing to the answer before getting to the examples.

- (a) (i) The definitions offered for domestic labour were frequently poor. Many talked about roles in the family or issues of equality and many others were describing the domestic system. Some candidates were able to say that domestic labour is not always done by women.
- (ii) In most cases candidates offered two appropriate examples of family functions. Many candidates gave Parsons two basic and irreducible functions but a significant number described the stabilisation of the adult personality as the way in which children are socialised.
- (b) A well understood question. Many answers were analytical and showed evaluation using feminist research. Some, who had a good grasp of sociology, related their answer to equality in society rather than equality in the family as asked by the question. It was disappointing that very few candidates addressed the issue of family members: the majority of answers were solely related to couples and failed to mention either children or the elderly.

## Section B

### Question 3

This question was answered by many candidates. It highlighted the importance of understanding concepts.

- (a) (i) Positional theory as that which relates to where you finish in the stratification system in relation to where you began, was, with some notable exceptions, understood by almost no candidate.
- (ii) It is disappointing that candidates at this level do not understand the term material factors but many did not and gave cultural factors as examples. However, the majority did and offered two examples of material factors that influence educational outcomes. These were best when they were clearly different and did not overlap.
- (b) This was a question that few candidates fully understood and there was a tendency to offer a catch all answer. It was necessary to consider if the education systems do serve the needs of the economy before considering other issues. There were few that developed the debate much further than role allocation and enabling capitalism to continue.

### Question 4

This was the more popular of the two education questions.

- (a) (i) Streaming was defined accurately by most candidates. Some made poor use of time by explaining why it happened rather than what it is. It was necessary to make some comment about the placing of candidates in separate classes in order to do well.
- (ii) Many candidates confused grouping with sub-culture. Most candidates gave two appropriate examples like banding or gender. It was very surprising that hardly any suggested that by age as one way in which candidates are put in classes in schools.
- (b) Most candidates correctly interpreted this question as one about the in school factors and referred, with credit, to the work of the interactionists. Other extended their answers to consider knowledge and power as well. At the top end of the range the best answers evaluated this against the out of school factors but few specifically addressed the question of grouping in their answer.



## Section C

### Question 5

Very few candidates answered this question.

- (a) (i) There were some clear answers to this question that defined the term correctly. Many candidates confused their answer and gave a definition of a specific belief.
- (ii) In order to give two successful examples it was necessary to understand what global meant. Those that did give two sound examples, frequently Christianity and Islam. Those that did not struggled to answer the question successfully.
- (b) There were some good answers to this question that showed sound analysis. Oppression of the working class was a major focus of many answers and there was some excellent use made of contemporary feminist work of such key thinkers as El Saadawi.

### Question 6

In relation to this section of the paper this was the slightly more popular question.

- (a) (i) Liberation theology was a concept that many candidates struggled with. Most candidates made a vague link to beliefs and ideas but few definitions were clearly focused.
- (ii) In order to be successful it was necessary to identify religious movements that are growing. Many candidates selected from the larger movements, frequently Christianity and Islam. Others described other expanding groups like the Jehovah's Witnesses. If the candidate gave sects or cults as an answer then it had to be related to a specific example to do well.
- (b) The secularisation debate was one that was well understood on many levels. Some answers were confined to issues relating to religious observance, but more analytical ones analysed to meaning of secularisation in a variety of contexts that included both historical and contemporary examples.

## Section D

### Question 7

This was the more popular of the two crime and deviance questions.

- (a) (i) Most candidates gave concise and accurate definitions of the term. There were a number that defined it as white crime. A number put correct examples in the definition and then went on to give the wrong examples in the next section of the paper.
- (ii) The majority of answers were accurate. Some candidates explained that it was victimless crime and then suggested that Robert Maxwell's taking money from the pension fund was an example of overlooking the fact that the pensioners were victims of this. Likewise with thalidomide. Others gave drug and weapon smuggling as examples, fraud and embezzlement were much better examples.
- (b) At the lower end of the mark bands candidates agreed with the proposition with the better ones supporting their answers with evidence. Higher up the mark bands candidates queried both the accuracy of the statistics and the nature of criminal behaviour. Most candidates had a great deal of knowledge, with which they were able to relate to this question. The most successful candidates were those who organised their work to develop an argument.





### Question 8

A significant number of candidates chose to answer this question.

- (a) (i) There were some excellent definitions of this term but there were many that showed no sociological understanding of it.
- (ii) The limitations of crime statistics were well understood by nearly all the candidates who answered this question. However a number of candidates were not secure in their understanding of validity and reliability.
- (b) At the lower range of the mark bands there were a number of answers that showed a lack of sociological understanding. Some candidates still refer to prostitution as a crime that only applies to women, this may be true of criminalisation but not of the breaking of the law. Others still see females as a category that are separate from working class. Other answers were almost completely physiological with little or no sociological content. Some candidates went a little further than Pollock in their answers. At the higher end of the mark bands there were some excellent analytical and sociologically accurate answers.

### Section E

#### Question 9

This question was answered but very few candidates and examiners were left of the opinion that the majority who answered it had not studied the subject.

- (a) (i) There was some understanding that this is a changing employment structure but most candidates seemed to think that this meant that workers had to be flexible.
- (ii) Virtually no one identified factors such as changing technology, but rather described changing patterns of pay.
- (b) No candidate who answered this question showed a sociological understanding. Examiners were left with the impression that the thesis was not understood as the ones who gave answers that included sociological evidence were mostly writing about the managerial revolution.

#### Question 10

Almost no candidate answered this question and examiners saw no higher order answers to it. Most answers to this question failed to complete an essay.

- (a) (i) Only one answer correctly defined the term.
- (ii) Few examples were given and most of these were inappropriate.
- (b) Little was put into answers to this question and most failed to reach half a page. Candidates clearly had a lack of appropriate knowledge.

### Section F

#### Question 11

Of the questions in this section this was the most popular with candidates.

- (a) (i) Most candidates defined this accurately as a fixed, frequently offensive, image of a group.
- (ii) There were some interesting examples offered that were frequently drawn from empirical research. However, the question was not about naming different types of disabilities which many candidates did.
- (b) Most answers took the pluralist vs. conflict theory stance in answering this question with many at the upper end of the mark bands including material such as hegemony.



**Question 12**

This question was answered by very few candidates.

- (a) (i) The few candidates who attempted this question had a sound understanding of the nature of gate keeping.
  - (ii) Some candidates struggled to come up with two examples other than gate keeping but there was some good use made of the power of owners and governments to control the content offered.
- (b) Few candidates managed to tackle this question really successfully. Most of the answers to this question outlined the different theories that relate to the way in which the media influences audiences. However, this tended to be done as a list and knowledge was not applied to the question in analysing how well, or not, the 'uses and gratifications theory' applies to explaining the link.

