

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/11

Essay

Key Features

- A good range of sociological knowledge was demonstrated by many of the candidates.
- High scoring answers included evidence of analysis and assessment.
- Some candidates made good use of relevant studies.
- There were some answers that lacked references to appropriate sociological material.

General Comments

Most of the candidates demonstrated some relevant sociological knowledge and understanding in answering the questions. However, there continue to be a lot of answers that cover some appropriate material without fully responding to the demands of the question. These answers are often lacking in analysis and assessment. To gain high marks it is necessary not only to demonstrate relevant knowledge but also to discuss critically the issues raised by each question. Practicing the skills of analysis and assessment at regular intervals during a course of study would be one way in which candidates could improve their chances of success in the exam.

A few of the candidates answered more than two questions, but cases of rubric error overall were rare. Most of the candidates were able to answer two questions fully in the time available.

Question 1

Some of the answers were confined to a few general observations about socialisation. Better answers provided an accurate account of the functionalist theory of socialisation. This often included references to value consensus and organic/mechanical solidarity. Good answers assessed the view that the functionalist theory of socialisation fails to reflect the complex nature of social interaction. The assessment was often delivered by making comparisons with other sociological theories.

Question 2

There were some low scoring answers that offered only a few observations about the nature of science in general. Answers that gained marks in the middle of the range usually comprised an accurate account of the positivist perspective in sociology. Higher scoring answers also included an assessment of the view that the similarities between sociology and the natural sciences have been exaggerated. Discussion of the realist perspective was often a feature in good answers. Some candidates also made effective use of contributions from the post-modernist perspective.

Question 3

Some of the answers were limited to a few points about the strengths and limitations of quantitative research. Better answers considered a wider range of strengths and limitations, making effective use of references to relevant concepts and theoretical issues. Good answers provided a full and well-informed account of why the data collected using quantitative research might be considered inferior to the insights derived from qualitative research. Some high-scoring answers raised questions about the basis on which research methods can be ranked against each other.

Question 4

There were a few answers that were confined to a discussion of interviews in general. Better answers demonstrated knowledge of the strengths and limitations of unstructured interviews specifically. Good answers discussed a wide range of practical and theoretical issues linked to the use of unstructured interviews. There was also an attempt to assess whether the depth of understanding achieved using unstructured interviews outweighs the practical limitations of that research method. Some candidates made good use of studies illustrating the advantages of unstructured interviews.

Question 5

There were some low scoring answers that were limited to a few comments about social inequality in general. Better answers demonstrated knowledge of the main patterns of inequality in income and wealth in modern industrial societies. The candidates also questioned who benefits from inequality. Good answers explained the sociological thinking behind the idea that inequality benefits only the rich and powerful groups in society. The explanation was often delivered in terms of the Marxist theory of class inequality. High scoring answers also provided an assessment of the view on which the question was based. This often involved contrasting the Marxist theory with functionalist and Weberian accounts of social inequality.

Question 6

Some of the answers were limited to a few observations about the nature of gender inequality. Better answers provided a brief account of the changes in society that may have led to a reduction in the inequality faced by females in society. Credit was also awarded for candidates who discussed different theories of gender inequality. Good answers demonstrated a sound understanding of different sociological views of gender inequality. In order to gain high marks it was also necessary to assess the view that there is no longer inequality between males and females in modern industrial societies. Some candidates made good use of relevant empirical evidence in constructing their answers.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/12

Essay

Key Features

- Good sociological knowledge was demonstrated by many of the candidates.
- Low scoring answers were often based on personal reflection rather than sociological knowledge.
- Good answers included evidence of analysis and assessment.
- Some candidates made effective use of references to studies.

General Comments

The majority of the candidates demonstrated a good range of sociological knowledge and understanding. However, there continues to be a minority of the entry who produce answers that are based on general knowledge and personal reflection. As these answers lack reference to appropriate sociological knowledge, they can gain only low marks. At the other extreme, there were some answers that demonstrated a considerable depth of sociological knowledge. These answers were also characterised by good use of analysis and assessment, with each response addressing directly the specific wording of the question.

A few of the candidates answered more than two questions, but cases of rubric error overall were rare. Most of the candidates were able to answer two questions fully in the time available.

Question 1

There were some low scoring answers that offered only a few vague references to functionalist theory. Better answers considered the extent to which functionalist theory provides an adequate theory of social conflict. There were a few good answers that assessed the contribution of functionalist theory in terms of other sociological theories, such as the Marxist and feminist perspectives. Some candidates made good use of the post-modernist critique of traditional sociological theory.

Question 2

Some answers discussed the value of sociological research in general without linking the material to the issue of helping disadvantaged groups. Better answers demonstrated an awareness of the debates about value relevance in sociology. Some candidates made useful references to the ideas of sociologists such as C Wright Mills, Becker and Gouldner. Good answers assessed the arguments for and against a value committed sociology. Some candidates rightly questioned who benefits from attempts to help the disadvantaged and what values underpin the idea of a value committed approach to sociological research.

Question 3

Some answers discussed the value of using secondary data in sociological research, but made little or no reference to official statistics. Better answers focused directly on the benefits and limitations of using official statistics. There were some high scoring answers that questioned the extent to which official statistics provide an objective account of social reality. These answers also often included appropriate references to sociological studies, such as Durkheim's research on suicide.

Question 4

There were some low scoring answers that offered a few general points about sociological research without linking the material well to a discussion of the qualitative approach. Answers that gained marks in the middle of the range were often characterised by a sound account of some general points for and against the use of qualitative research in sociology. High scoring answers provided an assessment of the strengths and limitations of qualitative research, paying particular attention to the issue of objectivity in this type of research. Some candidates made especially good use of references to studies that illustrate the use of qualitative research.

Question 5

Some answers were confined to an attempt to define the term 'social class'. Better answers outlined one or more theory of social class. There were some good responses that discussed the concept of property ownership and its importance in understanding class divisions. Some candidates made very good use of references to contemporary studies of social class, including contributions from post-modernist writers.

Question 6

Low scoring answers to this question were often confined to a few observations about the nature of poverty in general. Answers in the middle of the mark range were often based on a general account of one or more theory of poverty. Good answers linked the theoretical material on poverty to a discussion of the problems that the poor may face in improving their life chances. Some candidates provided a detailed assessment of the notion that the right attitudes and determination would be sufficient to enable the poor to escape poverty. References to appropriate studies of poverty featured in some of the better answers to this question.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/13

Essay

Key Features

- A good range of sociological knowledge was demonstrated by many of the candidates.
- High scoring answers included evidence of analysis and assessment.
- Some candidates made good use of relevant studies.
- There were some answers that lacked references to appropriate sociological material.

General Comments

Most of the candidates demonstrated some relevant sociological knowledge and understanding in answering the questions. However, there continue to be a lot of answers that cover some appropriate material without fully responding to the demands of the question. These answers are often lacking in analysis and assessment. To gain high marks it is necessary not only to demonstrate relevant knowledge but also to discuss critically the issues raised by each question. Practicing the skills of analysis and assessment at regular intervals during a course of study would be one way in which candidates could improve their chances of success in the exam.

A few of the candidates answered more than two questions, but cases of rubric error overall were rare. Most of the candidates were able to answer two questions fully in the time available.

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Some of the answers were confined to a few general observations about socialisation. Better answers provided an accurate account of the functionalist theory of socialisation. This often included references to value consensus and organic/mechanical solidarity. Good answers assessed the view that the functionalist theory of socialisation fails to reflect the complex nature of social interaction. The assessment was often delivered by making comparisons with other sociological theories.

Question 2

There were some low scoring answers that offered only a few observations about the nature of science in general. Answers that gained marks in the middle of the range usually comprised an accurate account of the positivist perspective in sociology. Higher scoring answers also included an assessment of the view that the similarities between sociology and the natural sciences have been exaggerated. Discussion of the realist perspective was often a feature in good answers. Some candidates also made effective use of contributions from the post-modernist perspective.

Question 3

Some of the answers were limited to a few points about the strengths and limitations of quantitative research. Better answers considered a wider range of strengths and limitations, making effective use of references to relevant concepts and theoretical issues. Good answers provided a full and well-informed account of why the data collected using quantitative research might be considered inferior to the insights derived from qualitative research. Some high-scoring answers raised questions about the basis on which research methods can be ranked against each other.

Question 4

There were a few answers that were confined to a discussion of interviews in general. Better answers demonstrated knowledge of the strengths and limitations of unstructured interviews specifically. Good answers discussed a wide range of practical and theoretical issues linked to the use of unstructured interviews. There was also an attempt to assess whether the depth of understanding achieved using unstructured interviews outweighs the practical limitations of that research method. Some candidates made good use of studies illustrating the advantages of unstructured interviews.

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Some of the answers were limited to a few observations about the nature of gender inequality. Better answers provided a brief account of the changes in society that may have led to a reduction in the inequality faced by females in society. Credit was also awarded for candidates who discussed different theories of gender inequality. Good answers demonstrated a sound understanding of different sociological views of gender inequality. In order to gain high marks it was also necessary to assess the view that there is no longer inequality between males and females in modern industrial societies. Some candidates made good use of relevant empirical evidence in constructing their answers.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/21
Data Response

Key Features

- Good answers continued to make effective use of sociological studies and were able to apply empirical data appropriately to the questions.
- Many responses contained an evaluative tone and were able to analyse to good effect.
- **(a)** and to some extent **(b)** questions were less well answered.
- **(c)** and **(d)** questions generally produced more successful responses with many containing apposite theoretical references.

General Comments

The standard of responses was fairly similar to the previous session last year. Those candidates achieving the highest marks demonstrated all of the relevant skills. **(a)** questions were less well answered, most notably **1(a)**. Quite often candidates were able to identify an element of a definition but were not successful in developing them. **(b)** questions were answered somewhat better than **(a)** but, they too, were prone to being partial responses with identified reasons that were either undeveloped or overlapping. There is a clear opportunity here for Centres to focus on skills development in relation to the demands of these two questions. Candidates would benefit from practising these questions to produce concise, well distinguished points that are sociologically developed. Overall, there was greater success achieved in the **(c)** and **(d)** questions, which is pleasing given that these require the application of higher order skills. The exception to this rule was **2(c)** which was less well answered. It is also worth noting that some responses to **(c)** questions contained evaluation and that this is unnecessary as there are no marks awarded for this skill in the mark scheme. Overall, **Question 3** was the least well attempted, most notably in respect of question **(d)** where there was a tendency to rely on common-sense. There were no rubric errors and the candidates appeared to have no problem answering two questions in the time available.

Question 1

- (a)** Many answers outlined a partial definition of *determinism* but few developed these fully enough to gain full marks. Well answered responses outlined two elements, for example, by referring to the notion that 'society constrains behaviour' as well as the individual having 'no choice' in their conduct.
- (b)** Candidates generally identified a sound reason (though often only one) but were less good in developing their identification. There was a notable tendency for answers to contain overlapping reasons.
- (c)** A well answered question; candidates were slightly stronger on outlining structural theories, sometimes with over lengthy general accounts of functionalism and Marxism but not always with a sufficient focus on their structuralist credentials. Typically, less time was given to interpretivism. The best responses managed to fully distinguish between the two rather than juxtapose them. There was some unnecessary evaluation in a number of responses to this question.
- (d)** Good answers clearly focused their attention on the interpretivist approach to socialisation and outlined valid studies that supported this view. Less successful answers outlined a very general survey of models of socialisation, often beginning with the functionalist perspective. However, there was evidence of sound knowledge in most answers with many able to make effective assessment as well.

Question 2

- (a) Many answers outlined a partial definition of *objective* and some developed these fully enough to gain full marks. Better answers explained more directly what is meant by objective in the context of an interview.
- (b) Most answers correctly identified at least one valid reason but were not always able to develop their point sufficiently to gain a further mark. Typically, this involved the notion of respondents 'misunderstanding' poorly worded questions, although this was not always related to the potential for diminished reliability. Some were able to correctly identify a second reason but were less likely to fully develop their point satisfactorily. A number of answers did not distinguish two reasons clearly enough.
- (c) Good answers were able to identify a range of points and the best ones did not simply list these but developed them in a way that elucidated their methodological significance e.g. by making links to concepts such as validity and reliability, or more specific ones like social desirability. Less successful responses had a narrow range of points and/or did not fully develop their significance. Some answers spent too much time describing what interviews are rather than fully focusing on the question.
- (d) Good answers directly addressed the question in relation to the positivist critique of unstructured interviews by linking their response to theoretical concerns. These answers then went on to evaluate this by reference to the interpretivist position. Less successful answers tended to focus on practical strengths and limitations without sufficiently linking these to the broader theoretical debate that was the focus of the question. Some answers did not address the theoretical base of the question at all.

Question 3

- (a) Most answers were able to correctly identify an element of what is meant by the term *working class*, but did not always fully develop their point or, alternatively, did not add a further comprising element.
- (b) The majority of answers were able to identify two valid reasons but many did not fully develop either or both of these. A number of answers did not distinguish their two reasons clearly enough.
- (c) This question was answered well with most candidates able to identify a number of reasons and to develop their ideas accordingly. Most were able to incorporate relevant sociological concepts and theories into their responses and were rewarded for doing so. Some responses included evaluative comments which were unnecessary as there are no marks in this question for evaluation.
- (d) Good answers were able to correctly locate their responses in an appropriate theoretical context, although some focused their attention overly on the contributions of functionalists. This approach was of limited relevance. The best answers directly linked their arguments to the concept of social stratification. However, a number of candidates were not entirely clear about the meaning of the term underclass, and these responses were largely commonsensical and were not well rewarded.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/22
Data Response

Key Comments

- A good range of sociological knowledge was demonstrated by many of the candidates.
- High scoring answers to the **(d)** questions included evidence of analysis and assessment.
- Answers to the **(b)** questions often lacked development of the points identified.
- There were some answers that lacked references to appropriate sociological material.

General Comments

Most of the candidates demonstrated some relevant sociological knowledge and understanding in answering the questions. The knowledge based **(a)** questions were answered well by almost all of the candidates. The knowledge part of the **(b)** questions was also answered well, but many of the answers failed to provide sufficient development to merit full marks. Some candidates wasted their effort by providing assessment in response to the **(c)** questions. The **(c)** questions require the candidate to provide an explanation rather than an assessment. Good answers to the **(d)** questions were based on a sound analysis and assessment of the issues raised by the question. Some candidates offered only knowledge based answers in relation to the **(d)** questions and so were they were unable to gain high marks for this part of their work.

A few of the candidates answered three rather than two questions, but cases of rubric error overall were rare. Most of the candidates were able to answer two questions fully in the time available.

Question 1

- (a)** Some candidates confused the idea of a common culture with the process of socialisation. There were a lot of answers that defined 'culture' without describing what is meant by 'common' culture. These answers were deemed to provide a partial response to the question and so gained one mark.
- (b)** Most of the candidates were able to identify two agencies of secondary socialisation, usually schools and religious organisations or the workplace. However, there were many answers that lacked an adequate description of how the agencies provide socialisation. To gain full marks it was necessary both to identify two relevant agencies and to describe how they contribute to the socialisation process. Some answers defined secondary socialisation without identifying any agencies.
- (c)** Some low-scoring answers were confined to a few limited comments about the functionalist view of socialisation. Answers in the middle of the mark range often identified a range of concepts and ideas associated with the functionalist theory of social order, without providing a sufficiently detailed explanation to merit high marks. Good answers offered an accurate summary of the functionalist notion of value consensus and also often included references to the ideas of organic and mechanical solidarity and systems integration.
- (d)** Answers that fitted the bottom mark band were often confined to describing the functionalist model of society only. Better answers included an account of Marxist theory. Good answers applied the material on Marxist theory to provide a critique of the functionalist model of society. Assessment was a further feature of high-scoring answers. The assessment was often delivered by contrasting different sociological theories and their contributions to the debate about the value of the functionalist model of society.

Question 2

- (a) Some candidates offered only a definition of interviews in general and so gained no marks. Good answers to this question often noted that structured interviews are based on pre-set questions and the questions are asked in a standardised way. No marks were awarded for discussing the strengths and/or limitations of structured interviews.
- (b) Some answers identified features of particular quantitative research methods rather than focusing on the qualities which positivists look for in research methods generally. There were a lot of answers that gained two marks for identifying two qualities associated with positivist research. The qualities most often identified were reliability and representativeness. Good answers also provided a description of each of the qualities identified.
- (c) A few candidates confused participant observation with interviews. Some answers were confined to describing a few strengths and/or limitations of participant observation. Better answers explained why interpretivists think that participant observation is the best method for obtaining valid data. Good answers also included an accurate definition of what is meant by 'validity'.
- (d) Some answers were confined to a few observations about interviews in general. Better answers addressed the issue of why the answers that people give in interviews may have little to do with their real or normal behaviour. Good responses also included an assessment of the extent to which research findings derived from interviews may lack validity. Some candidates made good use of the distinction between structured and unstructured interviews in answering the question.

Question 3

- (a) Most of the candidates who attempted this question demonstrated some knowledge of the term 'gender'. To gain full marks, it was also necessary to show an understanding of what is meant by 'discrimination'. Some candidates demonstrated an understanding of gender divisions, without defining the term 'discrimination', and so they gained limited credit for a partial response to the question.
- (b) Quite a few answers discussed obstacles to social mobility in relation to gender and ethnic divisions. No marks were awarded as the question referred specifically to obstacles affecting the working class. Good answers often referred to barriers within education and the workplace that might prevent a working class person gaining upward social mobility.
- (c) There were some low-scoring answers that discussed social mobility in very general terms, with little or no reference to the problems of measuring mobility. Better answers considered a range of factors that can make it difficult to measure social mobility in an accurate way. Some candidates made good use of the distinction between short-range and long-range mobility. References to relevant studies of mobility were another feature of some high-scoring answers.
- (d) Answers that fitted the bottom mark band were often confined to a few simple observations about the nature of social inequality. Better answers offered explanations about why many able and talented people may fail to achieve upward social mobility. Good answers demonstrated a sound understanding of the nature of structural inequality and also included an assessment of the extent to which opportunities for social mobility are restricted by the established order of society. Some candidates made good use of the meritocracy thesis to provide a theoretical underpinning to their answers.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/23
Data Response

Key Features

- Good answers continued to make effective use of sociological studies and were able to apply empirical data appropriately to the questions.
- Many responses contained an evaluative tone and were able to analyse to good effect.
- **(a)** and to some extent **(b)** questions were less well answered.
- **(c)** and **(d)** questions generally produced more successful responses with many containing apposite theoretical references.

General Comments

The standard of responses was fairly similar to the previous session last year. Those candidates achieving the highest marks demonstrated all of the relevant skills. **(a)** questions were less well answered, most notably **1(a)**. Quite often candidates were able to identify an element of a definition but were not successful in developing them. **(b)** questions were answered somewhat better than **(a)** but, they too, were prone to being partial responses with identified reasons that were either undeveloped or overlapping. There is a clear opportunity here for Centres to focus on skills development in relation to the demands of these two questions. Candidates would benefit from practising these questions to produce concise, well distinguished points that are sociologically developed. Overall, there was greater success achieved in the **(c)** and **(d)** questions, which is pleasing given that these require the application of higher order skills. The exception to this rule was **2(c)** which was less well answered. It is also worth noting that some responses to **(c)** questions contained evaluation and that this is unnecessary as there are no marks awarded for this skill in the mark scheme. Overall, **Question 3** was the least well attempted, most notably in respect of question **(d)** where there was a tendency to rely on common-sense. There were no rubric errors and the candidates appeared to have no problem answering two questions in the time available.

Question 1

- (a)** Many answers outlined a partial definition of *determinism* but few developed these fully enough to gain full marks. Well answered responses outlined two elements, for example, by referring to the notion that 'society constrains behaviour' as well as the individual having 'no choice' in their conduct.
- (b)** Candidates generally identified a sound reason (though often only one) but were less good in developing their identification. There was a notable tendency for answers to contain overlapping reasons.
- (c)** A well answered question; candidates were slightly stronger on outlining structural theories, sometimes with over lengthy general accounts of functionalism and Marxism but not always with a sufficient focus on their structuralist credentials. Typically, less time was given to interpretivism. The best responses managed to fully distinguish between the two rather than juxtapose them. There was some unnecessary evaluation in a number of responses to this question.
- (d)** Good answers clearly focused their attention on the interpretivist approach to socialisation and outlined valid studies that supported this view. Less successful answers outlined a very general survey of models of socialisation, often beginning with the functionalist perspective. However, there was evidence of sound knowledge in most answers with many able to make effective assessment as well.

Question 2

- (a) Many answers outlined a partial definition of *objective* and some developed these fully enough to gain full marks. Better answers explained more directly what is meant by objective in the context of an interview.
- (b) Most answers correctly identified at least one valid reason but were not always able to develop their point sufficiently to gain a further mark. Typically, this involved the notion of respondents 'misunderstanding' poorly worded questions, although this was not always related to the potential for diminished reliability. Some were able to correctly identify a second reason but were less likely to fully develop their point satisfactorily. A number of answers did not distinguish two reasons clearly enough.
- (c) Good answers were able to identify a range of points and the best ones did not simply list these but developed them in a way that elucidated their methodological significance e.g. by making links to concepts such as validity and reliability, or more specific ones like social desirability. Less successful responses had a narrow range of points and/or did not fully develop their significance. Some answers spent too much time describing what interviews are rather than fully focusing on the question.
- (d) Good answers directly addressed the question in relation to the positivist critique of unstructured interviews by linking their response to theoretical concerns. These answers then went on to evaluate this by reference to the interpretivist position. Less successful answers tended to focus on practical strengths and limitations without sufficiently linking these to the broader theoretical debate that was the focus of the question. Some answers did not address the theoretical base of the question at all.

Question 3

- (a) Most answers were able to correctly identify an element of what is meant by the term *working class*, but did not always fully develop their point or, alternatively, did not add a further comprising element.
- (b) The majority of answers were able to identify two valid reasons but many did not fully develop either or both of these. A number of answers did not distinguish their two reasons clearly enough.
- (c) This question was answered well with most candidates able to identify a number of reasons and to develop their ideas accordingly. Most were able to incorporate relevant sociological concepts and theories into their responses and were rewarded for doing so. Some responses included evaluative comments which were unnecessary as there are no marks in this question for evaluation.
- (d) Good answers were able to correctly locate their responses in an appropriate theoretical context, although some focused their attention overly on the contributions of functionalists. This approach was of limited relevance. The best answers directly linked their arguments to the concept of social stratification. However, a number of candidates were not entirely clear about the meaning of the term underclass, and these responses were largely commonsensical and were not well rewarded.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/31

Essay 2

Key Messages

1. When candidates are asked for two examples they should ensure that they are clearly different.
2. Descriptive passages of evidence should be kept brief.
3. Candidates should include named sociological theory and evidence to support assertions in longer answers in order to access higher mark bands.
4. Candidates should include evaluative points throughout essays and a summative conclusion to access the highest mark band.

General Comments

Shorter answers requiring knowledge and the selection of examples were generally well done. Longer answers requiring application of a range of data and assessment of the material used had a tendency to be assertive and generalised.

Some candidates included examples in their definitions to **(a)(i)** questions and these are not needed. However examples in **(a)(ii)** are more successful if they are clearly different and that way the problem of overlap is avoided.

It was noted that many answers to part **(a)** questions were longer than part **(b)** and this does not give a candidate enough scope to develop a thoughtful and evaluative essay answer. Another area for improvement is the omission of overlong descriptive passages which do not help to answer the question as set. Such answers would have benefitted from planning rather than producing a catch all answer, even if they were shorter.

Other answers would benefit from the inclusion of more sociological theory and the application of concepts, which was evident in the most successful answers, but was wholly missing from weaker answers. When including such detail it is more successful to name a theorist or at least a theory such as feminism rather than make reference to 'some sociologists'. Candidates should also be careful when they are using non-sociological data and refer to such theorists as anthropologists, biologists or psychologists rather than sociologists. Another area for development is the conclusion to essays as these are more useful if they make new and summative points rather than just briefly repeating what has already been stated.

More rubric errors were present in this examination session than the last with many candidates, sometimes all the candidates from one Centre, answering six instead of three questions, one from each section.

Comments on Specific Questions

Option A

Question 1

This was the more popular family question.

- (a) (i)** Many candidates were able to identify the expectations of what 'family' can mean in their definition. Some candidates' definition of ideology outlined different types of families or explained what family life should be like.

- (ii) Most answers correctly identified two appropriate economic functions carried out by families. Some candidates only offered one example, gave two aspects of the same function or listed non-economic functions such as socialisation rather than answering the question.
- (b) Many candidates were able to identify functions of the family beyond that of socialisation. The best responses addressed the specific question asked and considered 'primary function' in relation to different theoretical perspectives and supported their answer with careful analysis. A common error was to argue that Marxists, unlike functionalists, did not think socialisation was an important role as the family's primary role was to serve the needs of capitalism. A number of responses would have been improved by the inclusion of a well-constructed conclusion and a more careful analysis of the evidence presented. The most sophisticated answers pointed out that functionalism and Marxism are both structuralist and both agree that the family socialises children but for different purposes.

Question 2

Fewer candidates answered this question on the family.

- (a) (i) There were many excellent definitions of this term which covered all three aspects of the triple shift. The most common error was to omit the emotion work and define the dual burden.
- (ii) The best answers clearly identified two distinct characteristics such as the use of power and female domestic work. Some candidates only identified one characteristic or described features of conjugal relationships.
- (b) There were answers which displayed excellent analysis and supported their answers with a good range of evidence. Weaker answers were characterised by a tendency to confuse marriage and the family or debated which family type is best. There was some misapplication of the work of Murdock and references were made to 'some' sociologists rather than naming theorists such as Benston and Ansley as some candidates did.

Option B

Question 3

This was the less popular of the education questions.

- (a) (i) Few candidates had a firm grasp of this term and offered definitions which ranged from government action to types of building or funding. A small number gave an accurate and sociological definition. Some candidates who selected this question failed to give any definition.
- (ii) Many candidates were able to identify two ways in which the state controls education and the most successful of these identified the curriculum and funding. A common error was to identify a way but then not to explain how the state operated control.
- (b) Candidates successfully used a range of factors including class, gender and ethnicity to answer this question. There was some use of such concepts as marketisation and assessment in depth of the social, material and linguistic advantages possessed by some groups. Candidates should be aware that assertive essays that make general points about 'the rich and the poor' could be improved by more specific reference to sociological theories and studies. Further, lengthy descriptions of the British educational system don't award candidates additional credit.

Question 4

This was the more popular education question.

- (a) (i) Most candidates had a weak grasp of the concept. Common errors were to define it as a punishment, as removing activities from the curriculum or taking oneself away from others.
- (ii) The best answers to this question identified clearly different reasons such as cultural and material factors for contributing to pupil success in school. It is worth noting that some answers to this question were over lengthy and a few candidates gave four instead of two reasons. Common

errors were to explain why some groups failed or why some individuals succeeded which was not what the question had asked.

- (b) Most candidates were able to demonstrate an understanding of the process of labelling giving considered responses exploring the ways in which it can prevent educational success. Fewer answers were able to support their understanding with an assessment of the factors, including labelling, that can prevent some groups of pupils from being successful in education.

Option C

Question 5

This question on religion was answered by slightly more candidates than the next. However, it was noted that a number of candidates who selected this question also selected 4 and not 3 questions to answer from the paper.

- (a) (i) There were responses which showed clear understanding of the nature of sects. Weaker answers understood that they were connected with religion. A small number of candidates did not attempt this part.
- (ii) Candidates accurately described the size of organisations and links to the state as key differences in the majority of cases. Common errors were to assume that the question had asked the difference between a church and a sect, which could gain some credit, or the difference between Christian and non-Christian organisations, which could not.
- (b) Candidates must consider the question as set and support their answer with analysis. Weaker answers were characterised by a tendency to provide generalised comments about religion and were less well supported with analysis. Sometimes the question was not adequately addressed and post-modern theories were confused with rationalism. Candidates need to answer the question as set; those who provided an answer for the question they had prepared for on secularisation, which took no account of post-modernism, rather than for the question on the paper, were limited to the lowest mark bands.

Question 6

This question was answered by fewer candidates than **Question 5**.

- (a) (i) Candidates displayed an accurate understanding of religiosity.
- (ii) Many candidates correctly identified two differences between the different types of groups. Sometimes the examples would have benefitted from further development.
- (b) Some candidates were able to explain why the existence of new age movements can be seen to influence the power of religious institutions in modern industrial societies. Candidates who paid attention to religious institutions and understood the meaning of new age movements and supported their answer with careful analysis did well. Common errors were to confuse new age movements with new religious movement or fundamentalist groups or the lack of any reference to religious institutions in their answer.

Option D

Question 7

This was the more popular question in this section.

- (a) (i) All candidates understood that crime is to do with the law but some did not link this activity to either time or place. It is worth noting that some candidates supported their answers with examples of crime; the inclusion of such examples is not needed for definition questions.
- (ii) The best answers identified two distinctly different adaptations to status frustration such as rebellion and conformity and then described what these mean for individuals. A common error was to identify one way and then explain it in two situations. Weaker answers misinterpreted the question and stated that it is difficult to escape from the self-fulfilling prophecy if you are poor. It is

worth noting that some candidates spent too long on this question with lengthy descriptions of the work of individuals such as Merton and this time would have been better spent planning for **(b)**.

- (b)** There were responses that showed consistent analysis, a clear and sometimes sophisticated style and an ability to consider and evaluate alternative explanations. Candidates dealt with theory from a wide range of perspectives and were able to demonstrate where theories and evidence supported or contradicted each other. The best responses considered all aspects of the question in a relevant way and came to thoughtful, balanced conclusions. When these answers made reference to biological or psychological explanations they had also included a sociological critique of them. Some candidates need to avoid repeating material throughout their essays and avoid ending with a homily which does not add to a sociological debate.

Question 8

This was the less popular question on crime and deviance.

- (a) (i)** All candidates understood that cyber-crime is connected to the Internet but a common error was to overlook the 'crime' in the definition.
- (ii)** Candidates need to read the question carefully as most answers to this question explained what the chivalry thesis is or why women commit fewer crimes than men rather than outlining a strength and a limitation of the thesis.
- (b)** Many candidates developed arguments about the links between crime and gender. An error was to assume that gender just meant male. Many answers would have been improved by the inclusion of other factors that may link to criminality such as class, ethnicity, power and the role of the agents of social control. An uncommon error was to relate the answer to ethnicity and ignore gender.

Option E

Question 9

A very small number of candidates answered this question with few accurate responses.

- (a) (i)** A number of candidates understood that the concept was related to Durkheim and communities but a number stated that it was linked to organising.
- (ii)** There were few accurate responses to this question.
- (b)** Responses to this question were weak. It is worth noting that when candidates state 'as I said in an earlier question' that this cannot be credited in the question that they are currently answering.

Question 10

This question was answered by too few candidates to make any comment appropriate.

Option F

Question 11

This was the more popular of the media questions.

- (a) (i)** All candidates understood that global media is to be found worldwide but a common error was to overlook the development of media corporations in the definition.
- (ii)** The best answers to this question identified clear consequences and there were strong answers which developed the implications for local cultures or local media. The inclusion of such concepts as hybridisation is to be encouraged.
- (b)** Many candidates offered assertive answers agreeing with the question which lacked support beyond that of the basic explanation of the Marxist and the pluralist views. More developed answers were able to utilise work of such as Whale and Bagdikian. A number of candidates failed to offer any answer for this section.

Question 12

This was the less popular of the media questions answered by few candidates.

- (a) (i)** The majority of candidates defined stereotype as a wrong image.
- (ii)** Most candidates were able to give examples but some defined hegemony before giving examples which was not required for this question.
- (b)** Candidates must answer the question as set. Some answers were characterised by a tendency to provide generalised comments about the media and images of individuals or groups within it and these lacked analysis. Sometimes the question was not adequately addressed with little or no reference to ethnic minorities.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/32

Essay 2

Key Messages

1. To gain full marks for definitions in **Question (a)(i)**, answers need to be clear and focused.
2. Candidates answers should be focused on the question as set and avoid long descriptive passages. This is particularly relevant in relation to dated material.
3. Sociological concepts, theorists and theories should be included to support answers.
4. Analytical essays which include examples and evaluation are the most successful.
5. Candidates who planned their time between the three questions and offer brief and concise answers to part **(a)** questions while allowing time to develop arguments in part **(b)** questions generally produced more successful responses.

General Comments

Shorter answers requiring knowledge and the selection of examples were generally well done demonstrating a good understanding of sociological terminology. Longer answers requiring application of a range of data and assessment of the material used had a tendency to be assertive and generalised and would have benefitted from the use of more sociological theory.

A small number of candidates included examples in their definitions to **(a)(i)** questions and these are not needed. The most successful answers to **(a)(ii)** questions gave two distinctly different examples.

An area for improvement is the omission of overlong descriptive passages which do not help to answer the essay questions as set. Such answers would have benefitted from planning rather than producing a catch all answer, even if they were shorter.

Most candidates answered the question as set and clearly addressed the issue that was raised in the question. Other answers omitted to do this preferring to address factors not mentioned in the question at all. In order to improve candidates must directly address the issue outlined in the question even if they then later dismiss it in favour of another factor. Likewise if the question asked relates to modern industrial society then reference to such groups as the Nayar is inappropriate.

Many candidates linked social features together but a number still see a feature such as gender in isolation from other social characteristics. Other answers would benefit from the inclusion of more sociological theory and the application of concepts, which was evident in the most successful answers. Candidates should also be careful when they are using non-sociological material and refer to such theorists as anthropologists, biologists or psychologists rather than sociologists. Another area for development is the conclusion to essays as these are more useful if they make new and summative points rather than just briefly repeating what has already been said.

Few rubric errors were present in this examination session but some candidates answered part **(a)** from one question and then part **(b)** from another.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

A very popular question answered by most candidates.

- (a) (i) Polygamy was well defined by most candidates. A common error was to describe it as a form of marriage where men could have more than one wife. Less common errors were to confuse it with monogamy or relationships outside of marriage.
- (ii) Candidates offered many excellent answers to this question outlining a range of reasons relating to changes in social attitudes and habits. Weaker candidates referred to empty shell marriages and divorce which do not relate to a lessening of the marriage 'rate'. Some candidates used divorce successfully by arguing that fear of divorce could prevent people from marrying.
- (b) Candidates who addressed the issue of 'powerful force' in their essay offered thoughtful and sometimes sophisticated answers to this question. There was evidence, in many Centres, of appropriate use of up-to-date text and theory. Some effective comments were made relating to government policies and the ways in which the family may or may not exert any influence in societies today. These answers were well supported with a range of evidence from both contemporary societies and contemporary sociology. Some answers redefined the question to one about the universal nature of the family or confused the family with marriage. It is worth noting that a number of candidates supported their answer by reference to the Nayar who are not to be found in modern industrial societies as the question has asked.

Question 2

This question was answered by few candidates.

- (a) (i) Candidates had a good understanding of females having the power or dominating families or society. Some candidates also included unnecessary detail about different types of matriarchal families. An uncommon error was to confuse the term with matrifocal.
- (ii) Many candidates identified single parent mother headed families and one other type such as the Nayer (in this case an appropriate example as there was no reference to modern industrial society in the question) or Nepalese examples. A number then described what women do rather than describe what the family would be like. A common error was to describe lone parent and single parent families as two different types.
- (b) The best responses to this question put childhood into a chronological framework and used cross-cultural examples to good effect. Many answers to this question overlooked the reference to the 'status of children' in the title and answered another question about the effects of divorce and working parents on children or discussed family status. Some limited reference was made to changes in the law and education but answers would have benefitted from a secure knowledge of sociological terms such as status and sociological evidence about the role of children in families.

Section B

Question 3

A small number of candidates opted to answer this question.

- (a) (i) Many answers focused accurately on aspects of cultural bias to be found in schools' curricula. Excellent reference was made to some aspects of the curriculum such as history. Common errors were to confuse the term with the hidden curriculum or aspects of overt racial discrimination.
- (ii) A well answered question with candidates offering a variety of sound reasons for the success of some ethnic minority groups over others. Uncommon errors were to give reasons for the failure of some ethnic minority groups other than success or to identify educational success with another factor such as class, ignoring ethnicity.

- (b) Candidates had a tendency to be assertive and offered generalised answers to this question. These answers asserted that ethnicity was the major cause but little sociological evidence was offered to support why this may be so. Some answers outlined the significance of other factors such as class in influencing educational achievement and many of these would have been more successful if they had been evaluative and explained why ethnicity may not be the most significant factor. The linking of several factors such as class, gender and ethnicity also improved the evaluative nature of many essays.

Question 4

This was a very popular question.

- (a) (i) Most candidates correctly defined formal education as the official school curriculum or syllabus. Common errors were to state that this happened within the home or that it was secondary education.
- (ii) There were many excellent answers to this question which frequently picked one material and one cultural factor. Such answers which selected two clearly different home factors were the most successful. Some candidates did select two home factors but failed to elaborate on how they influenced a pupil's education.
- (b) Candidates must consider the question as set and support their answer with analysis. Weaker answers were characterised by a tendency to generalised comments about problems faced by disadvantaged pupils in schools and were unsupported with evidence. Sometimes the question was not adequately addressed and there was little focus on the way schools can, or cannot, influence pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Candidates need to answer the question as set; rather than give a prepared response about why some groups are unsuccessful in school or outlining what schools should do to improve performance. Such answers were limited to the lowest mark bands. It is worth noting that some candidates referred to the work of Burt in an uncritical way as well as calling 'girls' a disadvantaged group despite the fact that girls come from all strata of society. There was some excellent use made of local schemes to improve the results of pupils from disadvantaged homes.

Section C

Question 5

Few candidates selected this question.

- (a) (i) Candidates rarely provided an accurate definitions of ideological beliefs. Most candidates linked ideological beliefs to what individuals think or believe in.
- (ii) Most candidates offered two appropriate examples but a common error was to name and describe a religion as a non-religious ideology.
- (b) Candidates who answered this question had a tendency to misunderstand the question and interpret 'social factors' as theories and be assertive and unsupported and as consequence many essays were weak.

Question 6

This question was more popular than **Question 5**.

- (a) (i) There were some accurate definitions of world rejecting sects but common errors were to either confuse them with traditional religions or to define them as being secular.
- (ii) Most candidates identified two reasons for the growth of sects with the more successful responses then describing the reason why this factor encourages growth. A number of answers identified a factor but did not describe the growth. An uncommon error was to describe how sects should behave and not answer the question as set.
- (b) Candidates who had a firm understanding of the nature of new religious movements and were able to relate these to the way in which traditional religions have lost or retained power were able to

produce thoughtful essays, many of which were well supported with evidence. Some answers were characterised by lists of descriptions of the features of different new religious movements or different traditional religions which lacked focus on the question.

Section D

Question 7

This was a popular question with candidates.

- (a) (i) This term was well defined with a very small number of candidates confusing it with informal sanctions.
- (ii) This was a well answered question with many candidates outlining a variety of ways in which being labelled a criminal can influence an individual's life. There was some excellent use of concepts such as stigmatisation and the self-fulfilling prophecy. It is worth noting that some candidates wrote a longer answer to this question than to the essay that followed. Other candidates gave long introductions about the nature of labelling and then supported this with two weak examples of the consequences of being labelled criminal.
- (b) Candidates who had a sound understanding of the nature of crime rates for both males and females were able to produce thoughtful essays. These were particularly successful if other factors that influence levels of crime, including the actions of the agents of social control, were included. Many of these were well supported with a range of evidence. A number of candidates introduce a more global perspective, which is to be encouraged. Some answers were characterised by lists of descriptions of how females spend their time or did not acknowledge the role of the agents of social control and these were limited to the lowest mark bands. Some essays were very short and showed evidence of being rushed.

Question 8

This question was answered by a number of candidates.

- (a) (i) Some candidates had a firm grasp of deviancy amplification but common errors were to confuse it with labelling or the self-fulfilling prophecy.
- (ii) Many candidates selected two appropriate examples but common errors were to give examples of labelling or moral panics. A less common error was to correctly identify the role of the media but ignore the role of the police in the amplification of deviance.
- (b) Marxist theories were outlined well in many essays and these were then contrasted with a range of other theories resulting in thoughtful analysis and at its best summative conclusions. Weaker answers were characterised by list like descriptions which did not consider the 'usefulness' of Marxist theories.

Section E

There were too few responses to the questions in this section to make any comment appropriate.

Section F

Question 11

This was the less popular question on the media.

- (a) (i) Moral panic was well defined by the majority of candidates. A common error was to either describe the role of the media in exaggerating events or societal reaction but not both.
- (ii) Two appropriate examples were identified by most candidates. More successful answers described these stereotypes but some answers needed to improve on this. In a small number of cases candidates only offered one example.

- (b) There were responses that showed understanding of a range of theories and evidence which focused directly on the question as set. Weaker answers were characterised by a tendency to make generalised comments about the control of the media by the ruling class and a lack of clarity about the meaning of representations. Sometimes the question was not adequately addressed and answers related to the extent of ruling class influence or audience behaviour (which was the subject of **Question 12 (b)**). Candidates need to answer the question as set and those who did not do so were limited to the lower bands.

Question 12

This question was answered by most candidates who selected the media section.

- (a) (i) Definitions of popular culture generally acknowledged that it was enjoyed by the majority of the population. An uncommon error was to attempt to define it by making a value judgement of that type of culture.
- (ii) Two aspects of high culture were identified by most candidates, the majority of which then described what they had identified. Common errors were to identify and describe characteristics of the individuals who experience high culture or to describe aspects of the life style of the rich rather than high culture itself.
- (b) There were responses that made reference to theories and evidence which evaluated the extent to which the media may or may not influence audience behaviour. Weaker answers were characterised by a tendency to make generalised comments about how people use the media to find out about the news. Sometimes the question was not adequately addressed and comments were limited to assertive answers. Candidates need to answer the question as set and those who failed to do so were limited to the lower bands.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/33

Essay 2

Key Messages

1. When candidates are asked for two examples they should ensure that they are clearly different.
2. Descriptive passages of evidence should be kept brief.
3. Candidates should include named sociological theory and evidence to support assertions in longer answers in order to access higher mark bands.
4. Candidates should include evaluative points throughout essays and a summative conclusion to access the highest mark band.

General Comments

Shorter answers requiring knowledge and the selection of examples were generally well done. Longer answers requiring application of a range of data and assessment of the material used had a tendency to be assertive and generalised.

Some candidates included examples in their definitions to **(a)(i)** questions and these are not needed. However examples in **(a)(ii)** are more successful if they are clearly different and that way the problem of overlap is avoided.

It was noted that many answers to part **(a)** questions were longer than part **(b)** and this does not give a candidate enough scope to develop a thoughtful and evaluative essay answer. Another area for improvement is the omission of overlong descriptive passages which do not help to answer the question as set. Such answers would have benefitted from planning rather than producing a catch all answer, even if they were shorter.

Other answers would benefit from the inclusion of more sociological theory and the application of concepts, which was evident in the most successful answers, but was wholly missing from weaker answers. When including such detail it is more successful to name a theorist or at least a theory such as feminism rather than make reference to 'some sociologists'. Candidates should also be careful when they are using non-sociological data and refer to such theorists as anthropologists, biologists or psychologists rather than sociologists. Another area for development is the conclusion to essays as these are more useful if they make new and summative points rather than just briefly repeating what has already been stated.

More rubric errors were present in this examination session than the last with many candidates, sometimes all the candidates from one Centre, answering six instead of three questions, one from each section.

Comments on Specific Questions

Option A

Question 1

This was the more popular family question.

- (a) (i)** Many candidates were able to identify the expectations of what 'family' can mean in their definition. Some candidates' definition of ideology outlined different types of families or explained what family life should be like.

- (ii) Most answers correctly identified two appropriate economic functions carried out by families. Some candidates only offered one example, gave two aspects of the same function or listed non-economic functions such as socialisation rather than answering the question.
- (b) Many candidates were able to identify functions of the family beyond that of socialisation. The best responses addressed the specific question asked and considered 'primary function' in relation to different theoretical perspectives and supported their answer with careful analysis. A common error was to argue that Marxists, unlike functionalists, did not think socialisation was an important role as the family's primary role was to serve the needs of capitalism. A number of responses would have been improved by the inclusion of a well-constructed conclusion and a more careful analysis of the evidence presented. The most sophisticated answers pointed out that functionalism and Marxism are both structuralist and both agree that the family socialises children but for different purposes.

Question 2

Fewer candidates answered this question on the family.

- (a) (i) There were many excellent definitions of this term which covered all three aspects of the triple shift. The most common error was to omit the emotion work and define the dual burden.
- (ii) The best answers clearly identified two distinct characteristics such as the use of power and female domestic work. Some candidates only identified one characteristic or described features of conjugal relationships.
- (b) There were answers which displayed excellent analysis and supported their answers with a good range of evidence. Weaker answers were characterised by a tendency to confuse marriage and the family or debated which family type is best. There was some misapplication of the work of Murdock and references were made to 'some' sociologists rather than naming theorists such as Benston and Ansley as some candidates did.

Option B

Question 3

This was the less popular of the education questions.

- (a) (i) Few candidates had a firm grasp of this term and offered definitions which ranged from government action to types of building or funding. A small number gave an accurate and sociological definition. Some candidates who selected this question failed to give any definition.
- (ii) Many candidates were able to identify two ways in which the state controls education and the most successful of these identified the curriculum and funding. A common error was to identify a way but then not to explain how the state operated control.
- (b) Candidates successfully used a range of factors including class, gender and ethnicity to answer this question. There was some use of such concepts as marketisation and assessment in depth of the social, material and linguistic advantages possessed by some groups. Candidates should be aware that assertive essays that make general points about 'the rich and the poor' could be improved by more specific reference to sociological theories and studies. Further, lengthy descriptions of the British educational system don't award candidates additional credit.

Question 4

This was the more popular education question.

- (a) (i) Most candidates had a weak grasp of the concept. Common errors were to define it as a punishment, as removing activities from the curriculum or taking oneself away from others.
- (ii) The best answers to this question identified clearly different reasons such as cultural and material factors for contributing to pupil success in school. It is worth noting that some answers to this question were over lengthy and a few candidates gave four instead of two reasons. Common

errors were to explain why some groups failed or why some individuals succeeded which was not what the question had asked.

- (b) Most candidates were able to demonstrate an understanding of the process of labelling giving considered responses exploring the ways in which it can prevent educational success. Fewer answers were able to support their understanding with an assessment of the factors, including labelling, that can prevent some groups of pupils from being successful in education.

Option C

Question 5

This question on religion was answered by slightly more candidates than the next. However, it was noted that a number of candidates who selected this question also selected 4 and not 3 questions to answer from the paper.

- (a) (i) There were responses which showed clear understanding of the nature of sects. Weaker answers understood that they were connected with religion. A small number of candidates did not attempt this part.
- (ii) Candidates accurately described the size of organisations and links to the state as key differences in the majority of cases. Common errors were to assume that the question had asked the difference between a church and a sect, which could gain some credit, or the difference between Christian and non-Christian organisations, which could not.
- (b) Candidates must consider the question as set and support their answer with analysis. Weaker answers were characterised by a tendency to provide generalised comments about religion and were less well supported with analysis. Sometimes the question was not adequately addressed and post-modern theories were confused with rationalism. Candidates need to answer the question as set; those who provided an answer for the question they had prepared for on secularisation, which took no account of post-modernism, rather than for the question on the paper, were limited to the lowest mark bands.

Question 6

This question was answered by fewer candidates than **Question 5**.

- (a) (i) Candidates displayed an accurate understanding of religiosity.
- (ii) Many candidates correctly identified two differences between the different types of groups. Sometimes the examples would have benefitted from further development.
- (b) Some candidates were able to explain why the existence of new age movements can be seen to influence the power of religious institutions in modern industrial societies. Candidates who paid attention to religious institutions and understood the meaning of new age movements and supported their answer with careful analysis did well. Common errors were to confuse new age movements with new religious movement or fundamentalist groups or the lack of any reference to religious institutions in their answer.

Option D

Question 7

This was the more popular question in this section.

- (a) (i) All candidates understood that crime is to do with the law but some did not link this activity to either time or place. It is worth noting that some candidates supported their answers with examples of crime; the inclusion of such examples is not needed for definition questions.
- (ii) The best answers identified two distinctly different adaptations to status frustration such as rebellion and conformity and then described what these mean for individuals. A common error was to identify one way and then explain it in two situations. Weaker answers misinterpreted the question and stated that it is difficult to escape from the self-fulfilling prophecy if you are poor. It is

worth noting that some candidates spent too long on this question with lengthy descriptions of the work of individuals such as Merton and this time would have been better spent planning for **(b)**.

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