# SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/11
Paper 11

## Key messages

- When the data response **Question 1(c)** includes a table, graph or chart candidates should study any information above and below the data graphic as they could provide creditworthy points. For example on **Question 1(c)** on this paper the source was adapted, the diaries were only completed by females etc. If properly described such points would enable candidates to gain full marks.
- It should be noted that the development needed for points in optional questions part **(c)** can be less than in optional questions part **(d)**. Candidates should aim for three conceptual points in both **(c)** and **(d)**, but the explanations can be simpler in **(c)** as there are only 6 marks available, whereas in **(d)** there are 8 marks available and hence more is required by way of quality of evidence per point.
- Candidates should organise their points into distinct paragraphs for the extended answers. They should also develop each point in a paragraph to fully explain the meaning. This evidence includes explanation of the point, examples and/or sociological studies, sociological theory or empirical evidence.

## General comments

Overall, the work of the candidates in this session exhibited a good level of engagement with the questions and the assessment objectives. Time management appears to have been good with very few candidates not answering all the required questions. There were very few rubric errors and few non-responses.

Section A 'Methodology' was a good test of candidates' knowledge of key research concepts and methods. Nearly all candidates extracted and interpreted appropriate information from the source in **Question 1(a)** and **1(c)**. Responses to **1(d)** and **1(e)** displayed a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of aspects of research methodology. Many candidate responses made clear and confident use of methodological terms but there is a tendency to conflate validity and reliability.

In the optional questions the 'Culture, identity and socialisation' option was slightly more popular than 'Social Inequality. In both optional questions most candidates showed good knowledge and understanding of the key theories, concepts and arguments within the topics. Candidate responses demonstrated a breadth of knowledge and some well-structured and balanced debates on some complex sociological issues.

## Comments on specific questions

*Section A: Theory and Methods*

### Question 1

**(a)** A very good response here with almost all candidates correctly identifying the two countries with the most leisure time as Germany and Italy.

**(b)** A very good response to the questions which asked candidates to identify two types of observation. It is important to use correct sociological terms for research methods and most candidates achieved both marks by listing two from either participant, non-participant, covert or overt observation. A few candidates used synonyms such as hidden observation or terms such as longitudinal neither of which were creditworthy.

**(c)** This question required candidates to use information from Source A to describe two reasons why the data may not be accurate. The question drew a variable response. Popular correct points included that the diaries were completed only by females aged 15 – 60 which could be developed

as a problem for representativeness in two different ways: gender and age range. Others noted that the diaries were only completed in one week in December 2016. Again this could be developed in different ways either to argue that it is only a snapshot (and perhaps a snapshot in what would be a 'holiday' month for many people), or that it was outdated in terms of society in 2023. Others used the fact that the source has been adapted and therefore could have been altered or the fact that the diaries were self-completion which could easily have led to inaccuracies by the women recording data, for example because they may have relied on their memory if they recorded data for the day in the evening. So, there were plenty of points that could have been identified in the source. Candidates who scored less well often only identified but then did not develop a point from the source or answers were too vague to credit.

**(d)** The best responses focused on a known characteristic of open questions such as that they encourage qualitative data or they allow the respondent to answer in their own words. Such points were then developed by making links with greater detail, depth and accuracy of data. Some candidates used terms like validity as an identified strength but then made no link to open questions as such and hence received no marks.

**(e)** This question on the strengths and limitations of using secondary data drew a mixed response. Popular strengths included the idea that it is widely available via the internet and hence time and cost saving. The best responses homed in on examples of secondary data and used these to develop strengths and limitations. For example, diaries are first-hand accounts that can give an insider's point of view of an event or historical period and official statistics can give a societal view of patterns and trends in crime or employment. Popular limitations included the likelihood that some form of secondary data such as historical documents or old statistics are outdated and cannot be applied today or that the data has been created for another purpose and may not fit the researcher's needs. Candidates who scored less well gave fewer than two strengths and limitations and/or made vague points that lacked reference to secondary data.

**(f)** This question required candidates to explain why interpretivists criticise quantitative data. Unlike preceding questions, answers are marked in bands. A minimum of three well developed points are required for band three (8 – 10 marks). These points should be paragraph length. Points which are shorter are likely to be classed as only partially developed or undeveloped. Most responses to this question did contain enough points, but marks were limited to band one or band two because of limited development. The best answers showed an understanding of interpretivism. For example, some candidates talked about the interpretivist belief that individual view of themselves and their actions is crucial and hence purely numerical data is seen as superficial or that behaviour in the social world cannot be measured like science measures behaviour in the natural world and hence statistical data is unhelpful. A minority of candidates evaluated the interpretivist view which was tangential to the question.

**(g)** The essay question focused on evaluating the extent to which the presence of a researcher may negatively affect sociological research. Many candidates identified some ways in which researcher presence may damage data gained through the interviewer effect, interviewer bias generally or the Hawthorne Effect in overt observations. These candidates often described the issue well and then argued that such effects lead to a lack of accuracy or validity in data with the best answers explaining why. On the against side, the best answers focused on the ability of a researcher to establish initial rapport and to clarify misunderstandings leading to more valid responses. Others discussed the ability to probe interviewees for greater detail or participant observers being able to achieve verstehen or an insider's point of view. However, very few candidates provided a range of developed points each way, i.e. three or more and this limited many candidates' marks to band two (5 – 8 marks). Some answers were completely one-sided and hence could only achieve band two marks at best.

### Section B: Culture, identity and socialisation

### Question 2

**(a)** This question asked candidates to define the term 'femininity.' It drew a good response with many candidates achieving two marks linking to the idea of the expected behaviour of females. Some chose to give an examples such as gentle or a nurturing role. Where candidates only scored one mark it was usually due to them missing out one of the two elements needed.

**(b)** This question required candidates to describe two examples of manipulation into gender identity. Candidates who scored well often identified parents dressing children in gender appropriate clothing, steering them into gendered activities. Others identified peer pressure or teacher expectations and subject/career guidance as influencing children into gendered pathways. Those who scored less did not describe the examples given.

**(c)** This question focused on how individuals are encouraged to conform to the norms and values of society. There was a generally good response. The question is essentially about social control and those who scored best made three developed points about positive and negative sanctions used by the family, school, media and other agents. A few candidates discussed measures used in formal social control such as prison. Candidates who scored less well usually made only one or two points sometimes with little or no development.

**(d)** This question asked candidates to explain why feral children find it difficult to fit into society. Candidates could approach the 'why' aspect question in different ways. For example, some identified features of feral children's behaviour that made it hard for them to fit in, such as a lack of language, and argued this is why they find it difficult. Others looked to establish the cause of their feral behaviour, for example they had been 'socialised' by animals or they had been neglected and abused as babies such that their development was irredeemably damaged. Few candidates scored top band. Most candidates scored in band two due to having less than three well developed points.

**(e)** The essay question focused on the extent to which a global culture exists. Many responses scored marks in band one or band two, this was often due to limited understanding of the key term 'global culture' and the debate surrounding its existence and impact. There were few one-sided answers, however, and most included at least one contra argument. The issue was that many points made were not substantive evidenced points. Some candidates made good quality arguments about core values that are held in common in different societies across the world such as anti-racism, an increasing consensus about women's rights etc. Some used institutions such as the United Nations Charter of Human Rights as evidence for such common values. Others focused on how globalisation has seen the emergence of fast food, restaurants, fashion and shopping brands. Still other creditable points included the continued dominance of English as a worldwide language on the internet and westernisation or Americanisation due to global media companies such as Disney and Hollywood films. In evaluation popular points included the success of traditional clothing, foods and products along with non-western media products such as those coming from 'Bollywood' and 'Nollywood'. Others pointed out that cultural diversity, rather than a single global culture, is now the norm in many societies.

### Section C: Social Inequality

### Question 3

**(a)** Just under half of all candidates who chose question three achieved two marks with their definition of scapegoating. Most described the idea in terms of individuals or groups being blamed for something. Some linked this to the idea that this blame was unjustified or the result of prejudice and discrimination. Examples could also be given as part of the definition and a small number identified that ethnic minorities are often blamed by those in power as a divide and rule strategy (Marxism), for example through the idea that immigrants are taking the host nation's working class jobs.

**(b)** There was variable success amongst candidates who were asked to describe two features of the underclass. Some candidates chose to focus on the social groups who constitute the underclass, for example, some ethnic minorities, single mothers or long-term unemployed. Others focused on the facts of social exclusion or aspects of so-called underclass 'lifestyle' or culture, such as a high level of criminality and deviance, lack of education or having certain values that keep them in poverty such as fatalism or immediate gratification. Those who did not achieve full marks gave only one example or gave two but left one or both undescribed.

**(c)** The question asked how some ethnic minorities are disadvantaged in modern industrial societies. Candidates should give three points with simple development to have a chance of scoring at the top of band two (5 – 6 marks). Common answers included negative media stereotyping leading to police targeting, various kinds of discrimination in employment and racism in schools through the ethnocentric curriculum or teacher labelling. The best answers identified the point, for example institutional racism in the workplace, and then unpacked this through an example, such as the

research that showed how employers often fail to give interviews based on foreign sounding surnames meaning that ethnic minorities were less likely to get jobs.

**(d)**    This question asked candidates to explain why functionalists believe that inequality can be positive. Most answers came in band one (1 – 3 marks) or band two (4 – 6 marks). Some candidates gave descriptions of various aspects of functionalism such as the organic analogy but did not then go on to link the material to the question. The most frequent correct answers were that functionalists view inequality as an incentive to those at the bottom to work harder, that inequality is fair because we live in a meritocracy and that one's place in the hierarchy is achieved rather than ascribed. Others pointed out that inequality is functionally necessary as there is a hierarchy of jobs and statuses and a 'sifting and sorting' of individuals is needed to allocate the right people to the right roles. Many candidates identified at least one positive aspect of inequality but few explained two or more.

**(e)**    The essay question asked candidates to discuss the extent to which social class is still important in modern industrial societies. The best responses included a range of points on both sides and evidential development of arguments along with frequent use of sociological concepts. Popular 'for' points included various examples of how social class leads to disadvantages in life chances in education, employment, health and social mobility. Others drew upon Marxist theory to discuss the inequalities between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in capitalist society. A few candidates used functionalist theory and argued that a social class stratification was functionally necessary for society in economic terms. In evaluation most used ethnicity, gender and age as arguably more important than social class. Those who sought to directly critique the continued importance of social class often pointed towards the idea that 'class is dead' in a postmodern world where consumption is more important than production at least in terms of identity or argued that the old class boundaries are shifting and blurring to such an extent that they are no longer important social distinctions.

# SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/12
Paper 12

## Key messages

- In **1(c)** candidates should *first* identify their points from the source and then develop them in description. The answers must contain information from, and be clearly linked to, the source.
- Candidates should be encouraged to use sociological concepts throughout their extended answers (Questions **1(f)**, **1(g)**, **2/3 (c)** – **(e)**) as their mark will be affected by such use.
- Candidates should organise their points into distinct paragraphs for the extended answers. They should also develop each point in a paragraph to fully explain the meaning. This evidence includes explanation of the point, examples and/or sociological studies, sociological theory or empirical evidence.
- Candidates should answer part **(a)** of **Questions 2** and **3** in a clear and concise manner, presenting two core elements to provide a comprehensive definition and avoid repeating the word from the question as part of their answer.

## General comments

Overall, there were some high quality responses across the range. The candidates demonstrated some good engagement with both the questions and the assessment objectives. There were few non-responses or timing issues and almost no rubric errors.

*Section A* 'Methodology' was a good test of candidates' knowledge of key research concepts and methods. Some impressive theoretical knowledge of positivism and feminism was seen, though less prominent aspects of the specification, such as non-official statistics and types of question, were not dealt as confidently. Analysis and interpretation of the source material was good. Many candidate responses made clear and confident use of methodological terms but there is a tendency to conflate validity and reliability.

In the optional questions the 'Culture, identity and socialisation' option was slightly more popular than 'Social Inequality'. In both optional questions most candidates showed good and, in some cases, excellent knowledge and understanding of the key theories, concepts and arguments within the topics.

## Comments on specific questions

### Section A: Theory and methods

### Question 1

**(a)** Nearly all the candidates identified two ways Zimbardo tried to make the experiment realistic from Source A. The most common responses included stating that a part of the building was turned into a pretend prison and that the prisoners were arrested by real police, were fingerprinted and wore prison clothes etc. The small number of candidates who did not score full marks selected parts from the source that did not relate to the experiment being made more realistic.

**(b)** Candidates were asked to identify two types of question used by sociologists when conducting research. Some candidates correctly identified types of question such as open, closed, scaled, multiple choice and pre-coded. However, a substantial number of candidates wrote two *specific* questions a sociologist might ask during their research. For example, how can I maintain ethics, or what sample should I have? Other candidates incorrectly identified two research methods, e.g. questionnaires, rather than types of question.

**(c)**   This question required candidates to use information from Source A to describe two problems with the way the research was conducted. Most candidates identified one and, more commonly, two problems. The best answers selected an aspect of the research, for example, that the sample was only composed of males, and then briefly described what the problem with this was, i.e. that it does not include females and is therefore unrepresentative of the population. There were multiple issues with the sample – for example it only had 21 people and all were male university students – and candidates could choose to focus both points on the sample. By far the most popular answer was the abuse that the prisoners suffered from the guards with most candidates then describing how this was an ethical issue in sociological research. Less successful answers identified possible problems without developing them; while others discussed issues that were not present in the source and thus could not be credited.

**(d)**   This question asked candidates to describe two limitations of using non-official statistics in sociological research. While many candidates understood what non-official statistics are, the answers given were frequently generalised and vague. For example simply asserting that non-official statistics are likely to be inaccurate/false/lack validity/biased/costly/not representative. Whilst this may be true in some cases, it may not be true in others. For example, some prominent and reputable charities, non-governmental organisations and research bodies often conduct research using professional researchers and statisticians. So, candidates needed to give a context if they were to advance such points. For example, many gained credit for saying that some organisations lack the kind of resources that governments have and therefore struggle to do large scale research and hence their statistical findings may lack representativeness. The most common successful responses described points such as they may be biased because they may have been carried out by charities or political organisations who want to further their own interests, or non-official statistics produce quantitative data which is limited in terms of depth and detail as no qualitative data is gained. Another creditable point was that the statistics may not be entirely relevant for a sociologist as they have been created for another, possibly non-sociological, purpose.

**(e)**   This question asked candidates to describe two strengths and two limitations of a positivist approach to sociological research. It drew many good quality answers. The strengths most cited were that positivists gather quantitative data that can be turned into statistics and used for comparing trends and patterns; they adopt a scientific approach which aims to be objective due to non-interference by researchers; that they aim to control variables and hence produce findings that are more likely to be reliable; and, finally, they adopt a macro approach using large scale samples which are more often representative and generalisable. The limitations presented most frequently included the lack of qualitative data and in-depth explanation/understanding, thus lack of validity, verstehen, etc. Another common answer was that sociology cannot be modelled on science and that researchers need to admit the inevitability of bias and the need for researcher's subjectivity as a legitimate part of research. The better answers identified four points with enough development for suitable descriptions. Responses that scored less well focused on issues such as that respondents may lie or that it is cheap, easy and quick. These are generic points that are too vague to credit as points specific to positivist approach.

**(f)**   This question required candidates to explain why feminists believe that society is based on conflict. It drew high calibre responses from some candidates who had a thorough knowledge of feminist arguments. The most successful band three answers (8 – 10 marks) developed three substantial points. The best approach is to write in paragraphs ensuring that the point is made in the first sentence and then this is backed up by relevant evidence, often in the form of explanation, examples and sometimes a study (e.g. Oakley). Many candidates made more than three points but not all were fully developed. Hence many answers scored in band two (4 – 7 marks). Popular points included: the idea that society is patriarchal with status, power and resources being dominated by men. Some candidates separated their treatment into different areas such as the conflict between women and men in the family, in education and in the workplace. In the family many candidates pointed out that men continue to make the main decisions with women in a subordinate role, sometimes being subjected to domestic violence and segregated conjugal roles. Inequalities in education were frequently alluded to such as gendered subject choices and a lack of education for girls in some cultures. The workplace offered many examples including vertical and horizontal segregation, the glass ceiling and glass cliff, the gender pay gap and sexual harassment. Less successful answers were often list-like with undeveloped or underdeveloped points and common-sense arguments with little sociological evidence given in support. Some candidates offered descriptions of the different strands of feminism or discussed how feminists were fighting for equal rights, both of which were somewhat tangential to the question.

**(g)** This question asked about the extent to which secondary data is useful for sociological researchers. Many candidates provided responses which scored in band 2 (5 – 8 marks) or band 3 (9 – 12 marks). Most presented balanced answers providing more than one argument for each side of the debate with a conclusion at the end. Candidates are encouraged to not limit themselves from only listing the strengths and limitations of secondary data but should rather unpack both sides of the argument conceptually. The most successful answers developed a wide range of points on both sides of the debate with some effective use of concepts, theories and examples. A vital element in the best answers was that candidates linked points to specific examples and types of secondary data. Examples included official statistics, historical documents such as old newspapers and personal documents such as diaries and letters. A few candidates cited famous examples such as the diary of Anne Frank. Using examples was important as the category of 'secondary' data is broad and includes both qualitative and quantitative types. Therefore, candidates who wrote in generic terms about 'secondary data' being valid or reliable, without specifying examples, were usually only able to achieve minimal credit, as such statements depend upon the kind of secondary data being referenced. A few responses were one-sided or lacked adequate organisation of points into paragraphs with the result being that points merged.

## Section B: Culture, socialisation and identity

### Question 2

**(a)** Most candidates scored at least one mark for their definition of 'custom,' identifying it as an accepted norm or tradition in a society or culture. Many responses, however, did not offer a complete definition. For example some did not mention that customs carry on over time. A few candidates provided specific examples such as celebrating Eid or Christmas or customs centred around greeting such as shaking hands.

**(b)** This question asked candidates to describe two examples of informal social control. Overall, the question was answered well, with most candidates describing at least one example. Popular answers included ostracism from peers, being grounded by parents and various rewards or punishment by teachers at school. A few candidates simply named agents of informal social control with no unpacking of how the social control was done.

**(c)** The questions asked candidates to explain how males are socialised into masculinity. This question was answered well overall, with some good conceptual knowledge being supported by examples. Many candidates described how males are socialised into masculinity by the family (primary socialisation, imitation, canalisation and manipulation), by education through the hidden curriculum, by peer groups in terms of peer pressure and by media in terms of role models and influencers. There were many references to Ann Oakley's study on gender socialisation. The agencies of religion and the workplace featured less prominently but were deployed effectively by some candidates. Candidates who scored less well often wrote about *what* males were expected to do, or be, without reference to the *how* element in the question. Candidates who talked in vague terms about 'expectations' and males being 'taught', with no further reference to the techniques of socialisation, achieved less credit than those who focused their discussion on techniques such as verbal appellations or role modelling from parents.

**(d)** This question asked candidates to explain why age affects an individual's social identity. Most responses scored in band two rather than band three. Many candidates showed some understanding of the demands of the question. However, in many cases answers lacked a sociological dimension. Responses often included description of different age cohorts in general, often stereotypical terms, relying on commonsense material which linked to the key word 'identity' only implicitly. More successful candidates focused less on describing different age groups and more on identifying three or more core points about how identity is affected by age and then supporting such points with examples. Such as the idea that age affects the rights a person has (as indicated by age-related laws), how individuals are seen and treated by others in society (for example the labelling or discrimination against young and old) and the responsibilities that are expected of them (for example the job and family responsibilities of adults).

**(e)** This question required candidates to discuss the extent to which the media helps individuals to learn social expectations. Many candidates provided well-argued, balanced answers, offering a range of reasons to cover both sides of the debate. Most answers focused on new media. Celebrity influencers often featured as examples of role models who set social expectations around fashion

and lifestyle. Another common focus was the role of visual media such as films and TV in representing traditional gender roles and the norms and behavioural expectations attached to those roles. TV news and newspapers were also mentioned in terms of showing how criminals and deviants are punished for going against the law and social values. On the 'against' side, many candidates discussed limitations of the influence of the media, for example in areas or countries where access to the media is minimal. The main approach, however, was to consider how other agencies of socialisation were more important than the media in instilling social expectations, for example family, education, religion, workplace, peers. These evaluation points were often developed more conceptually and with more evidence than the 'for' points. Less successful answers offered only weak descriptions of media influence or did not included development of sufficient points in enough depth to achieve credit beyond band two (5 – 8 marks).

## Section C: Social inequality

### Question 3

**(a)** Many candidates defined the term 'racism' correctly, referring to two elements required for a comprehensive definition, e.g. discrimination or prejudice against a person or group belonging to another ethnicity or skin colour. A minority of candidates correctly identified racism as a form of discrimination but then incorrectly linked it to gender and sometimes social class or age.

**(b)** There was a mixed response to the question asking candidates to describe two examples of discrimination against young people. The best answers described how young people were often paid a lower wage rate, given lower positions in the workplace and were negatively represented in the media. Some candidates gave only one example and a significant number of candidates wrote about discrimination linked to a young person's ethnicity, gender and class. Such answers were not credited as they were not about discrimination against young people per se, rather were they about sexism, racism etc.

**(c)** Overall, the question asking candidates to explain how gender equality occurs in the workplace was done well. The better answers offered several conceptual points which included vertical and horizontal segregation, the glass ceiling and glass cliff, the gender pay gap and sexual harassment in the workplace. Less successful band one responses tended to include only one developed point and/or were more 'commonsense' than sociological in focus.

**(d)** The question as to why poverty exists in modern industrial societies was done very well by many candidates. Many candidates wrote at length, making effective use of concepts such as dependency culture, the welfare state, the poverty trap, fatalism, and the cycle of poverty. Some candidates demonstrated a particularly impressive knowledge of New Right and Marxist theory. A small number of candidates spent time, at the beginning of their answer, defining poverty (absolute and relative) without then applying this knowledge to the question. Less successful answers presented ideas in a more general manner, referring to unemployment and/or low paid jobs and/or lack of education, with limited sociological engagement.

**(e)** The essay-style question asked candidates to discuss the extent to which ethnicity is now the main form of stratification. Most candidates presented balanced answers and offered a range of valid arguments for both sides, written with varying degrees of sophistication. Responses demonstrated a good understanding of the debate around the extent of ethnic and racial discrimination in modern societies. Popular answers included the presence and impact of stereotypes and labelling in education, institutional discrimination in housing policies, the workplace and the law via police targeting. Successful responses linked points explicitly to life chances. A few candidates made effective references to older, closed systems such as slavery, the caste system in India and the apartheid system in South Africa although the question suggests a more contemporary focus. The 'for' side of the debate was evaluated largely by reference to gender inequality, ageism, and social class as more pervasive forms of stratification and inequality. Whilst evaluating many candidates drew upon Marxist, interactionist, functionalist and feminist theory. The most successful candidates attempted to address the 'to what extent' aspect of the question in their conclusion. Weaker responses tended to lack both range and detail, some showing only a limited understanding of the terms ethnicity and social stratification.

# SOCIOLOGY

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

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## Key messages

- In questions on types of secondary data, such as personal documents, candidates are advised to base their answers on examples, in this case such as diaries or letters, rather than generalising about all personal documents.
- in **Question 1(d)** and **(e)** candidates should first identify an aspect of the data, method or approach and then describe why that aspect is a strength or limitation. For example, in **1(d)** identify that *diaries are first-person qualitative accounts of past events*, and then develop by saying that *this gives unique insight into how people lived and experienced events such as Anne Frank's experiences as a Jew in the Second World War*.
- Candidates must be aware of the difference between formal *agents* of social control (such as the police) and techniques of formal control (such as being expelled from school for breaking written rules). Responses to **Question 2(b)** illustrated some confusion here.
- In extended questions candidates should write points in paragraph form or enumerate points using 'firstly, … secondly, …' etc.

## General comments

Responses showed a good level of engagement with both the question paper and the assessment objectives. Time management appears to have been good with few candidates running out of time. There were few very rubric errors or non-responses.

In Section A, candidate knowledge and understanding of methodology was satisfactory, though some candidates use the key evaluative concepts of validity, reliability, representativeness and generalisability rather too loosely. The large number of possible points to choose from in the source-based questions (**Question 1a** and **1c**) worked to the candidates' advantage. Most candidates described strengths and limitations of aspects of research methodology with varying degrees of success. However, knowledge of personal documents and qualitative sources of secondary data was less good. In essay responses the evaluation skills evidenced by some candidates was solid, with a few candidates going beyond juxtaposition by using other perspectives to interrogate the view in the question.

The optional question on 'Culture, identity and socialisation' was far more popular than 'Social inequality'. In both optional questions many candidates showed a good understanding of key sociological ideas, concepts and arguments and used these to good effect.

## Comments on specific questions

*Section A: Theory and methods*

**Question 1**

**(a)** This question asked candidates to identify two findings from the research in Source A. The word 'findings' was flagged in the source and most candidates scored full marks. The main responses included the 'boys claimed to use social media after school' and 'for 1 – 2 hours'.

**(b)** This question required candidates to give two examples of qualitative sources of secondary data. Many offered answers such as 'historical documents or personal documents, though neither of these are guaranteed to be qualitative data and so were too generic. Case studies also featured in some answers and the problem with this is that case study is a primary method. A small number of

candidates gave either qualitative or secondary sources, but not an example demonstrating both aspects.

**(c)** This question asked candidates to use Source A to describe two criticisms of the teacher's research into social media use. It was generally well-answered. Most candidates identified two issues directly from the Source A and developed both points. The most common answers stated that the incentive of an early lunch may have caused candidates to rush and hence give incomplete or inaccurate answers, the teacher was present whilst candidates completed the questionnaire which may have resulted in socially desirable answers and the sample size and composition were such that the research was unrepresentative of all young people.

**(d)** Responses regarding the strengths of using personal documents tended to be polarised between those who understood what personal documents are and those who did not. Like historical documents candidates should avoid generalising about personal documents as they come in many forms, some quantitative and some qualitative. The best answers focused on the strengths of diaries, letters, photographs and autobiographies for sociological research. Often such points revolved around the idea that such examples give depth, detail and unique insight into often past events. Candidates who did less well either generalised about personal documents, for example asserting they were valid, reliable or cheap etc. This kind of response however often made no reference to personal documents.

**(e)** In this question candidates were asked to describe two strengths and two limitations of using primary data in sociological research. Some candidates used secondary data in juxtaposition to emphasise the strength or limitation and this worked well. The strengths most cited were using primary data means research is more up to date and appropriate to the researcher's aims and hypothesis, more flexible in terms of the methods and sampling techniques used than pre-done secondary data. The limitations presented most frequently included the difficulty of accessing a large and representative sample (unlike for example official statistics), the time-consuming and costly nature of planning, preparation and execution of a research plan, and difficulties around conducting research in an objective, unbiased manner.

**(f)** This question required a knowledge of experiments and why some sociologists use them in research. Many candidates made one or two accurate, developed points. Some responses lacked the range needed for band three. More successful answers focused on laboratory experiments and made good use of positivism and its associated features and concepts. Common answers included the idea that experiments give researchers control over variables and hence are repeatable and reliable, they are more objective due to less researcher interference and that they yield quantitative data which is useful when trying to measure and compare the effects of one thing against another. In some cases candidates offered examples to illustrate their points such as Zimbardo or Milgram. A few candidates discussed field experiments such as Mayo or Rosenthal and Jacobson. A small number of candidates evaluated experiments, discussing weaknesses which was not required by the question and hence not creditworthy. Candidates who were less successful demonstrated minimal knowledge of experiments and often generalised that they were valid and gave accurate results.

**(g)** The essay-style question asked candidates to evaluate the extent to which a quantitative approach to research is effective. Candidates had the option of discussing the merits of quantitative *data* as an aspect, say, of a positivist approach or the strengths of different quantitative methods. Many candidates provided responses which scored in band two for (5 – 8 marks) or band three (9 – 12 marks). Candidates who scored at the top of band three or into band four were well-prepared and gave three distinct, developed points on both sides of the debate with a conclusion. Less successful answers had insufficient range and development. Popular points on the 'for' side included the ability to compare and identify patterns and trends in data, the association with a macro approach and large samples giving the possibility of representativeness and generalisability, and the ease of analysis and interpretation in comparison to qualitative data. Methods such as questionnaires and structured interviews sometimes featured as part of these points. In evaluation some candidates opted to invert 'for' points, whilst others preferred to compare aspects of the quantitative approach unfavourably with a qualitative approach. So, some discussed the merits of unstructured interviews or the general benefits of a qualitative approach for achieving validity and verstehen. Some candidates who chose the latter option simply juxtaposed quantitative with qualitative; however, answers which *only* described the merits of a qualitative approach were not able to achieve full credit as reference needed to be made back to the question.

### Section B: Culture, socialisation and society

### Question 2

**(a)** Overall this question was answered well. Most candidates identified two elements in their definition, often that it represents the first stage of socialisation in the family and that it aims to teach the core norms and values to children. Candidates who only scored one mark often only made a brief allusion to the family.

**(b)** Most candidates described at least one way formal agents of social control ensure conformity. The best answers concentrated on agents such as the police, prisons or the courts and gave relevant examples of the negative sanctions that were given out for breaking the law. Many candidates cited ways that schools, religion and workplaces promote conformity, and such answers were only acceptable if points were focused on *formal control* i.e. rule- or law-based sanctions. References to agents such as the media and family were unlikely to be credited.

**(c)** In this question candidates were asked to explain how the peer group influences young people during adolescence. Many candidates scored in band two (4 – 6 marks). Three developed points were needed for full marks. The most common responses cited peer pressure, role modelling and ostracism as techniques used by peers. Some referred to young people joining subcultures and being influenced to engage in deviant activities and subcultures though candidates needed to focus on the 'how' part of the question to achieve full credit.

**(d)** Most candidates scored some marks on this question by discussing aspects of the hidden curriculum. Common answers included the way the hidden curriculum is taught, i.e. indirectly via general teacher and school expectations that are constantly reinforced, enhancing effectiveness. Other points focused on what the hidden curriculum teaches and why this is so important. The importance of learning broader norms and values featured prominently, along with the necessity of conforming to social rules and laws, mediated through sanctions. There were some intelligent references to Marxist theory (Bowles and Gintis) and the idea that the hidden curriculum conveys harmful messages to working class children regarding the need to obey teachers and, later, employers and other authority figures. Candidates who scored less well often left points only partially developed or made a series of list-like, undeveloped points.

**(e)** In the essay-style question candidates were asked to discuss the extent to which gender is the most important aspect of social identity. It was well received by most candidates and there were some good responses which developed a range of points on both sides of the debate. On the 'for' side popular points focused on gender socialisation in the family as foundational to identity (Oakley), the representation of gender, including stereotypes, in the media, the role of influencers shaping expectations around appearance and lifestyle and how gender continues to affect life chances through discrimination against women particularly in the workplace. In evaluation some candidates cited postmodernist ideas that society was changing in terms of gender norms and introducing both more freedom regarding now plural gender identities. Others argued that there is now more equality for women so gender identity is not now linked to social status and power as it once was. Others approached evaluation by arguing that other factors are more important than gender in terms of social identity, offering social class, ethnicity and age as the most frequent alternatives. Many answers integrated appropriate sociological concepts, theory and studies in support of points made. The best answers showed an excellent understanding of gender identity.

### Section C: Social inequality

### Question 3

**(a)** The definitional question on ageism was well answered by many candidates who identified it as a form of prejudice or discrimination based on a person's age. Sometimes examples were given such as older people not being given jobs or promotions because of they are seen as incapable due to their elderly status.

**(b)** There were many excellent responses to this question which asked candidates to identify two ways that governments try to reduce inequality in societies. Popular correct points included the introduction of welfare state benefits, pensions and progressive taxation as well as public health and free, universal education. Where responses did not get full marks, it was usually because they only identified one or two points and did not then describe or unpack them.

**(c)** The question asked candidates to explain how some groups experience prejudice in society. Many candidates discussed different social groups' experiences of prejudice such as ethnic minorities, women, the working class and different age groups. Some good conceptual knowledge was on seen in the best answers, with references to glass ceiling, vertical and horizontal segregation, labelling, institutional racism etc. Appropriate references to Marxism and feminism were also credited. Weaker responses made some relevant points but these lacked concepts, theory and development.

**(d)** This question asked candidates to explain why a culture of poverty exists. Answer needed to be specific to this culture and its values or attitudes, rather than just poverty, to be credited. Many candidates linked the culture of poverty to the New Right and Charles Murray. Popular points included people becoming dependent on welfare, the de-valuing of education amongst the underclass, fatalism and the tendency to pursue instant rather than deferred gratification. Answers that scored in band one or two often made several points but lacked full development with evidence such as concepts, examples and/or sufficient explanation.

**(e)** The essay-style question asked candidates to discuss the extent to which the unequal distribution of wealth is the main form of social inequality. Candidates approached the question in different but equally viable ways. Some interpreted the key term 'distribution of wealth' as a synonym for social class inequalities and then used gender, ethnicity and age as evaluation competing alternatives. Others identified particular social groups such as women, the underclass, ethnic minorities or young people as being disadvantaged in terms of the distribution of wealth, for example talking about the feminisation of poverty and the poverty trap. In evaluation such candidates often turned to functionalist ideas about meritocracy, equal opportunities legislation and the introduction of the welfare state as measures which are narrowing the gap between the haves and the have nots. Aside from references to functionalist or New Right theory there were also intelligent references to feminism and Marxism. Many weaker responses tended more towards common-sense than sociological evidenced points.

# SOCIOLOGY

> **Paper 0495/21**
> **Paper 21**

## Key messages

- Candidates do not need to write an introductory paragraph, responses should focus on the question from the beginning to maximise marks.
- Many candidates do not write in paragraphs, making it difficult to differentiate between points. It would be beneficial for candidates to write in paragraph form, particularly in the banded **Questions – (c)**, **(d)** and **(e)**.
- There was a good awareness that **Question (e)** requires a debate, with several points for and against, and a judgement at the end in a conclusion. To further improve performance, candidates should include some form of sociological evidence to substantiate each point made. This could be in the form of examples, statistics, sociological concepts, theory or even a sociological study. This way answers will be better developed and explained.
- Some responses for **Questions (b)** and **(c)** are overly long. Responses here can be short – perhaps a couple of sentences per point. A couple of words, however, does not meet the requirement to 'describe' in **(b)** questions. Understanding the requirements of the command words used is really crucial to candidate success.
- Points in **Questions (d)** and **(e)** should be developed more fully, sociologically evidenced and always be in paragraphs.
- Candidates' knowledge of definitions could be further improved. This would enable them to not only obtain full marks in **(a)** questions, but would also help them to understand key terminology in other questions as well.
- Candidates should show their sociological knowledge by using terms, concepts, studies and theories whenever possible. This approach allowed a lot of candidates to achieve good marks in this examination series. However, some candidates could only score lower marks as their answers tended to be based on common sense rather than Sociology.
- Candidates should spend time thinking about what the questions are asking and planning answers to those longer questions before they start to write – this is particularly important in the 15-mark essay questions to ensure that candidate's remain focused on the specific demands of the question set rather than writing at length but without answering the question set.
- Candidates should use the number of marks per question as guidance for how much should be written and how long should be spent on a particular question. At times, for example, candidates were writing as much for a **part (c)** question worth 6 marks as for a **part (e)** question worth 15. Time management skills and regular practice of timed examination questions in the classroom will really help with this.

## General comments

In general candidates showed a good and, in some cases, impressive knowledge of the subject matter, often integrating sociological conceptuality and, in many cases, a range of theory into their answers. **Family** and **Education** were the most popular questions followed by **Crime, deviance and social control**. Rubric errors were minimal and most candidates appeared to manage their time well.

Many candidates used relevant contemporary, global and localised examples alongside the more traditional 'textbook' evidence in order to justify and substantiate several of the points made. This demonstrated both sociological knowledge and the ability to apply sociological concepts and theory to the real world.

Very few rubric errors were seen this examination session, allowing most candidates to maximise their chances of success. Some candidates did not number, or incorrectly numbered their answers, candidates should be aware of the importance of doing this diligently.

In the **part (a)** question, candidates should look to include **two** separate elements in their definition. Examples can be a really useful way of adding a second element to an answer and are thus to be encouraged.

**Part (b)** needs **two** distinctly different points with some development – candidates should separate these and label them clearly.

In **part (c)** questions candidates should make sure there are more than two sociological points made, evidenced and developed.

For **part (d)** candidates should adopt the same approach as for **(c)** but develop ideas further, consider more range and ensure concepts/theory/studies are used appropriately. Concepts, development, quality of response and explicit sociological engagement tend to be the key differentiator between a **part (c)** and a **part (d)** question.

In terms of the 15-mark **part (e)** question, candidates should organise their answers into paragraphs and develop each idea fully using theory, studies, examples and/or concepts wherever relevant. Responses should include three developed points for and three developed points against the claim in the question. There also needs to be a well-focused conclusion that makes a supported judgement on the claim in the question. Each point made should be directly focused upon what the question is asking and should engage sociologically and conceptually wherever possible. Some candidates are choosing to answer the 15-mark questions first to make sure that they do not run out of time, this worked well for several candidates but ultimately this is the candidates' own decision to make.

## Comments on specific questions

### Section A: Family

### Question 1

**(a)** Many candidates were able to get two marks with a full definition of the 'cereal packet family', many of the remaining candidates were able to get one mark typically through recognising it as being a type of nuclear family. The link to the media or to functionalism or to the ideal family was what typically moved the answer to two marks.

**(b)** This was an accessible question for candidates. Most candidates described different types of marriage, often describing arranged, forced, love and polygamy. Sometimes the description given did not match the identified type of marriage. This was most often seen in arranged and forced marriages.

**(c)** Some responses included three clear and developed points to discuss this idea using clearly linked examples such as consumer markets, legislation, fewer children and child rights. There was some overlap in points made at times which prevented some candidates from achieving the top marks available. Some candidates did not know what 'child-centred' meant.

**(d)** Most candidates explained why marriage is seen as less essential today. Common ideas discussed were secularisation, family diversity and the impact and role of feminism. The best responses included development and substantiation of the points made. Some responses were more common-sense rather than conceptual and sociological in tone.

**(e)** On the whole this question was answered well and most candidates made at least simple points about changing family roles. Typically, it was the roles of husband and wife that were most commonly discussed but some candidates did discuss the roles of grandparents and children in their answers. On the 'for' side feminism was well used (e.g. Sharpe) alongside the notion of the symmetrical family from Willmott and Young. Non-nuclear family structures were also put to good use here. On the 'against' side it was concepts such as Oakley's dual burden, the triple shift, domestic violence (Dobash and Dobash) and decision making (Edgell and Pahl) that were most common. Ethnic diversity within families was also well considered by some candidates in the light of whether family roles were changing or not.

*Section B: Education*

**Question 2**

**(a)**    The vast majority of candidates explained what social mobility meant by referring to a movement between social classes. This was often linked to improved life chances and examples used typically came from education or the workplace. A smaller number of candidates only offered one element in their answer and thus only scored one mark e.g. doing well at school.

**(b)**    This question was well answered with candidates clearly demonstrating an understanding of the Interactionist concept of 'self-fulfilling prophecy'. It was most frequently linked to labelling theory and examples were often used to gain the second mark. For example, being put into a low set and living up to this expectation by not performing well. Some candidates did not provide the essential two elements in their answer and so were awarded one mark only.

**(c)**    This question was accessible and most candidates addressed it well in their answers. Material deprivation was typically considered in terms of inability to afford private education, lack of access to necessary resources and equipment, lack of a quiet study space and diet and nutrition. In some responses points were not separated out, making it was hard to see where one point began and ended.

**(d)**    Candidates clearly understood the difference between sanctions and rewards and most related these to the school setting. Responses that were not related to the school setting and were more generic did not score as well. Sanctions referred to were often detention and suspension and rewards were praise, certificates and prizes. To score well candidates needed to discuss the reasons that schools used sanctions and rewards. The most successful responses considered social conformity, Marxism, social control, socialisation and the functions of education. Some answers were repetitive and did not give the required three separate points. Again, it is crucial that points are separated out by the candidate and that each idea discussed is clearly different.

**(e)**    This question on gender and educational achievement was well answered. Most candidates gave a sensible, sociological discussion about its impact and significance. Some made points about the system favouring boys, others about it favouring girls – both approaches were equally valid. Concepts used well on the 'for' side of the debate were the feminisation of education, labelling theory, teacher expectations, anti-school subcultures, patriarchy and access to education. On the 'against' side the most common approach was to claim that other social factors held more significance e.g. ethnicity and social class. Functionalism and the ideas of equality and meritocracy were also well used. The best responses were well developed and gave a substantiation of the points made alongside the focus on the idea of educational achievement within the question.

*Section C: Crime, deviance and social control*

**Question 3**

**(a)**    Most candidates demonstrated a partial understanding of the term 'official crime statistics', although several responses repeated terms in the question without showing full understanding. Recognising them as a government measurement of crime and as being quantitative/numerical data was most common.

**(b)**    This proved to be a very accessible question with the majority of candidates describing punishments for crime. Common responses included describing fines, prison and community sentencing.

**(c)**    Responses were at times repetitive and often limited with few showing a diversity of knowledge and understanding of the criminal online world. Cyber-crimes such as fraud and identity theft were often referred to, the dark web less so. Those that used the terms and referred to specific online crimes did the best.

**(d)**    This question required candidates to compare crime rates for different ethnic groups. This could be done specifically (e.g. focusing on a specific ethnic group) or generically (e.g. choosing factors that explained the differences e.g. material deprivation). Often three distinct points were not made and thus range was lacking from responses. Some responses were limited in the development and substantiation of points. The best responses included discussion of three very different ideas of

differing crime rates amongst different ethnic groups e.g. material factors, cultural factors, linguistic factors and school/curriculum factors.

**(e)** The best answers referred to the non-official nature of the method increasing validity, anonymity and the ability to access non-prosecuted crimes. Having specific knowledge of self-report studies e.g. The Farrington study helped some candidates to better evidence their points. In evaluation, other methods of measuring crime were discussed, and some candidates scored good marks through a critique of self-report as an accurate methodology. Many responses demonstrated a limited knowledge of what a self-report study was or how it was used by sociologists to measure crime. This led to the 'for' side of the debate often being not as well developed as the 'against' side.. Some responses incorrectly referred to victim surveys instead of self-report studies.

### *Section D: Media*

### Question 4

Very few responses on Media were seen in this component.

**(a)** Candidates typically understood the term 'role model' and defined it well. Examples were often used to gain the second mark e.g. influencers, sports stars, film actors etc. The idea of it being a person looked up to and admired came through well in most answers.

**(b)** Those candidates that focused on the representation of the working class answered the question well. Poverty, a hard-working ethic, dole scroungers and manual work were common answers. Some responses described how the working class use the media, rather than their representation in the media, which could not be credited.

**(c)** Better responses to this question considered social media in terms of communication, relationships, education, entertainment and information. Some delved into concepts from the uses and gratifications approach such as personal identity and did this well. Examples were not as well used – points made do need to be substantiated. The best responses engaged very well with sociological concepts such as interactivity, portability and the prosumer.

**(d)** Most candidates engaged well with this question on media violence and used both classical sociological evidence (e.g. the Bobo Doll experiment) alongside more contemporary examples such as the American school shootings to substantiate their points. Better responses introduced discussion of concepts such as imitation, desensitisation and role modelling.

**(e)** The best responses to this question demonstrated clear understanding of what was meant by 'ruling class power' and good knowledge of Marxist theory. They considered issues of ownership, distribution and the editors/journalists. The work of the GUMG was well used here. In evaluation, new and social media were the key elements considered to challenge the notion of the media maintaining ruling class power. The role of the active audience and citizen journalism were well considered. Some weaker responses demonstrated understanding of the general focus of the question but did not link ruling class power to the media.

# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 0495/22
Paper 22

## Key messages

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## Comments on specific questions

*Section A: Family*

### Question 1

**(a)**     Most candidates achieved both marks on the definition of 'joint conjugal roles'. Many candidates referred to the roles of husband and wife in the family being shared equally. A few candidates gained only one mark due to a lack of precision in their definition: e.g. sharing actions within a family or giving a partially correct example. A few candidates incorrectly described traditional conjugal roles.

**(b)**     The majority of the candidates showed knowledge and understanding of the concept of a reconstituted family and identified and described at least one reason why they were becoming more common in modern industrial societies. Popular answers included higher divorce rates, changing attitudes, secularisation and feminism. A common error was candidates who did not address the specific question i.e. why reconstituted families are *becoming more common* and instead provided answers that were too general to credit, such as death of a partner.

**(c)**     The question on how grandparents contribute to family life was an accessible one and many candidates scored well. Typical answers included grandparents giving financial and emotional support, helping dual worker parents with childcare/household chores and socialising children into the norms and values of their culture. A few candidates strayed into a discussion of negative aspects of grandparent's role in the family, such as the financial burden they can become, which was not creditworthy.

**(d)**     There was a mixed response to the question on why urbanisation has changed family life. The best responses made three well-developed points, with each point explicitly linked to an aspect, or consequence, of urbanisation on the family. Popular points included: the emergence of the nuclear family with geographical mobility, changes in conjugal roles and women's rights, structural differentiation, changing family functions and greater family diversity (e.g. the emergence of lone-parents and cohabitation). A few candidates spent too much time at the start of their answer describing the way extended families had previously lived in rural areas without answering the question set. The best answers explicitly linked the points raised to family life providing sufficient sociological material and development. The weaker responses generally lacked range and/or depth.

**(e)** The essay-style question on the dark side of the family was another accessible question. Most candidates described the prevalence of domestic violence and child abuse/neglect and the negative consequences arising from divorce. Sometimes answers on the 'for' side of the debate were a little repetitive e.g. only considering different forms of abuse. Other acceptable points that featured included the dual/triple burden upon women, criticism of the 'cereal packet' family and the New Right critique of single parent and dysfunctional families. Some candidates integrated theory with appropriate references to both feminism (patriarchy) and Marxism (critique of the warm bath theory). On the 'against' side of the debate popular points included functionalist arguments about the various functions that the family fulfil such as socialisation and reproduction, the emergence of more symmetrical or joint conjugal roles and the positive aspects of divorce and ensuing reconstituted families. Changing legislation and increased awareness of human rights was also used well in evaluation by many candidates.

### Section B: Education

### Question 2

**(a)** When defining 'social factors' a good number of candidates scored both marks by referring to things that affect educational achievement and then following up with an example such as social class, ethnicity or gender. However, there was a substantial number of vague or incorrect answers given that received only partial or no credit.

**(b)** This question asked candidates to describe two sanctions *used by schools* and was accessible to most candidates. Detention and suspension were the most frequent negative sanctions given with praise, certificates and medals/prizes also featuring as examples of rewards. Some candidates did not score full marks as they gave general examples of rewards and sanctions rather than school specific examples, as asked for by the question.

**(c)** There were some very impressive answers from some candidates to the question about how Marxists criticise the education system. Many candidates clearly understood that the education system prepares the working class/proletariat to serve the needs of the upper class/bourgeoisie in various ways. A substantial number of candidates therefore gave creditworthy explanations of how Marxists would criticise the education system. Commonly, the responses focused on capitalism, private schools, hidden curriculum, lack of meritocracy, negative teacher labeling and working-class underachievement compared to the upper/middle class. Some weaker responses outlined how Marxists criticise society rather than the education system, showing only tangential relevance to the question. A minority of candidates did not appear to know Marxist theory at all.

**(d)** This question asked candidates to explain why a candidate's background may affect educational achievement. The quality of answers varied from more common-sense points to highly conceptual ideas. The few low scoring candidates limited themselves to a discussion of rich versus poor candidates. Other more sophisticated responses utilised material factors, various forms of cultural deprivation/capital, racial discrimination and linguistic difficulties. A few candidates drew upon labelling theory and studies such as Becker, Bernstein and Marx for extra support. Lots of candidates organised their answer into 3 clear paragraphs, each having a clearly different focus.

**(e)** The essay style question asked candidates to discuss the extent to which the comprehensive system of education is the best. Common arguments generally referred to comprehensives being non-selective, accepting children of all social groups in the local area, of all abilities. On the 'for' side of the argument some candidates leant heavily on the idea of equal opportunities, arguing that comprehensives serve the functionalist view of meritocracy and allowing ethnic minority candidates to integrate and working-class candidates to improve their life chances. Other points that featured included the promotion of a strong community ethos and the idea that it gave a second chance to 'late bloomers' who may have failed an 11+ exam. In evaluation, candidates typically cited drawbacks such as bright children being held back, behavioural issues resulting from large class sizes and setting/streaming still taking place leading to labelling of less able and often working class or ethnic minority children. Others developed the advantages of other schools such as private schools and faith schools and used this to good effect as evaluation. Some mistakenly cited state schools as a different type of school.

### Section C: Crime, deviance and social control

### Question 3

**(a)** There was a mixed response to the definitional question on labelling. Candidates who scored best included two aspects in their answer – for example referring to the idea of a person or group being named or stereotyped by others and then the idea that this stereotype can cause a reaction. There were several different aspects that could be credited. Some candidates referred to Howard Becker and the idea of a master status or a self-fulfilling prophesy occurring. Others gave a partial definition and added an example such as young males being stopped and searched because of being tagged with a deviant label. Candidates who scored less well usually only identified one element in their answer.

**(b)** A wide variety of crimes were creditworthy as examples of urban crimes. Popular answers included shoplifting, mugging, gang crime, vandalism, white collar/corporate crime and bank robbery. Some candidates did less well on this question as they gave examples of crimes which lacked a specific *urban focus* and hence were not creditworthy, such as theft, cybercrimes and murder.

**(c)** Many candidates knew and understood the basics of victim surveys and how they are used to measure crime but relatively few scored full marks. There were very few references to classic victim surveys such as the Islington Survey or key feminist surveys. Common points included the idea of victims doing a questionnaire or being interviewed about crimes that had been committed against them, that the surveys helped to measure unreported crimes (the dark figure) and the fact that some surveys are local and therefore useful in identifying crime hotspots both in terms of the frequency and types of crime. Other candidates focused on the anonymity and confidentiality of the survey data and the increased validity this gave the survey results. Some candidates mistakenly thought the police conducted the surveys whilst others talked about self-report studies instead. Another common error was attempting to explain the limitations of using victim surveys which led to answers being at least partially out of focus.

**(d)** The question as to why crimes are not always reported to the police was accessible to most candidates. However, whilst many candidates made multiple points these were often only partially developed and often list-like in nature. Popular answers included not reporting crimes because they brought shame and embarrassment, fear of reprisal, no trust in the police, crimes being too trivial or that people did not want to become involved in lengthy police and court proceedings. The better responses Integrated sociological language by linking to specific crimes such as domestic violence and/or using concepts such as the dark figure, stereotypes, institutional racism, white-collar crime and ostracism.

**(e)** Most candidates gave several points on each side of the debate about the extent to which a lack of status explains criminal behaviour. There were some very good responses demonstrating wide and detailed knowledge of explanations for crime. On the 'for' side common points included Cohen's status frustration, Merton's strain theory and Cloward and Ohlin's illegitimate opportunity structure. Some candidates referred to status more generally and included explanations for lower class and ethnic minority crimes. In evaluation**,** many candidates wrote intelligently about inadequate socialisation, labelling theory, masculinity and the postmodern idea of crime for 'thrills'. The weaker responses tended to be more one-sided and/or lacked adequate organisation, offering unconvincing arguments and undeveloped or underdeveloped points which could not be fully credited. It was not always clear if some of the points being made were arguing in support of or evaluating the question therefore candidates are strongly advised to signal clearly within their essays.

### Section D: Media

### Question 4

**(a)** A number of candidates who opted to answer this question defined the term 'citizen journalism' correctly, giving a comprehensive definition linked to the public distributing information through the internet. Blogging, social media and uploading were often used as examples. The best answers described how members of the public or ordinary people can gather and distribute information.

**(b)** This question asked candidates to describe two ways the audience use the media according to the uses and gratifications model. It proved to be an accessible question with popular answers

including people using the media for entertainment, information, education and personal identity. In the descriptions candidates frequently gave relevant examples which were sufficient to pick up both marks per point. Those who scored less well tended to give vague descriptions, left points undeveloped or alternatively did not focus on the 'uses and gratifications' part of the question.

**(c)** The question on how the media is biased drew some good quality responses from candidates. Candidates focused on a range of points including the bias of media owners, political bias and examples of propaganda, for example, in Hitler's Germany. Others focused on sensationalism and exaggerated reporting, gender/ethnic stereotyping or other stereotypes such as the pro-western bias in global media content. There was a wide range of different approaches to the question, all equally valid.

**(d)** The question on why contemporary media is global posed more of a challenge to candidates. Candidates typically gained marks in this question by outlining how people all over the world have access to the media and consume media from other countries, including how the BBC, Bollywood etc. are not just available in their own nation but on a global scale. Popular points included the explosion in digital technology and online platforms, particularly social media, allowing people from around the world to connect and interact. Other points referred to citizen journalism on the internet and the idea of diaspora communities accessing films and media products from their country of origin e.g. Indians in the UK streaming Bollywood films. Relatively few candidates explored global media ownership or online education.

**(e)** The essay style question focused on the extent to which the media influences the audience's values and attitudes. On the 'for' side of the debate, popular answers included the evidence that advertising, scapegoating and propaganda all affect audiences, with relevant examples, and the hypodermic syringe model supported by examples such as copycat violence. Some candidates referenced Bandura's Bobo Doll experiment and research by the Glasgow University Media Group to good effect. In evaluation, candidates made some use of the uses and gratifications model and general pluralist/selective explanations, focusing on the ability of more active and discriminating audiences to choose and even generate their own content for their own purposes with little influence from the media.

# SOCIOLOGY

## Key messages

- Candidates do not need to write an introductory paragraph, responses should focus on the question from the beginning to maximise marks.
- Many candidates do not write in paragraphs, making it difficult to differentiate between points. It would be beneficial for candidates to write in paragraph form, particularly in the banded **Questions – (c)**, **(d)** and **(e)**.
- There was a good awareness that **Question (e)** requires a debate, with several points for and against, and a judgement at the end in a conclusion. To further improve performance, candidates should include some form of sociological evidence to substantiate each point made. This could be in the form of examples, statistics, sociological concepts, theory or even a sociological study. This way answers will be better developed and explained.
- Some responses for **Questions (b)** and **(c)** are overly long. Responses here can be short – perhaps a couple of sentences per point. A couple of words, however, does not meet the requirement to 'describe' in **(b)** questions. Understanding the requirements of the command words used is really crucial to candidate success.
- Points in **Questions (d)** and **(e)** should be developed more fully, sociologically evidenced and always be in paragraphs.
- Candidates' knowledge of definitions could be further improved. This would enable them to not only obtain full marks in **(a)** questions, but would also help them to understand key terminology in other questions as well.
- Candidates should show their sociological knowledge by using terms, concepts, studies and theories whenever possible. This approach allowed a lot of candidates to achieve good marks in this examination series. However, some candidates could only score lower marks as their answers tended to be based on common sense rather than Sociology.
- Candidates should spend time thinking about what the questions are asking and planning answers to those longer questions before they start to write – this is particularly important in the 15-mark essay questions to ensure that candidate's remain focused on the specific demands of the question set rather than writing at length but without answering the question set.
- Candidates should use the number of marks per question as guidance for how much should be written and how long should be spent on a particular question. At times, for example, candidates were writing as much for a **part (c)** question worth 6 marks as for a **part (e)** question worth 15. Time management skills and regular practice of timed examination questions in the classroom will really help with this.

## General comments

In general candidates showed a good and, in some cases, impressive knowledge of the subject matter, often integrating sociological conceptuality and, in many cases, a range of theory into their answers. **Family** and **Education** were the most popular questions followed by **Crime, deviance and social control**. Rubric errors were minimal and most candidates appeared to manage their time well.

Many candidates used relevant contemporary, global and localised examples alongside the more traditional 'textbook' evidence in order to justify and substantiate several of the points made. This demonstrated both sociological knowledge and the ability to apply sociological concepts and theory to the real world.

Very few rubric errors were seen this examination session, allowing most candidates to maximise their chances of success. Some candidates did not number, or incorrectly numbered their answers, candidates should be aware of the importance of doing this diligently.

In the **part (a)** question, candidates should look to include **two** separate elements in their definition. Examples can be a really useful way of adding a second element to an answer and are thus to be encouraged.

**Part (b)** needs **two** distinctly different points with some development – candidates should separate these and label them clearly.

In **part (c)** questions candidates should make sure there are more than two sociological points made, evidenced and developed.

For **part (d)** candidates should adopt the same approach as for **(c)** but develop ideas further, consider more range and ensure concepts/theory/studies are used appropriately. Concepts, development, quality of response and explicit sociological engagement tend to be the key differentiator between a **part (c)** and a **part (d)** question.

In terms of the 15-mark **part (e)** question, candidates should organise their answers into paragraphs and develop each idea fully using theory, studies, examples and/or concepts wherever relevant. Responses should include three developed points for and three developed points against the claim in the question. There also needs to be a well-focused conclusion that makes a supported judgement on the claim in the question. Each point made should be directly focused upon what the question is asking and should engage sociologically and conceptually wherever possible. Some candidates are choosing to answer the 15-mark questions first to make sure that they do not run out of time, this worked well for several candidates but ultimately this is the candidates' own decision to make.

**Comments on specific questions**

*Section A: Family*

**Question 1**

**(a)** The majority of candidates were awarded two marks for a full definition of 'beanpole family', many of the remaining candidates gained one mark typically through recognising it as being a type of extended family. The 'tall and thin' idea was commonly seen and was duly rewarded.

**(b)** This was an accessible question and most candidates gained full marks, often referring to sanctions/rewards, role modelling, imitation and manipulation/canalisation. The majority of responses included sufficient description to warrant the second mark being awarded in each point.

**(c)** Some responses included three clear and developed points discussing how the family could be patriarchal using clearly linked examples such as domestic violence, segregated conjugal roles, decision making and power. Studies such as Oakley, Edgell, Pahl and Dobash and Dobash were used well. It was evident that some candidates did not know what 'patriarchal' meant and just gave general answers that did not gain marks.

**(d)** Many candidates identified the functions of the family and explained why the nuclear family completed them the best. The most common answers were socialisation, gender roles and social control. Better responses compared other family types and showed why they were dysfunctional or explained why the nuclear family was privatised, child-centred or was seen as the ideal in the media as the 'cereal packet' family. Concepts and sociological terms were very well used.

**(e)** On the whole this question was answered well. The majority of candidates started with showing the negative effects of an ageing population upon family life with most candidates identifying financial and emotional burdens as general stresses upon the family. The pivot generation was often referred to as was the idea of family pressure. Many of the weaker responses were one-sided only which limited marks. Better responses were two-sided and included detailed and conceptual arguments with a detailed, reflective conclusion. In evaluation, typical responses included candidates referring to childcare, emotional support, economic support and primary socialisation contextualised within the framework of longer life expectancy and better healthcare for the elderly.

*Section B: Education*

**Question 2**

**(a)** The vast majority of candidates explained what social mobility meant by referring to a movement (up or down) between social classes. This was often linked to improved life chances and examples used typically came from education or the workplace. A smaller number of candidates only offered one element in their answer and thus only scored one mark e.g. doing well at school.

**(b)** This question on the ways schools can select their candidates proved to be accessible to the candidates. Most candidates answered this question well and opted for entrance examination/test, academic ability, gender or paying for a private school with clear descriptions for these points. Some candidates identified two ways that schools could select candidates but only gave vague or too brief descriptions therefore only scoring one of the second two marks available.

**(c)** This question was generally answered well. Many candidates explained how social conformity can be achieved in schools, typically describing formal or informal control, rewards or sanctions, peer pressure and/or the hidden curriculum. Most candidates explained these points well but some candidates did so with less conceptual description and therefore did not score full marks. Those that use concepts well in at least two of their points scored top marks.

**(d)** Many candidates identified reasons why some ethnic groups might do better than other ethnic groups but did not then go on to relate those points to better exam results being achieved. The most common answers that linked the two discussed home/material factors, cultural factors, racism, discrimination and labelling. A lot of candidates gave three good quality points with clear conceptual descriptions that focused well on specific ethnic groups. The concept of 'Tiger mums' was frequently seen and was used well.

**(e)** Many candidates gave reasons why middle class candidates did better than working class candidates in school but often did not go on to link these points successfully to the education system. The most common examples where this was evident was in points on home life or cultural capital which would then not be related back to school at all. Lots of candidates did link the education system into their answer and did so also with lots of concepts and/or studies in support. Institutional racism, ethnocentric curriculum, elaborated code and type of school were perhaps the best used ideas. The range of evaluative points was good in this question, generally stronger than the 'for' points, with many candidates discussing alternatives such as gender impacting education or the functionalist argument of meritocracy or generally describing comprehensive schools and the ability to gain scholarships.

*Section C: Crime, deviance and social control*

**Question 3**

**(a)** The majority of responses to this question were awarded either two or zero marks with very few gaining one mark as candidates did or did not know what ostracism meant. Those that did defined it accurately and often used an example to gain their second mark.

**(b)** This proved to be a very accessible question with candidates describing deterrents to criminal behaviour such as fines, prison and community sentencing. Some used the idea of ostracism and the role of the media was also explored. These points were generally described well, linked to the 'putting off from crime' and therefore the majority of candidates scored highly.

**(c)** A high number of responses were not focused on police enforcement, as per the question, instead focussing on the law in general e.g. courts and prison, which could not be credited. There were many responses that did link to the police and successfully discussed police targeting, arrest, surveillance, stop and search, zero tolerance, patrols and/or the use of the media.

**(d)** This question required candidates to explain why victim surveys show a different pattern of crime to official crime statistics. Some candidates just described official crime statistics and did not mention victim surveys at all, some candidates described the benefits of victim surveys but did not show why the patterns differed to official crime statistics. These could only be awarded partial marks. The best responses compared the two methods giving clear examples to back up points, for example

the dark figure of crime, the anonymity of victim surveys and various reasons as to why crimes may be unreported or unrecorded in the official statistics but may be discussed in a victim survey.

**(e)**    A lot of candidates answered this question on age and crime very well with good use of supporting sociological knowledge in the form of studies, theory and/or concepts. Youth was the key age group discussed by most candidates. There were frequent references seen to status frustration, strain theory, drift theory, gang culture, postmodern ideas of 'edgework', examples about the elderly criminals in Japan and official statistics showing more young people committing crime than any other age group. Answers were also well evaluated with many candidates offering alternative points on gender, social class or ethnicity as more important factors in determining whether individuals committed crime and explaining these points in relation to home factors such as socialisation and material or cultural deprivation.

### Section D: Media

### Question 4

Very few responses on Media were seen in this component.

**(a)**    Candidates typically either understood and defined the term 'labelling' well or gave an unclear response. Those that scored highly utilised the idea of stereotyping and public reaction. Examples were often used to gain the second mark e.g. youth as criminal, elderly as weak, women as passive etc.

**(b)**    This question proved accessible to most candidates with the most common answers seen being role modelling and imitation. The better responses moved beyond simple identification and offered clear descriptions of the terms/processes as well.

**(c)**    Some candidates successfully described the direct and immediate effect of the hypodermic syringe model upon audiences and many candidates exemplified their answer with Bandura's bobo doll experiment or generally described audiences imitating what they saw in the media, e.g. children and violence. The power of advertising was also discussed well and the 'soaking up' of media messages through a passive audience. Weaker responses included fewer concepts and sometimes did not demonstrate understanding of the hypodermic syringe model.

**(d)**    Most candidates knew and understood the concept of 'censorship'. Lots of candidates answered this question well, discussing protection of the state, official secrets, protection of children and the certification system in the media. Responses with a high level of concepts and examples supporting each of the points made alongside the development and discussion scored well.

**(e)**    Candidates provided examples of stereotypes of various age groups in the media in both arguments 'for' and 'against'. This helped them make up for the lack of concepts that could be related to the answer and were rewarded. On the whole this question was answered quite well in terms of the number of points made and explained – the typical approach was to consider different age groups in a point. Evaluation tended to follow the same pattern and many candidates related their sociological understanding of media stereotyping to their own media experiences.