SOCIOLOGY

| Paper 0495/11 |
| Paper 11 |

Key messages

A number of strong responses were seen which showed clear engagement with sociological issues and contemporary debates.

Using sociologically specific terminology will raise the overall quality of the answer and will access the marks for the sociological/conceptual engagement;

Some candidates struggled with questions when they did not recognise the key term in the question. As the key terms in questions will always be from the syllabus, it is essential that candidates become familiar with **all** of these;

Use the marks per question as guidance as to how much is to be written for a particular question. Some candidates were writing half a page for a part **(a)** question worth 2 marks and the same for a part **(e)** question worth 15;

On 'to what extent' questions ensure that candidates have a balanced argument that considers **both sides** of the debate. The response needs to include a range of points for each side that are well developed and evidence based, with a justified conclusion;

It would be beneficial to all candidates to better understand the difference between a research method and the data or evidence that the method produces;

Improved understanding of the difference between the key terms of validity and reliability would be advantageous to candidates;

Understanding the types of responses required by command words and question instructions would be beneficial to candidates.

General comments

Overall many candidates responded well to the demands of the questions, demonstrating relevant knowledge and understanding of sociological concepts, along with appropriate application of knowledge and understanding to the questions. Candidates were generally well prepared to discuss the strengths and limitations of methods in section A. Candidates could improve their responses with better preparation in how to write an evaluative conclusion.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1(a)

Candidates showed a good understanding of how to read the data and identify the correct answer.

Question 1(b)

There were many accurate responses to this question. Candidates can improve by understanding the difference between the method in which sociological research is collected and the actual data collected.

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Question 1(c)

There were many excellent responses to this question. Candidates generally showed good understanding of the trends and were able to support their answer with the selection of relevant data.

Question 1(d)

Many excellent answers to this question were seen. Candidates showed knowledge of political bias in official statistics and the unrepresentative nature of official crime statistics.

Question 1(e)

Many candidates answered this question well and showed good knowledge and understanding of social surveys. Candidates need to be encouraged to structure their responses better to avoid either identifying too few or too many strengths and limitations.

Question 1(f)

Many responses to this question were excellent showing a sound understanding of the difficulties a researcher might face. The best answers were distinguished by the range of subject specific language used. Terms like sample attrition were frequently seen. Other answers did show some confusion between the terms validity and reliability.

Question 1(g)

Some responses to this question showed an excellent understanding of ethical issues, many needed to show a broader knowledge and understanding of the range of quantitative methods available to researchers. The best responses were those that recognised that different types of quantitative method would have different ethical issues.

Section B

Question 2(a)

Most candidates had a clear understanding of this term.

Question 2(b)

There were many excellent responses to this question. Candidates frequently identified the family and school as agencies of socialisation, other agencies were less frequently seen. Most responses were able to describe their chosen agencies without a great deal of difficulty.

Question 2(c)

There were some good answers to this question which made references to processes like inadequate socialisation, and other aspects like dysfunctional families, anti-school subcultures and criminal sub-culture. Many answers were too brief and lacked understanding that socialisation need not necessarily be into mainstream norms and values.

Question 2(d)

Most candidates could describe some aspects of the nature v nurture debate in their response to this question. Other responses needed more development and lacked specific knowledge or terminology.

Question 2(e)

There were many good responses to this question which looked at youth and criminal sub-cultures which were successful contrasted with religious and feminine 'bedroom' sub-culture. Most candidates attempted a balanced response. Often attempts at a balanced answer lack the detailed knowledge or terminology to achieve higher marks.

Section C

Question 3(a)

This question was generally well answered; most candidates had a good understanding of this term.

Question 3(b)

Candidates showed good knowledge and understanding of different forms of stratification and this question was answered well.

Question 3(c)

Many candidate responses showed good sociological knowledge; candidates frequently identified the use of welfare benefits and progressive taxation as means of reducing inequality, other responses focused on legislation to reduce discrimination.

Question 3(d)

There were some good responses to this question. Good answers typically contrasted the views of Marx and Weber on social class. Other responses lacked understanding of the different ways social classes have been defined and some candidates simply describing different social classes rather than analysed them in relation to the question.

Question 3(e)

Some excellent responses to this question looked at economic changes which have impacted on the nature of the working class. Reference was seen frequently to the embourgeoisement theory. Good responses typically gave a better account of how the working class had changed. Arguments about why the working class had not changed were generally not as well developed. Candidates could improve their responses with the addition of a good evaluative conclusion.

SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 0495/12
Paper 12
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Key messages

A number of strong responses were seen which showed clear engagement with sociological issues and contemporary debates.

Using sociologically specific terminology will raise the overall quality of the answer and will access the marks for the sociological/conceptual engagement;

Some candidates struggled with questions when they did not recognise the key term in the question. As the key terms in questions will always be from the syllabus, it is essential that candidates become familiar with **all** of these;

Use the marks per question as guidance as to how much is to be written for a particular question. Some candidates were writing half a page for a part **(a)** question worth 2 marks and the same for a part **(e)** question worth 15;

On 'to what extent' questions ensure that candidates have a balanced argument that considers **both sides** of the debate. The response needs to include a range of points for each side that are well developed and evidence based, with a justified conclusion;

It would be beneficial to all candidates to better understand the difference between a research method and the data or evidence that the method produces;

Improved understanding of the difference between the key terms of validity and reliability would be advantageous to candidates;

Understanding the types of responses required by command words and question instructions would be beneficial to candidates.

General comments

Many responses showed excellent knowledge and understand of key terms and concepts. Some excellent responses showed clear evidence of exam preparations that focused on command words and answer structure. These responses allowed candidates to access the higher marks by giving precise and well-focused answers. Candidates can improve their responses by having a better understanding of how to make comparative points in the 'to what extent' questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1(a)

There were some very good answers to this question. The most common responses focused on the contrast in clothing as evidence of social class differences. Other responses discussed the attitudes and feelings of those in Source A, which could not be credited. It is beneficial for candidates to make two comparative points. Frequently candidates only made one point of comparison which resulted in only gaining one mark.

Question 1(b)

This question was generally well answered, with the most frequently identified methods being interview and questionnaire. It is important for candidates to know that official statistics are not a sociological research method; they are the outcomes of a research.

Question 1(c)

There were some excellent responses to this question. The most frequently seen response was those suggesting that photographs, like that in Source A, was fake or staged and that the photograph was taken out of context. Other responses didn't use the Source in their response and therefore could not be credited.

Question 1(d)

Most candidates answered this question well. Good responses showed that there were few ethical issues with this method and that it was reliable. Other responses showed a limited grasp of content analysis as a research method.

Question 1(e)

Many candidates answered this question well making reference to the levels of commitment required and 'drop out' rates. The term attrition rate was also seen in many responses. The best responses were characterised by a clear structure which ensured candidates identified the correct number of strengths and limitations. All research takes some time and costs some money therefore candidates need to offer further clarification of their points about time and cost to achieve higher marks.

Question 1(f)

Many responses showed good understanding of the concept of reliability. Most candidates were able to give a clear definition of this term. Candidates frequently showed good knowledge and understanding of the positivist approach to research and its links to reliability. Candidates need to better understand the reasons why positivists wish to achieve reliability, i.e. to establish social facts in order to achieve better marks.

Question 1(g)

There were some excellent responses to this question demonstrating a clear understanding of the range and types of historical and personal documents available. Good responses contrasted the representative nature of historical documents like censuses with personal documents like an individual's diary and also showed an awareness of the 'sample' that the documents might represent. Other responses treated historical and personal documents as a generic term. Candidates who achieved higher marks, better understood the nature of historical and personal documents.

Section B

Question 2(a)

This concept was generally well understood. Most candidates were able to offer some suggestion of the term being related to the importance of the child in society. Other responses showed candidates were not familiar with the term 'child-centred' which they confused with child centre, i.e. a nursery or kindergarten.

Question 2(b)

This question was very well answered. Most responses showed an awareness that children have moved from an economic role to a much more dependent role. Some candidates considered the changes in children's rights whilst others considered the impact of changing technology. In order for candidates to achieve higher marks, they need to fully develop their response by illustrating both sides of the change that has occurred, i.e. the before and after.

Question 2(c)

There were some excellent response to this question which were characterised by strong knowledge and understanding of socialisation in the family. The best response included the terms; canalisation, manipulation, role models, imitation, verbal appellation terms which were used with great accuracy. Candidates could improve their responses by ensuring they use the correct sociological terms e.g. making reference to copying parents rather than imitation.

Question 2(d)

This question was generally answered well. The best responses considered factors like maintaining social order or maintaining the power of the elite. Candidates were frequently able to identify a range of sanctions available to the various agencies of social control showing good sociological knowledge. Candidates could have improved their responses by focusing on the command word 'explain' many were able to describe the sanctions that were available without saying why they were used.

Question 2(e)

There were some good responses to this question which were characterised by good knowledge of cultural variations in the role of the child. Most responses showed an awareness of the key terms in the question which were frequently accurately defined. The best responses where those that balanced their knowledge of cultural variations with an understanding of more universal roles such as daughter, son and sibling.

Question 3(a)

There were some excellent responses to this question. Weaker responses were unable to recognise that the elite are also characterised by their power and status.

Question 3(b)

This question was very well answered. The most frequently identified social classes were upper and working class. Some responses mistakenly identified other social characteristics such as their religion, or other means of stratification.

Question 3(c)

There were some excellent answers to this question. Responses frequently focused on inheritance, ascribed characteristics and levels of education as a means to maintain status. Other responses were less well developed or only identified a single factor.

Question 3(d)

There were some very strong responses to this question. Responses frequently discussed luxury goods and lifestyle enjoyed by the wealthy. Some responses also looked at other social groups. There were some very sound responses that considered the lifestyle of the poor and included discussion of concepts such as culture of poverty.

Question 3(e)

There were some excellent responses to this question many candidates showed excellent knowledge and understanding of barriers to mobility. Responses frequently identified education and discrimination as key barriers. There were some good discussions of meritocracy as evidence of the removal of barriers and clear knowledge and understanding of legislative changes and their impact. Candidates can improve their response by offering a clear evaluative conclusion.

SOCIOLOGY

> **Paper 0495/13**
> **Paper 13**

Key messages

A number of strong responses were seen which showed clear engagement with sociological issues and contemporary debates.

Using sociologically specific terminology will raise the overall quality of the answer and will access the marks for the sociological/conceptual engagement;

Some candidates struggled with questions when they did not recognise the key term in the question. As the key terms in questions will always be from the syllabus, it is essential that candidates become familiar with **all** of these;

Use the marks per question as guidance as to how much is to be written for a particular question. Some candidates were writing half a page for a part **(a)** question worth 2 marks and the same for a part **(e)** question worth 15;

On 'to what extent' questions ensure that candidates have a balanced argument that considers **both sides** of the debate. The response needs to include a range of points for each side that are well developed and evidence based, with a justified conclusion;

It would be beneficial to all candidates to better understand the difference between a research method and the data or evidence that the method produces;

Improved understanding of the difference between the key terms of validity and reliability would be advantageous to candidates;

Understanding the types of responses required by command words and question instructions would be beneficial to candidates.

General comments

There were many excellent responses to questions. Many candidates show excellent knowledge and understanding of key terms and sociological concepts. Candidates frequently described social factors and characteristics where they were required to explain them and often responses do not use the materials provided in source A. There was clear evidence of the ability to define key sociological terms, though they were not always used accurately in context.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1(a)

Most candidates answered this question well. Some candidates made inferences from the source rather than identifying facts as the question required.

Question 1(b)

This question was generally well answered. Candidates commonly identified political bias as an issue that impacted on secondary data.

Question 1(c)

There were some excellent responses to this question. Candidates were able to use data from source A to show how statistics from a website could be used as secondary data. Some very strong answers were seen that referred to the use of websites like source A for literature review prior to beginning research or for triangulation and comparative study. Most answers made at least some reference to the content of source A in their response.

Question 1(d)

Most candidates answered this question well showing good understanding of the limitations of field experiments. Responses frequently referred to the inability of the researcher to control all the variables in the field experiment. Some responses confused field experiment and experiment.

Question 1(e)

Many candidates answered this question well. Some responses showed only a limited awareness of what a case study is. Generic comments about the strengths and limitations of research methods, i.e. they take time and cost money are unlikely to achieve higher marks.

Question 1(f)

Many responses showed good understanding of what primary data is and why it might not be valid. Some responses confused validity and reliability or showed limited understanding of the range and nature of primary data. Primary data can be both qualitative and quantitative and that this will impact on its validity.

Question 1(g)

This question was generally well done. Most responses were able to offer at least some limitations of interpretivist research. Other responses contrasted the interpretivist approach with the positivist approach this was most successfully done where the positivist approach was used as a critique of interpretivism. Many responses showed good knowledge of both interpretivism and positivism The best responses used this knowledge in a more balanced way and developed an argument.

Section B

Question 2(a)

There were many excellent responses to this question. This concept was generally very well understood.

Question 2(b)

This question was very well answered. Most responses showed excellent knowledge and understanding of the processes of socialisation. Some responses identified two processes without development.

Question 2(c)

This question was generally well done. There was good understanding of the key concepts and how agencies of socialisation and social control help to maintain value consensus. Some responses showed very good knowledge and understanding of the Marxist and functionalist perspectives on value consensus.

Question 2(d)

There were a wide range of responses that candidates could have provided to this question. Most responses focused on sub-cultural or religious diversity. Most responses looked at groups with norms and values that were likely to lead to conflict with the ethnic majority or the mainstream value system. The best responses gave a good explanation of why diversity can result in conflict.

Question 2(e)

There were some excellent responses to this question which were characterised by a strong understanding of the term social construction. Candidates frequently gave examples of the relative nature of values although the terms 'relative', 'relativism' were rarely used. Other responses lacked balance often showing good knowledge of diverse value systems but little knowledge of 'universal' values.

Question 3(a)

There were some excellent responses to this question. Some responses indicated that income would only come from wages. The better responses were those that mentioned other sources of income such as from investments and share dividends.

Question 3(b)

This question was very well answered. A wide range of causes of poverty were identified ranging from unemployment to exploitation.

Question 3(c)

There were some excellent answers to this question. Responses frequently focused on progressive taxation and welfare benefits. Some good responses looked at property redistribution such as that which might be seen in a communist system.

Question 3(d)

There were some very strong responses to this question. Responses frequently contrasted the life chances of various ethnic groups or those of men and women. Less frequently seen responses were those that considered social class. Some responses also considered the nature of society, i.e. if it was a closed or open system. Some responses needed to develop the explanation of how things differ; both sides of the difference were not always fully explained.

Question 3(e)

There were some excellent responses to this question many candidates showed excellent knowledge and understanding of the nature of gender discrimination in modern industrial society. Terms like: glass ceiling, vertical and horizontal segregation, dual burden and reserve army of labour were frequently seen. Some responses mentioned the greater equality that now exists because of legislation and better access to opportunities like education. Many responses gave contemporary examples of successful women, mostly from the field of politics; this included some impressive arguments about the 2016 US presidential elections as evidence of both discrimination and equality. The very best responses included an evaluative conclusion.

SOCIOLOGY

| Paper 0495/21 |
| Paper 21 |

Key messages

A number of strong responses were seen which showed clear engagement with sociological issues and contemporary debates. Topical, contemporary and local examples were used alongside more traditional 'textbook' examples in order to justify points made. Theories and concepts were also very well used by an increasing number of candidates. Very few rubric errors were seen in the examination session which is excellent and allows candidates to demonstrate what they can do successfully.

● Ensure what is being written specifically addresses the issues raised in the question. Candidates were unable to score additional marks because they were describing and writing generally rather than specifically answering the question;

● Using sociologically specific terminology will raise the overall quality of the answer and will access the marks for the sociological/conceptual engagement;

● Candidates should spend time thinking about what questions are asking for and planning answers to those specific questions in their reading time. This is particularly important in the 15 mark essay questions;

● Some candidates did not use paragraphs, making it difficult for the Examiner to see where points began and ended. It would be helpful for Centre's to teach essay writing techniques for the part e questions to try and rectify this;

● Introductions and definitions at the beginning of **(c), (d)** and **(e)** questions take up valuable time and do not gain specific marks, they are not needed at all in parts **(c)** and **(d)**. Conclusions are also unnecessary in part **(c)** and **(d)** questions;

● Some candidates struggled with questions when they did not recognise the key term in the question (e.g. cultural factors in **2(e),** narrowcasting in **4(a)**). As the key terms in questions will always be from the syllabus, it is essential that candidates become familiar with **all** of these;

● Use the marks per question as guidance as to how much is to be written for a particular question. Some candidates were writing half a page for a part **(a)** question worth 2 marks and the same for a part **(e)** question worth 15;

● On part **(e)** questions ensure that candidates have a balanced argument that considers **both sides** of the debate. The response needs to include a range of points for each side that are well developed and evidence based, with a justified conclusion;

● In **(e)** questions, a conclusion is required in this essay style question in order to reach the highest marks available and is where the candidate should ensure that they have answered the specific question set and have made a judgment.

General comments

In general there appeared to be the full range of quality of answers on the paper. In the part **(a)** question, candidates should look to include two separate elements in their definition, e.g. 'juvenile delinquency' – either define both the 'juvenile' and 'delinquency' part of the question and/or complement the definition with examples. Part **(b)** needs two distinct points.

In part **(c)** questions make sure there are more than two points made and developed. For part **(d)** adopt the same approach as for **(c)** but develop further, consider more range and ensure concepts are used appropriately.

In terms of the 15 mark part **(e)** question, candidates should be encouraged to organise their answers into paragraphs and to develop each idea fully using theory and/or concepts wherever relevant. Each point should aim to be directly focused upon what the question is asking and to engage sociologically and conceptually wherever possible.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 – The Family

(a)   This was answered well by most candidates who showed good understanding of the term 'empty-nest family'.

(b)   Some very good answers by candidates who reflected on societal changes to both a global and a local scale. Most commonly referred to were civil partnerships, cohabitation, singlehood, communes and friends as family (shared households).

(c)   There was a range of good answers seen for this question. The best answers focused directly on the 'roles' part of the question and referred to marital partners, extended family members and children. Sometimes candidates did not have enough distinct points in their responses and lost marks either for a lack of range or for a lack of development. There was good conceptual engagement seen here for the most part too with reference to dual burden, triple shift, empowerment, symmetry, joint conjugal roles, child-centredness and lone parents.

(d)   This was a well answered question on the whole although some candidates did not focus their answer specifically on the nuclear family, talking instead about families in general. Theoretical engagement was seen in relation to functionalism and The New Right. Some of the better answers also linked in Marxism and the promotion of false class consciousness through the ideology of capitalism and the conformist proletariat worker.

(e)   A full range of answers were seen for this question where all candidates were able to engage with the debate on some level. Weaker answers made very generic points about a lack of money or poor housing whilst the better answers considered both material and cultural factors at length. Consideration was given to family roles, family structures and family norms/expectations/behavior. Marxism was the theory most likely to be used here.

Question 2 – Education

(a)   There was mixed success for this question with some candidates simply repeating the term 'functions of education' in the question, some hinting at an understanding and others providing a full and clear definition. Most candidates produced partial answers.

(b)   This question was answered well by the candidates who were clear what was meant by setting and streaming. They linked their responses with good or poor educational achievement and referred to such ideas as teacher labeling, self-fulfilling prophecy, anti-school sub-cultures and peer pressure. Candidates who did not fully understand the terms typically answered in very general terms and so were unable to score all the marks available.

(c)   This was a question that clearly differentiated between candidates. A number of responses did not make clear sociological points and had limited understanding of the concept of social mobility and its links to education. The more successful answers considered different types of schools and the importance of qualifications. Functionalist ideas of meritocracy were discussed along with feminist thoughts on positive discrimination, compensatory education and initiatives to improve the performance of girls.

(d)   The question seemed to be accessible to all and produced a range of answers. The strongest responses looked at both structural and cultural ideas as well as the type of school attended. Marxism was used to support the points made by the better able candidates.

(e)   A number of candidates clearly did not understand what was meant by 'cultural factors', referring

instead to general, vague ideas about different cultures. This clearly impacted upon the number of marks awarded. Other candidates used the question as an opportunity to consider both ethnicity and social class and this allowed for a range of points to be made that could easily be developed with sociological evidence and conceptual engagement. Linguistic codes, role models, norms and values, religious rules, etc. were all commonly used ideas. In evaluation it was typically material and/or structural factors that were discussed.

Question 3 – Crime and Deviance

(a) This was a well answered question with most candidates being able to show at least partial understanding of this term.

(b) This question elicited some really interesting answers from the candidates and produced typically good responses. Where marks were low it was often due to only one reason being provided or to candidates misreading the question and discussing why younger people commit crime. Common answers considered material success, responsibilities, having nothing to prove, having status and being successfully socialised.

(c) A good range of different types of surveillance were referred to in this question, meaning a lot of answers were specific and accurate rather than simply relying on general description. Common ideas were CCTV, internet surveillance, speed cameras, intelligence systems and social media applications.

(d) This question produced variable responses which largely depended on how effective the candidates understanding of Marxism was. Some confused it with other theories and explanations of crime and so did not score highly. Others knew what the theory was about but could only really come up with one idea thus resulting in repetitive answers. The best looked at distinct areas of the theory such as poverty, inequality, relative deprivation, exploitation and the formal agencies of social control.

(e) Candidates engaged well with this question and typically chose a variety of different crimes in order to link them with the concept of masculinity. This often led into discussion of the changing male role, feminism, the breadwinner and the crisis of masculinity. Status was also considered as an important link by many. Common points against the claim included material and relative deprivation, strain theory, status frustration, excitement, the chivalry thesis, Marxism and the labeling theory. The question was really well answered on the whole with some good sociological engagement.

Question 4 – Media

(a) This question was not well answered on the whole with most candidates clearly not understanding the term 'narrowcasting'. Those that did referred to the idea of a specialist and niche audience and to the plurality of media channels and output today.

(b) A number of candidates were unable to answer this question well or focus on the issue of usage in the question but instead considered ownership, media professionals and general Marxist theory. It is crucial that the question is specifically addressed in order to maximize marks. Good responses considered different consumption patterns, entertainment 'vs' information, mass appeal 'vs' niche programming, trivia 'vs' high culture, etc.

(c) Most candidates were able to explain agenda setting with some degree of success. Marxist theory was often referred to, although some candidates made some interesting links to feminism as well in terms of arguing that patriarchal values and attitudes were the cornerstone of the media. Owners, editors, journalists and the nature of the audience were all typically referred to here. Less successful responses either did not unpack the concept of 'agenda setting' or didn't have sufficient range within their response.

(d) This was a generally well answered question with some good understanding shown of moral panics and how they are created by the media. Commonly referred to ideas were stereotyping, sensationalism, exaggeration, perceived social threats, folk devils and societal/police/government pressure. Candidates that received lower marks for this question simply described what a moral panic was without explaining how the media creates them.

(e)   This question revealed that some candidates are not clear on the difference between new and traditional media. The best answers responded to the question with specific audiences in mind and therefore introduced a real sense of sophisticated sociological thinking to their response. Recognising, for example, the digital divide, digital natives and digital dinosaurs as being crucial. Commonly used concepts to support the claim were user generated content, interactivity, personalisation, on-demand, global media and multiple platforming. This was often supported with reference to pluralism and/or postmodernist theory. Against the argument the better candidates considered how traditional media was adapting to the demands of the digital era and was therefore far from extinction. Some really interesting and topical answers were seen that made very good use of contemporary examples.

SOCIOLOGY

| Paper 0495/22 |
| Paper 22 |

Key messages

A number of strong responses were seen which showed clear engagement with sociological issues and contemporary debates. Topical, contemporary and local examples were used alongside more traditional 'textbook' examples in order to justify points made. Theories and concepts were also very well used by an increasing number of candidates. Very few rubric errors were seen in the examination session which is excellent and allows candidates to demonstrate what they can do successfully.

● Ensure what is being written specifically addresses the issues raised in the question. Candidates were unable to score additional marks because they were describing and writing generally rather than specifically answering the question;

● Using sociologically specific terminology will raise the overall quality of the answer and will access the marks for the sociological/conceptual engagement;

● Candidates should spend time thinking about what questions are asking for and planning answers to those specific questions in their reading time. This is particularly important in the 15 mark essay questions;

● Some candidates did not use paragraphs, making it difficult for the Examiner to see where points began and ended. It would be helpful for Centre's to teach essay writing techniques for the part e questions to try and rectify this;

● Introductions and definitions at the beginning of **(c), (d)** and **(e)** questions take up valuable time and do not gain specific marks, they are not needed at all in parts **(c)** and **(d)**. Conclusions are also unnecessary in part **(c)** and **(d)** questions;

● Some candidates struggled with questions when they did not recognise the key term in the question (e.g. cultural factors in **2(e),** narrowcasting in **4(a)**). As the key terms in questions will always be from the syllabus, it is essential that candidates become familiar with **all** of these;

● Use the marks per question as guidance as to how much is to be written for a particular question. Some candidates were writing half a page for a part **(a)** question worth 2 marks and the same for a part **(e)** question worth 15;

● On part **(e)** questions ensure that candidates have a balanced argument that considers **both sides** of the debate. The response needs to include a range of points for each side that are well developed and evidence based, with a justified conclusion;

● In **(e)** questions, a conclusion is required in this essay style question in order to reach the highest marks available and is where the candidate should ensure that they have answered the specific question set and have made a judgment.

General comments

In general there appeared to be the full range of quality of answers on the paper. In the part **(a)** question, candidates should look to include two separate elements in their definition e.g. 'urban crime' – either define both the 'urban' and 'crime' part of the question and/or complement the definition with examples.

Part **(b)** needs two distinct points. In part **(c)** questions make sure there are more than two points made and developed. For part **(d)** adopt the same approach as for **(c)** but develop further, consider more range and ensure concepts are used appropriately.

In terms of the 15 mark part **(e)** question, candidates should be encouraged to organise their answers into paragraphs and to develop each idea fully using theory and/or concepts wherever relevant. Each point should aim to be directly focused upon what the question is asking and to engage sociologically and conceptually wherever possible.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 – The Family

(a)   This was answered well by many candidates. Common errors included defining serial monogamy or polygamy, instead of monogamy on its own.

(b)   Some good answers were produced by many candidates. Common answers included joint conjugal roles, both partners working and sharing the financial burden, shared decision making and shared childcare responsibilities. A few candidates found it difficult to differentiate between *symmetrical* and their view of the male 'helping' the female or of role reversal.

(c)   Most candidates were able to explain how industrialisation affects family life in some way. Most candidates referred to more than two points in their answer. Common responses were the reference to 'geographical mobility' and the decline of the extended family. Other creditable responses included urbanisation and the privatisation of the nuclear family and increases in single parent families. A common error involved candidates who discussed at length the family prior to industrialisation rather than focusing on the specific question.

(d)   This was a well answered question on the whole. Common answers involved a discussion of secularisation, decreases in community or extended families and the common expectation or pressure to marry. Common errors involved discussing types of marriage i.e. polygamy or focusing on divorce without linking to the question. Concepts were less frequently used in this question other than secularization, civil partnerships and cohabitation, this did restrict some better constructed answers from accessing the top marks.

(e)   A full range of answers were seen for this question. Against points were often better constructed than arguments for and were quite varied discussing the rise of alternatives, although the extended family was referred to more frequently than other family types. A common issue was the tendency to list in a descriptive manner the alternatives without linking back to the nuclear family as the norm, or mentioning family types with little development. This restricted access to the higher bands as the arguments were not developed well. Some interesting responses were also seen that argues that the structure of the nuclear family remained the norm in most 'new' family types i.e. same sex, cohabitees, reconstituted etc. A common error for quite a few candidates was misinterpreting the question to be about how functional the nuclear family is rather than whether or not it is the norm, using alternatives to discuss whether these are considered more or less functional, often theories were applied i.e. feminism versus functionalism. This limited the marks that examiners were able to award.

Question 2 – Education

(a)   There was very mixed responses seen to this question. Many candidates were successful in getting at least a partial if not a full definition of vocationalism. They largely relied on the reference to training, skills, and practical work with some good examples given.

(b)   This question was answered well by many candidates. Common correct responses included reference to the self-fulfilling prophecy and self-negating prophecy. Weaker responses were the lack of applying labelling to the effects on educational achievement, thus restricting the marks to 1 per point as the development was not there.

(c)   Common responses referred to English being a second language, working class and restricted codes and middle class with elaborated code. A few referred to the advantages of being bi-lingual. Some candidates used these ideas well to construct well-focused responses. Weaker responses did not refer to class or ethnic minorities, or repetitive answers focusing just on English being a second language. Another issue was the lack of application of relevant points back to the effects on educational achievement.

(d) Most candidates were successful in explaining why schools are an important part of secondary socialisation. Common responses among all mark bands referred to hidden curriculum, the peer group, and developing a sense of nationalism/citizenship. Theory was well used here with references to Marxism, Feminism and Functionalism all seen frequently.

(e) The vast majority of the candidates understood the debate in this question but overall responses lacked good conceptual engagement. Students were able to discuss the relative merits of several different types of schools they often did not look at the context of the question, i.e. social mobility. Arguments included references to the 'old boy' network and high level qualifications leading to acceptance at prestigious universities. Faith and vocational schools were often seen as inhibiting social mobility.

Question 3 – Crime and Deviance

(a) Some candidates had difficulty defining urban crime, simply repeating both phrases in their definitions. However, many candidates mentioned 'cities' and were able to give an example of urban crime e.g. vandalism or robbery.

(b) Most candidates successfully answered this question and were able to provide at least one precise sociological explanations of crime aside from material deprivation. A few candidates ignored the instruction in the question and cited unemployment or poverty leading to a loss of marks.

(c) Most candidates were able to explain how moral panics in the media could affect the public's view of crime and criminals. A lot of candidates drew upon a good range of concepts linked to labelling theory. Less successful answers discussed how deviants and subcultures responded and so were unable to address the question sufficiently.

(d) Common responses included the police being influenced by media stereotypes, institutional racism and targeting groups who have higher rates of committing crimes according to the crime statistics. Weaker responses discussed why certain groups were more likely to commit crime, rather than applying to the police targeting aspect of the question.

(e) A significant number of candidates showed a good understanding of this question, with strong conceptual engagement. Many candidates were able to access band three due to the range of points that were made both for and against the statement in the question. Common points against included white-collar/middle class crime, biological/psychological explanations along with age and gender. A few engaged really well with the question theoretically and moved on to make sound judgements.

Question 4 – Media

(a) A number of candidates had difficulty answering this question. Some candidates were able to gain a mark with 'the media affects the audience' without the development of 'slowly and cumulatively'.

(b) Many candidates lacked clarity within their responses for this question. Correct answers included reference to entertainment and information. Incorrect answers tended to vaguely discuss issues relating to active audiences and on the whole the responses seen for this question showed little accurate understanding of uses and gratifications theory.

(c) Most candidates were able to explain the negative part of advertising. Some very good use was made of Marxist theory by many candidates who discussed false needs and materialism being used to distract the proletariat. Other key points featured included the negative effects on the young (e.g. 'pester power' or unrealistic representations) and the tendency for advertising to raise the price of goods with an unnecessary focus on materialism and consumerism.

(d) The few candidates who attempted mass media did show some sociological knowledge and understanding of why the media is biased and can distort reality. Common responses included the media as a tool of the ruling class, governments using it to promote propaganda and moral panics. Better responses featured references to gate-keeping, agenda-setting and commercial pressures on owners and journalists.

(e) A significant number of responses demonstrated a general understanding of the post-modernist view that the new media cannot be controlled. Many candidates discussed the diversification and globalisation of the media alongside issues such as increased interactivity. In terms of how the media can be controlled, many candidates focused on censorship and regulation but also control by the audience itself. Few candidates unable to gain more marks because they did not focus on new media but referred to the media in general instead.

SOCIOLOGY

Key messages

A number of strong responses were seen which showed clear engagement with sociological issues and contemporary debates. Topical, contemporary and local examples were used alongside more traditional 'textbook' examples in order to justify points made. Theories and concepts were also very well used by an increasing number of candidates. Very few rubric errors were seen in the examination session which is excellent and allows candidates to demonstrate what they can do successfully.

● Ensure what is being written specifically addresses the issues raised in the question. Candidates were unable to score additional marks because they were describing and writing generally rather than specifically answering the question;

● Using sociologically specific terminology will raise the overall quality of the answer and will access the marks for the sociological/conceptual engagement;

● Candidates should spend time thinking about what questions are asking for and planning answers to those specific questions in their reading time. This is particularly important in the 15 mark essay questions;

● Some candidates did not use paragraphs, making it difficult for the Examiner to see where points began and ended. It would be helpful for Centre's to teach essay writing techniques for the part e questions to try and rectify this;

● Introductions and definitions at the beginning of **(c), (d)** and **(e)** questions take up valuable time and do not gain specific marks, they are not needed at all in parts **(c)** and **(d)**. Conclusions are also unnecessary in part **(c)** and **(d)** questions;

● Some candidates struggled with questions when they did not recognise the key term in the question (e.g. cultural factors in **2(e),** narrowcasting in **4(a)**). As the key terms in questions will always be from the syllabus, it is essential that candidates become familiar with **all** of these;

● Use the marks per question as guidance as to how much is to be written for a particular question. Some candidates were writing half a page for a part **(a)** question worth 2 marks and the same for a part **(e)** question worth 15;

● On part **(e)** questions ensure that candidates have a balanced argument that considers **both sides** of the debate. The response needs to include a range of points for each side that are well developed and evidence based, with a justified conclusion;

● In **(e)** questions, a conclusion is required in this essay style question in order to reach the highest marks available and is where the candidate should ensure that they have answered the specific question set and have made a judgment.

General comments

In general there appeared to be the full range of quality of answers on the paper. In the part **(a)** question, candidates should look to include two separate elements in their definition, e.g. 'deferred gratification' – either define both the 'deferred' and 'gratification' part of the question and/or complement the definition with examples. Part **(b)** needs two distinct points. In part **(c)** questions make sure there are more than

two points made and developed. For part **(d)** adopt the same approach as for **(c)** but develop further, consider more range and ensure concepts are used appropriately. In terms of the 15 mark part **(e)** question, candidates should be encouraged to organise their answers into paragraphs and to develop each idea fully using theory and/or concepts wherever relevant. Each point should aim to be directly focused upon what the question is asking and to engage sociologically wherever possible.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 – The Family

(a) This was answered well by most candidates who showed good understanding of this term.

(b) Some good answers were produced by many candidates. Most commonly used examples referred to Afro-Caribbean families and the links to lone parenthood/matrifocal and to South Asian extended families. Candidates lost marks when they didn't link their comments specifically to family life.

(c) There was a range of different answers seen for this question across all possible marks. The best answers focused on both key elements in the question, trends in marriage and changed over time. Less successful answers looked at only one of these things. The best responses clearly identified key trends in marriage and then used sociological evidence and concepts to explain why this trend had changed over time. Secularisation, feminism, changing legislation and globalization were all referred to.

(d) This was a well answered question on the whole. Common answers involved a discussion of patriarchy, domestic violence, the warm bath theory, etc. Theory and concepts were used exceptionally well here in the better responses.

(e) Candidates had a range of strong arguments to show how functions had been lost most typically through discussion of dysfunctional families, changes to family forms and relevant theories such as functionalism, feminism and The New Right. Against quite varied discussing the core functions of the nuclear family and essential functions that could not be replaced by other institutions for example.

Question 2 – Education

(a) There was a lot of clear and accurate sociological knowledge seen here with most candidates being able to link this concept to the working class and to define two key elements.

(b) This question was answered well by many candidates. Common correct responses included reference to truancy, not valuing education and social characteristics such as male, working class and ethnic minority. Less successful answers either chose two features that were the same thing or just described what an anti-school sub-culture was.

(c) Where the candidate understood what was meant by the term 'cultural capital' this was a well answered question. Responses referred to extra-curricular activities, elaborated code, family visits to cultural places, reading at home and the value placed on education. A number of candidates did not fully understand the term, many confused it with material deprivation.

(d) Most candidates were successful in explaining why the type of school attended can influence life chances. Where marks were lost was typically when different types of schools were described but they were not linked to life chances. The best responses looked at how type of school could affect life chances both negatively and positively.

(e) Candidates engaged really well with this question and the majority was able to offer a wide range of reasons as to why teachers could influence an individual's educational achievement. Labelling theory, stereotyping, setting and streaming, and self-fulfilling/self-negating prophecies were most often seen. Less successful responses either did not focus on educational achievement in the question or didn't discuss sufficiently the role of the teacher. Typical arguments against considered both the role of the school more generally alongside home factors, both material and cultural.

Question 3 – Crime and Deviance

(a) The best answers to this question defined the term clearly and accurately and gave an example. A lot of candidates did not score full marks as there was too much simple repeating of the key terms in the question.

(b) Most candidates successfully answered this question with some really insightful and topical examples given. Hacking, identity theft, phishing and internet fraud were probably the most frequently seen examples.

(c) Most candidates were able to explain how moral panics in the media could affect the public's view of crime and criminals. A lot of candidates drew upon a good range of concepts linked to labelling theory. Other notable points concerned instilling fear and creating the illusion that crime rates are rising. Less successful answers looked at how deviants and subcultures responded and didn't address the demands of the specific question sufficiently.

(d) Candidates found this an accessible and engaging question and discussed the prison system knowledgeably and accurately. Some marks were lost when the 'deter' part of the question was not focused on and instead the candidate simply described what happened inside prisons. Common responses that worked well included prison violence, the loss of freedom and rehabilitation programs. Labeling theory was also used successfully by some candidates.

(e) A significant number of candidates showed a very good understanding of this question with a range of well-developed points. Conceptual engagement here was also very impressive with, when discussing master status, self-fulfilling prophecy, stigma, ostracism, deviancy amplification, deviant career, moral panics, etc. Common points against the claim included material and relative deprivation, strain theory, status frustration, masculinity, excitement, feminism, Marxism and topical examples relating to terrorism. The question was really well answered on the whole.

Question 4 – Media

(a) This question was answered quite well with a number of candidates being able to successfully define the term whilst others could offer at least a partial definition of it.

(b) Candidates engaged well with this question and had some pertinent, topical and interesting examples of censorship to describe.

(c) Most candidates were able to explain agenda setting with some degree of success. Marxist theory was often referred to although some candidates made some interesting links to feminism as well in terms of arguing that patriarchal values and attitudes were the cornerstone of the media. Owners, editors, journalists and the nature of the audience were all typically referred to here. Less successful responses either did not unpack the concept of 'agenda setting' or didn't have sufficient range within their response.

(d) This was a very well answered question with some good understanding shown of feminist theory in terms of media representations. A wide range of ideas were discussed but perhaps most typically seen were the male gaze, unrealistic body image, patriarchal control, eating disorders, invisibility, limited roles, subservience to men and lower status and power. Some great examples were used.

(e) This was a question that differentiated well between candidates but seemed to be accessible to all. The best responses discussed new media in terms of influencing the media through user generated content, interactivity, globalization and citizen journalism. Pluralism and postmodernism were frequently referred to here. Arguments against the claim typically considered the role of the news professionals, the owners, the government and the political agenda. Interesting topical and local examples were used to substantiate the points made. This was a well answered question.