SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 0495/11
Paper 11
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Key messages

- In the source related **Question (1c)** candidates should make a link to the source first and then move on to describe and unpack the issues.
- In questions requiring a specific number of points candidates should signal when they are moving from one point to another, for example by simply enumerating 'firstly … secondly' and so on.
- In **Questions 2 or 3 (d)** candidates should focus less on description and more on explaining reasons why.
- When developing points in essay-style questions candidates should try to unpack concepts and examples, linking back to the question at the end of the point or paragraph.

General comments

In general most candidates were able to engage well with the question paper and demonstrate relevant knowledge of sociological issues, concepts and theories. There were relatively few rubric errors and no-responses. In *Section A* candidates appeared to be able to understand and interpret the source and to discuss the merits and problems linked with the aspects methodology being examined, with varying degrees of accuracy. Some candidates need to have a clearer understanding of how to use the source to maximum effect in **Question 1c** in order to achieve higher marks in the question. In the essay-style questions elaborate introductions are unnecessary, though a well-formulated critical conclusion can enable candidates who make a range of developed points to achieve higher in the top bands. In the optional questions generally sound subject knowledge was in evidence. High achieving candidates develop points and arguments in a mature way referencing concepts, examples and, where appropriate, sociological theory.

Section A

Question 1

(a) Almost all candidates were able to identify the two countries from the source and gain the full two marks.

(b) Many candidates successfully identified two reasons for conducting a pilot study. Popular answers identified it as a check to see whether questions or methods work, to identify ethical issues and to save time and money in the event that the research proved unviable.

(c) The most successful responses focused on issues linked to the global nature of the research in the source. Some candidates described practical issues linked to collecting information from countries around the world, such as time and cost. Others linked examples of countries in the source to the problem of accessing credible and accurate data. Less successful answers either only made one valid point or made points which did not link in any way to the source.

(d) This question drew a generally good response. Answers which gained full marks described problems with open questions such as they do not yield statistics or patterns as qualitative, rather than quantitative, data is gained; or that they are more difficult or time-consuming to analyse. Some candidates merely identified problems but did not describe them or identified issues such as the interviewer effect and bias which are not specific to open questions.

(e) Reponses to this question were mixed. Some candidates achieved good marks by focusing on the fact that feminists have uncovered previously hidden discrimination and have successfully campaigned for women's rights resulting in widespread social change. Limitations which featured

strongly included the fact that feminism itself is divided, that they neglect other areas of social inequality or that feminists are often seen as being anti-male. Candidates who did less well did not engage with the question in that they simply described the exploitation of women or how women have more equality, without engaging directly with feminist views.

(f)   The majority of candidates showed a good understanding of ethical issues but some struggled to explain why these were problems for researchers. More successful responses examined issues such as the necessity for a covert approach to gain valid data in some areas of research, which then led inevitably to deception and lack of consent. Others identified the difficulty of avoiding distress or safeguarding privacy when interviewing on sensitive topics. Weaker responses simply described an ethical issue, for example, deception without explaining why this was a problem for sociological researchers. A small minority of candidates did not appear to know what ethical issues were.

(g)   Most candidates understood the principle of sampling and were able to discuss some of the main types in terms of their representativeness. Better quality responses organised a good range of points in discrete paragraphs and linked back to the issue of representativeness. Popular points linked representative approaches to large sample and stratified and quota sampling and less representative sampling to small sample groups and techniques such as snowball and random. Many responses were limited to mid-band two simply because of an insufficient number of points being made. Answers which were very brief and/or common-sense scored poorly.

Section B

Question 2

(a)   The vast majority of candidates scored at least one mark here. The best responses gave a clear definition of 'custom'. Those who lost a mark often successfully linked the idea with 'tradition' or 'norms' but did not give a complete description.

(b)   A wide range of answers was possible on this question. Candidates who scored full marks often identified specific rewards (such a promotion or verbal praise) and then went on to describe how they are effective in promoting conformity. Popular responses included as motivation and encouragement, getting public or group recognition and acceptance. A minority of candidates included a description of various negative sanctions which did not answer the question.

(c)   This question was generally answered well with accurate knowledge of how different agencies of secondary socialisation transmit norms. Candidates who scored highly identified agencies, such as education, and then described a process by which this agency transmits norms such as the hidden curriculum. Answers that engaged conceptually on all points were able to achieve full marks. Responses that did not include properly developed points or made only one or two basic points scored less well.

(d)   This question drew some interesting responses though many responses only achieved middle marks. The better quality responses focused on the desire to preserve original culture, as a reaction to discrimination from the host community and the fact they had been socialised into certain norms and values which then proved difficult to change. Weaker responses contained either only one or two points or points made were only partially developed. Responses do not need to include a definition of the key terms to achieve full marks.

(e)   There was a mixed response to this question. There was some good theoretical engagement, particularly with Marxist ideas about class identity. Issues to do with dress and appearance, education, negative labelling from the middle and upper classes featured prominently in support of a distinct working class identity. In evaluation some candidates made interesting points about globalisation or global culture and the fact that today status is achieved as society is meritocratic and therefore working class individuals can achieve social mobility and a different identity. Weaker responses contained either only one or two points or points made were only partially developed.

A few responses were one-sided arguing that peer groups having a good effect versus peer groups having a negative effect, rather than against points being other agencies. In addition, arguments for peer group socialisation tended to be weaker than the arguments offered for other agencies. However, a good range of agencies were used in evaluation. Many answers tended to be unbalanced in terms of the quality of the arguments offered. Some answers also centred more on

social control rather than socialisation and in a minority of cases socialisation was confused with group interaction. There was a good use of concepts generally.

Section C

Question 3

(a)   Whilst most candidates made some correct link to the culture of poverty, many did not offer a concise sociological definition. Candidates achieving full marks described it in terms of norms and values or lifestyle that kept an individual poor.

(b)   Many candidates gained full marks here by focusing on absolute and relative poverty.

(c)   Candidates were able to draw upon a range of examples to show how poverty affects life chances. Popular responses included the fact that it shapes health outcomes, life expectancy and educational opportunities, how some become stuck in a poverty trap or fall into a culture of poverty. Candidates who scored the highest marks made several points and developed their explanations conceptually.

(d)   Many candidates scored in the mid-range of marks available for this question. Popular points included the fact that the welfare state had created an underclass which was typified by a culture of poverty and anti-social values. Others noted the fact that structural factors meant that many on benefits could not escape from a poverty trap or poverty cycle. To score in the top mark band candidates needed to make a range of developed and conceptual points. Candidates who did less well made tangential points about the aim of the welfare state or even what the welfare state is doing to promote greater equality.

(e)   Most candidates who answered this question demonstrated a good level of understanding of the debate surrounding racial discrimination in modern industrial societies, with varying degrees of accuracy and perceptiveness. In favour of the question many made reference to anti-discrimination laws, meritocratic society, evidence of social mobility and role models emerging from minority ethnic groups. On the other side continued institutional racism and segregation, ethnocentrism in education and discrimination in the job market featured prominently. There were relatively few one-sided answers. Candidates who scored less well tended to make fewer developed points.

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| Paper 0495/12 |
| Paper 12 |

Key messages

- In *Section A* candidates should take care when using the source. It should be used directly for **Questions 1a** and **1c** rather than other questions in the section for which the source may not be directly relevant (for **example 1b**).
- In two questions candidates were asked to comment on the validity of research. Candidates should have a clear understanding of the key evaluative concepts (validity, reliability, representativeness and generalisability) which they can apply to appropriate methods.
- When answering the longer evaluative questions candidates should refer back to the question at the end of each developed point to avoid largely descriptive answers.
- In essay questions (15 mark questions) candidates should aim to write an evaluative conclusion that makes a judgement and gives support or justification for that judgement rather than ending with a purely summative comment.
- A number of candidates provided unnecessarily lengthy responses for 2 and 4 mark questions, sometimes resulting in shorter responses on the more demanding, higher mark questions. Candidates would benefit from having a clearer idea of an appropriate length of answer based on the number of marks awarded.

General comments

Overall many candidates were well prepared to answer questions across the three sections. *Section B* ('Culture, identity and socialisation') was more popular than *section C* ('Social inequality'). There were a very small number of candidates who answered both optional questions which is not necessary. There were also very few 'No Response'. The source and stimulus material appeared to be well understood by most candidates. Many candidates showed a good understanding of sociological concepts and were able to describe both strengths and weaknesses of various research methods and also theoretical perspectives. Weaker responses tended to rely on common sense rather than sociological knowledge. Some candidates link different concepts together in a purely formulaic way, such as 'this makes the research both valid and reliable'. Candidates should ensure that they are using such terms correctly and in the right context. There were some high quality optional essays which demonstrated a range of developed and evidenced points on both sides of the answer. Candidates should ensure that they develop points fully and separate arguments out into different paragraphs.

Section A

Question 1

(a)   Many candidates were able to identify the methods from the source and score full marks. The most common error was interviews and laboratory experiment. Some answered by reference to sampling and 'qualitative' or 'quantitative' methods which were not creditworthy as they did not feature directly in the source.

(b)   There was a mixed response to this question. Many candidates identified issues linked to the context of the question (being interviewed about your job) such as not being open due to fear of losing employment or being embarrassed when being asked about income etc. Those that scored less well tended to give a generic point, such as 'researcher effect' but without a link to the job context. Some candidates confused interviewer effect with the Hawthorne effect and/or referred to source A in their response. A number of responses were unnecessarily lengthy.

(c) The majority of candidates were able to describe the Hawthorne effect as one factor affecting the validity of the research in source A. Weaker responses only identified one factor. A few candidates identified possible validity factors surrounding experiments, including the naturalistic environment. Some responses discussed problems without any reference to the source material.

(d) This question was generally answered well with many candidates able to describe two strengths of telephone questionnaires. Practical issues of time and cost and access to a geographically dispersed sample were common correct answers.

(e) Many candidates achieved very good marks here. Popular responses included the researcher being able to clarify questions and the fact that quantitative data could be gained as strengths whilst possible researcher effect and the inability to probe further or achieve detailed qualitative data as limitations. Weaker responses featured incomplete descriptions of identified points.

(f) This question proved to be a demanding question for candidates. Better quality responses focused on issues to do with gaining trust, a naturalistic setting, avoiding the Hawthorne effect (if covert) and verstehen/gaining an insider's point of view when joining in activities. Whilst the majority of candidates knew what participant observation is, some did not effectively link it to validity. Weaker responses had an insufficient range of developed points. Some weaker responses evaluated the method and gave a series of negative points.

(g) As might be expected on a 15 mark question there was a wide range in the quality of answers. There were some excellent responses which engaged fully with the debate, were focused on the question and addressed the 'to what extent' element – often with a wide range of arguments and an impressive array of concepts. Most responses showed some degree of conceptual engagement. Many candidates showed a good understanding of different elements within the functionalist view of society such as the organic analogy, the importance of socialisation and social control and the idea of meritocracy. Many responses also contrasted functionalism with Marxism and feminism – with varying degrees of accuracy – rather than offer criticisms of functionalism. Others were able to discuss ideas about functionalism and alternative perspectives, without assessing whether 'it is correct'. Often candidates provided more basic descriptions of some aspects of functionalism and some responses were one-sided or limited in scope. There were a few 'No responses' to this part of the question.

Section B

Question 2

(a) Many candidates correctly understood the meaning of the term 'social identity' picking out the two elements of how a person sees themself and how others see them. Most responses included at least a partial definition or gave examples.

(b) Candidates responded well to this question overall with many successfully identifying and describing processes, often with good use of sociological terms. Primary and secondary socialisation and canalisation and manipulation featured frequently. Weaker responses were partial or the descriptions were vague. Some responses needed to be clearer in distinguishing between 'processes' of socialisation (as referred to in the question) and 'agencies'.

(c) Although there were some good responses to the question about how conformity is rewarded in the workplace, many focused on describing conformity in general via an introduction and 'listing' rewards without explanation. Candidates should include a number of points and develop each separately. Many answers lacked conceptual engagement; concepts such as norms, socialisation, values, social control and sanctions could be easily integrated. Weaker responses misunderstood the question and discussed negative sanctions and non-conformity in the workplace.

(d) Whilst there were some good responses here, many candidates demonstrated a basic knowledge and understanding of why patterns of socialisation may be different in different social classes. A majority of candidates focused on material factors, life chances, money and the experience or affordability of education. Some candidates did not explicitly link their points back to socialisation. Better responses were able to discuss the culture of the underclass, socialisation via language and the different values different classes place on education, work etc.

(e) Some responses demonstrated a strong grasp of the argument that class is the most important factor in creating social identity. The better answers assessed the 'to what extent' element, discussing a variety of ideas, utilising Marxism and focusing on cultural capital and material deprivation. These ideas were then often contrasting with ideas about ethnicity, gender, age and postmodernist ideas (although not necessarily labelled as such) regarding identity. Often there was a very good use of sociological terms. Weaker responses referred to 'status' and 'respect' and were mainly descriptive rather than engaging with the debate. Some referred to the nature-nurture debate and socialisation. Weaker responses were limited, vague or relied on common sense.

Section C

Question 3

(a) Some candidates were able to score full marks here by accurately describing the situation of those in poverty who are unable to escape from it despite their own efforts. Responses that scored one mark either described poverty or, on occasion, the poverty cycle or the culture of poverty. There were also some tautological responses i.e. 'when you are trapped in poverty'.

(b) Most candidates responded well and demonstrated good sociological knowledge, accurately describing class and gender inequalities. Weaker responses did not describe types of inequality and simply stated 'income' or 'education' for example.

(c) Better responses to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of how sociologists might use absolute poverty, relative poverty and the poverty line. Some referred to global measurements. Overall, however, candidates did not respond well to the demands of this question and discussed broad indicators of poverty such as income and occupation. Some candidates described methods that sociologists might use to research poverty rather than measure it.

(d) Some responses demonstrated a good understanding – mainly referring to life chances in terms of education, job opportunities, housing and healthcare. The best answers offered clear comparisons between the children of professional workers and working class children. However, many responses were descriptive rather than explaining why life chances might be worse/better in the two groups.

(e) Although there were some exceptions, overall candidates did not respond well to this challenging question. Some candidates discussed reasons for social exclusion rather than the extent to which poverty is a result of it, others 'reversed' the question and discussed how social exclusion is a result of poverty. In some cases, candidates gave reasons for poverty (often with good knowledge and understanding) resulting in one-sided responses.

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│         Paper 0495/13           │
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Key messages

- In the source related **Question (1c)** candidates should make a link to the source first and then move on to describe and unpack the issues.
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- When developing points in essay-style questions candidates should try to unpack concepts and examples, linking back to the question at the end of the point or paragraph.

General comments

In general most candidates were able to engage well with the question paper and demonstrate relevant knowledge of sociological issues, concepts and theories. There were relatively few rubric errors and no-responses. In *Section A* candidates appeared to be able to understand and interpret the source and to discuss the merits and problems linked with the aspects methodology being examined, with varying degrees of accuracy. Some candidates need to have a clearer understanding of how to use the source to maximum effect in **Question 1c** in order to achieve higher marks in the question. In the essay-style questions elaborate introductions are unnecessary, though a well-formulated critical conclusion can enable candidates who make a range of developed points to achieve higher in the top bands. In the optional questions generally sound subject knowledge was in evidence. High achieving candidates develop points and arguments in a mature way referencing concepts, examples and, where appropriate, sociological theory.

Section A

Question 1

(a)   Almost all candidates were able to identify the two countries from the source and gain the full two marks.

(b)   Many candidates successfully identified two reasons for conducting a pilot study. Popular answers identified it as a check to see whether questions or methods work, to identify ethical issues and to save time and money in the event that the research proved unviable.

(c)   The most successful responses focused on issues linked to the global nature of the research in the source. Some candidates described practical issues linked to collecting information from countries around the world, such as time and cost. Others linked examples of countries in the source to the problem of accessing credible and accurate data. Less successful answers either only made one valid point or made points which did not link in any way to the source.

(d)   This question drew a generally good response. Answers which gained full marks described problems with open questions such as they do not yield statistics or patterns as qualitative, rather than quantitative, data is gained; or that they are more difficult or time-consuming to analyse. Some candidates merely identified problems but did not describe them or identified issues such as the interviewer effect and bias which are not specific to open questions.

(e)   Reponses to this question were mixed. Some candidates achieved good marks by focusing on the fact that feminists have uncovered previously hidden discrimination and have successfully campaigned for women's rights resulting in widespread social change. Limitations which featured

strongly included the fact that feminism itself is divided, that they neglect other areas of social inequality or that feminists are often seen as being anti-male. Candidates who did less well did not engage with the question in that they simply described the exploitation of women or how women have more equality, without engaging directly with feminist views.

(f)   The majority of candidates showed a good understanding of ethical issues but some struggled to explain why these were problems for researchers. More successful responses examined issues such as the necessity for a covert approach to gain valid data in some areas of research, which then led inevitably to deception and lack of consent. Others identified the difficulty of avoiding distress or safeguarding privacy when interviewing on sensitive topics. Weaker responses simply described an ethical issue, for example, deception without explaining why this was a problem for sociological researchers. A small minority of candidates did not appear to know what ethical issues were.

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Section B

Question 2

(a)   The vast majority of candidates scored at least one mark here. The best responses gave a clear definition of 'custom'. Those who lost a mark often successfully linked the idea with 'tradition' or 'norms' but did not give a complete description.

(b)   A wide range of answers was possible on this question. Candidates who scored full marks often identified specific rewards (such a promotion or verbal praise) and then went on to describe how they are effective in promoting conformity. Popular responses included as motivation and encouragement, getting public or group recognition and acceptance. A minority of candidates included a description of various negative sanctions which did not answer the question.

(c)   This question was generally answered well with accurate knowledge of how different agencies of secondary socialisation transmit norms. Candidates who scored highly identified agencies, such as education, and then described a process by which this agency transmits norms such as the hidden curriculum. Answers that engaged conceptually on all points were able to achieve full marks. Responses that did not include properly developed points or made only one or two basic points scored less well.

(d)   This question drew some interesting responses though many responses only achieved middle marks. The better quality responses focused on the desire to preserve original culture, as a reaction to discrimination from the host community and the fact they had been socialised into certain norms and values which then proved difficult to change. Weaker responses contained either only one or two points or points made were only partially developed. Responses do not need to include a definition of the key terms to achieve full marks.

(e)   There was a mixed response to this question. There was some good theoretical engagement, particularly with Marxist ideas about class identity. Issues to do with dress and appearance, education, negative labelling from the middle and upper classes featured prominently in support of a distinct working class identity. In evaluation some candidates made interesting points about globalisation or global culture and the fact that today status is achieved as society is meritocratic and therefore working class individuals can achieve social mobility and a different identity. Weaker responses contained either only one or two points or points made were only partially developed.

A few responses were one-sided arguing that peer groups having a good effect versus peer groups having a negative effect, rather than against points being other agencies. In addition, arguments for peer group socialisation tended to be weaker than the arguments offered for other agencies. However, a good range of agencies were used in evaluation. Many answers tended to be unbalanced in terms of the quality of the arguments offered. Some answers also centred more on

social control rather than socialisation and in a minority of cases socialisation was confused with group interaction. There was a good use of concepts generally.

Section C

Question 3

(a) Whilst most candidates made some correct link to the culture of poverty, many did not offer a concise sociological definition. Candidates achieving full marks described it in terms of norms and values or lifestyle that kept an individual poor.

(b) Many candidates gained full marks here by focusing on absolute and relative poverty.

(c) Candidates were able to draw upon a range of examples to show how poverty affects life chances. Popular responses included the fact that it shapes health outcomes, life expectancy and educational opportunities, how some become stuck in a poverty trap or fall into a culture of poverty. Candidates who scored the highest marks made several points and developed their explanations conceptually.

(d) Many candidates scored in the mid-range of marks available for this question. Popular points included the fact that the welfare state had created an underclass which was typified by a culture of poverty and anti-social values. Others noted the fact that structural factors meant that many on benefits could not escape from a poverty trap or poverty cycle. To score in the top mark band candidates needed to make a range of developed and conceptual points. Candidates who did less well made tangential points about the aim of the welfare state or even what the welfare state is doing to promote greater equality.

(e) Most candidates who answered this question demonstrated a good level of understanding of the debate surrounding racial discrimination in modern industrial societies, with varying degrees of accuracy and perceptiveness. In favour of the question many made reference to anti-discrimination laws, meritocratic society, evidence of social mobility and role models emerging from minority ethnic groups. On the other side continued institutional racism and segregation, ethnocentrism in education and discrimination in the job market featured prominently. There were relatively few one-sided answers. Candidates who scored less well tended to make fewer developed points.

SOCIOLOGY

| Paper 0495/21 |
| Paper 21 |

Key messages

A significant number of very strong candidate responses were seen during this November marking session, showing clear engagement with sociological issues, theory and contemporary topics and debates. Many candidates are thinking sociologically and successfully applying their classroom knowledge to the specific examination questions. Relevant, contemporary, cultural and local examples were often used alongside the more traditional 'textbook' examples in order to substantiate many of the points made. Theories and sociological concepts were very well used by some candidates. Very few rubric errors were seen in this examination session which is excellent as this allows candidates to maximise their chances of success.

● Responses should specifically addresses the issues raised in the questions rather than adopting an 'everything I know about …' approach.
● Responses should include reference to sociological terminology, theory and concepts where relevant. Using sociological terms will raise the overall quality of the answer and will allow access to the higher mark bands if applied accurately.
● It is advisable to make a plan for answering the specific questions asked, in particular the 15 mark questions, to ensure that answers remain focused on the question.
● It is advised that answers are structured with paragraphs, a good idea is to have one extended and developed point per paragraph.
● Introductions and definitions of key terms at the beginning of **(c)**, **(d)** and **(e)** questions take up valuable time and do not gain marks, they are not needed at all in parts **(c)** and **(d)** and do not really add to the quality of response in part **(e)** questions. Conclusions are similarly unnecessary in part **(c)** and **(d)** questions but are expected in the part **(e)** evaluative essay questions.
● Responses should not include a description of things that the question does not ask for.
● Candidates should be familiar with all key terms from the syllabus in order to provide answers to questions.
● Candidates should use the marks per question as guidance for how much is to be written and how long should be spent on a particular question. Some candidates, for example, were writing half a page for a part **(a)** question worth 2 marks and the same for a part **(e)** question worth 15 marks. Time needs to be well managed in order to maximise the marks awarded.
● On part **(e)** questions there should be a balanced argument that considers both sides of the debate. The response needs to include a range of points for each side (three points for each side of the debate is recommended) that are well developed and evidence based, with a justified conclusion. Conceptual/theoretical engagement is expected in bands 3 and 4. One sided responses cannot get beyond band 2.
● In the part **(e)** questions, very good candidates often did not include a conclusion to the debate– they discussed points for and against without attempting an overview or a judgment. A conclusion is required in this essay style question in order to reach the highest marks available and is where the candidate should ensure that they have answered the specific question set and have thus made a judgement upon it.
● For the **(c)** and **(d)** questions candidates need to be able to develop points in order to achieve the higher levels, in some instances answers were list-like which limits the amount of marks that can be awarded. Also a range of points is crucial here; many answers tended to be too narrowly focused, a minimum of three different points should be made and developed.
● In the part **(b)** questions the answer should be developed as the command word is to describe, not just to list or state.

General comments

The least answered option was **Section D** (the media). **Section A** (family) was by far the most popular option with most candidates answering from this section of the examination paper.

Most candidates seemed to be aware of the need to look at both sides of the argument for the 15 mark questions which helps them to access the higher marks.

There were few answers based on 'common sense'. Most responses demonstrated some understanding of the sociological approach.

There were very few rubric errors and the overwhelming majority of candidates answered the correct number of questions. A few responses were wrongly labelled – it is important for responses to be labelled with the correct question number.

In the part **(a)** question, responses should include **two** separate elements in their definition, e.g. 'private school'– define the idea of the lack of state involvement in the education system and supplement this with the idea of it being funded through parental fees. Part **(b)** questions need two distinctly different points – it is good practice to separate and label these clearly e.g. 1) and 2). In part **(c)** questions more than two points should be made, evidenced and developed. For part **(d)** the same approach taken for part **(c)** should be adopted but develop points further, consider more range and ensure concepts/theory are used appropriately. In terms of the 15 mark part **(e)** questions, candidates should organise their answers into paragraphs and develop each idea fully using theory, examples and/or concepts wherever relevant. The best answers tended to include three points for and three against the claim in the question. Each point should be directly focused on the question and should engage sociologically and conceptually wherever possible.

The best conclusions in the part **(e)** questions are more than a summing up of what had already been said; they will show the skill of evaluation of the evidence given, providing an answer to the 'To what extent?' part of the question. There was often, even in good answers, a lack of balance between the two sides of the argument.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 – The Family

This was the most popular question during this examination session, attempted by the vast majority of candidates.

(a)   Candidates generally understood the idea of a 'commune' well and were able to define it at least partially. Examples such as hippy communities and kibbutz's were used by some candidates to back up their point and create the second aspect to their answer. Others referred to the shared values/sense of community alongside the idea of shared living arrangements.

(b)   Most candidates were able to give two types of cohabitation, with common examples being a trial marriage, a long-term commitment/alternative to marriage or an intimate living arrangement with little commitment. A large number of responses did not link cohabitation to intimate relationships and instead described different types of families.

(c)   This was a well answered question with a wide range of different approaches being taken in order to explain the links between urbanisation and family life. Candidates typically focused on changes to family type and structure, working women and issues of privatisation.

(d)   This was generally answered well with a range of points made about the changing role of women, changing attitudes to equality, housework becoming easier because of new technology, the privatised nuclear family, feminism and female employment. There was a tendency in weaker answers to write at length about roles in the past, and also to describe symmetrical families rather than explain their increase.

(e)   As long as candidates understood the term 'patriarchal', most were able to engage with the question and to debate whether nuclear families fitted this form. On the 'for' side reference was often made to segregated conjugal roles, the dual burden, differences based on ethnicity/culture

and domestic violence. On the against side female independence linked to feminism was widely referred to as was the influence of working women, female success in education and changing legislation and attitudes. Some excellent answers were seen here.

Question 2 – Education

(a)   There was a high proportion of very good answers to this question, usually referring to the lack of state control and the paying of fees. Examples were often also used as the second element of the definition e.g. Eton/Harrow.

(b)   This was generally well answered with candidates well able to demonstrate good sociological knowledge and understanding of different types of schools found in society.

(c)   This question produced a range of answers of various qualities. Better answers linked IQ tests to educational experience e.g. through teacher labelling, setting, entry to particular schools etc. Weaker responses described what an IQ test was and the problems in its validity. Answers like these did not focus enough on the question to be successful.

(d)   A number of answers were written in general terms about school norms and values, but the majority focused on relevant explanations for why students may reject school's norms and values. These typically included anti-school sub-cultures, peer pressure, reactions to negative labelling, racism, ethnocentrism and working class resistance to the middle class nature of education. Some weaker responses lacked range or development.

(e)   This question produced answers of varying quality and relevance. There tended to be a debate formed between functionalism, Marxism and feminism which meant that responses were engaged well sociologically. On the 'for' side of the argument, there was often a limited range of points made, with some repetitive answers. The 'against' side was often the stronger one, with many conceptual and well substantiated answers seen, particularly in regards to Marxism and feminism. Only a very limited number of the best responses ended with a critical conclusion that addressed the 'to what extent' part of the question.

Question 3 – Crime and Deviance

(a)   This question was generally well answered with most candidates being able to link their point with Cohen and young people.

(b)   There were some really good answers seen here that focused specifically on the police recording aspect of the question and thus were well rewarded. Some weaker responses included no reference to police recording crime and instead answered why some crimes were not reported which did not answer the question.

(c)   There was a noticeable divide in this question between those candidates who were clear on the links between the media and deviancy amplification and those that were not. The better answers referred to examples of deviancy amplification (either in society or from sociological studies e.g. Cohen – the mods and the rockers, Young – the drug takers). There were a number of candidates who simply described deviancy amplification, failing to explain how this can be caused by the media. Again, it is crucial that candidates focus carefully upon the command words in the question in order to maximize their chances of success.

(d)   This question produced some excellent and extremely sociological answers. The most popular areas of discussion centred around gender roles, pressure to be the breadwinner, proving masculinity, increased opportunities and gang culture/peer pressure to gain status. Some responses included an explanation of why the trend that males commit more crime than females may be incorrect which was not relevant to the question.

(e)   Discussions of victim surveys were sometimes fairly brief and limited to the idea of asking about victimisation being a good thing. There were some incorrect responses stating that victim surveys were done by the police. Few responses differentiated between local and national victim surveys. Few responses included theory such as feminism or Left Realism. In better responses there was some good discussion about validity, accuracy when compared to other measurements of crime and some excellent judgements were seen, well substantiated by points made, in the conclusion to the answer.

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Question 4 – Media

(a)   There was some understanding of the idea of the powerful role of the audience in many responses but most responses only gave a partial definition. The idea of the media satisfying various needs came across only in a few of the strongest responses.

(b)   This question was mostly answered well; candidates were aware of key developments and described these clearly. A wide range of different approaches to the question were seen, all largely successful. Common responses were the advent of new media and digitalisation/the internet.

(c)   This was a question most candidates engaged with well. Weaker responses described the processes found in the family e.g. canalisation/manipulation with little real reference to the media which limited the marks awarded. The better responses considered ideas such as imitation, role modelling, morality and agenda setting and did so with some well chosen examples, typically concerning behaviour, fashion, body image and attitudes.

(d)   This was not a well answered question on the whole, producing several 'no responses'. A number of responses simply described ways the media affected the audience with only implicit links made to the question. Better responses used the media effects theories and/or sociological theories to demonstrate the lack of common understanding when it comes to the affects of the media on the audience, e.g. by comparing hypodermic needle, cultural effects and uses and gratifications theories.

(e)   This was a question that candidates of all abilities were able to engage with, albeit on different levels. Better responses used concepts, examples and sociological studies regarding stereotyping in the media. These typically involved gender, disability, ethnicity and/or social class. The weaker responses were more general without specific examples or explicit sociological engagement. Some responses had limited points on the 'against' side of the argument. There were some excellent answers that constructed a substantiated debate linked well with ideas about equality legislation, media subverting and challenging of stereotypes, new media and the audience as producer.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/22
Paper 22

Key messages

A significant number of very strong candidate responses were seen during this November marking session, showing clear engagement with sociological issues, theory and contemporary topics and debates. Many candidates are thinking sociologically and successfully applying their classroom knowledge to the specific examination questions. Relevant, contemporary, cultural and local examples were often used alongside the more traditional 'textbook' examples in order to substantiate many of the points made. Theories and sociological concepts were very well used by some candidates. Very few rubric errors were seen in this examination session which is excellent as this allows candidates to maximise their chances of success.

- Responses should specifically addresses the issues raised in the questions rather than adopting an 'everything I know about …' approach.
- Responses should include reference to sociological terminology, theory and concepts where relevant. Using sociological terms will raise the overall quality of the answer and will allow access to the higher mark bands if applied accurately.
- It is advisable to make a plan for answering the specific questions asked, in particular the 15 mark questions, to ensure that answers remain focused on the question.
- It is advised that answers are structured with paragraphs, a good idea is to have one extended and developed point per paragraph.
- Introductions and definitions of key terms at the beginning of **(c)**, **(d)** and **(e)** questions take up valuable time and do not gain marks, they are not needed at all in parts **(c)** and **(d)** and do not really add to the quality of response in part **(e)** questions. Conclusions are similarly unnecessary in part **(c)** and **(d)** questions but are expected in the part **(e)** evaluative essay questions.
- Responses should not include a description of things that the question does not ask for.
- Candidates should be familiar with all key terms from the syllabus in order to provide answers to questions.
- Candidates should use the marks per question as guidance for how much is to be written and how long should be spent on a particular question. Some candidates, for example, were writing half a page for a part **(a)** question worth 2 marks and the same for a part **(e)** question worth 15 marks. Time needs to be well managed in order to maximise the marks awarded.
- On part **(e)** questions there should be a balanced argument that considers both sides of the debate. The response needs to include a range of points for each side (three points for each side of the debate is recommended) that are well developed and evidence based, with a justified conclusion. Conceptual/theoretical engagement is expected in bands 3 and 4. One sided responses cannot get beyond band 2.
- In the part **(e)** questions, very good candidates often did not include a conclusion to the debate – they discussed points for and against without attempting an overview or a judgment. A conclusion is required in this essay style question in order to reach the highest marks available and is where the candidate should ensure that they have answered the specific question set and have thus made a judgement upon it.
- For the **(c)** and **(d)** questions candidates need to be able to develop points in order to achieve the higher levels, in some instances answers were list-like which limits the amount of marks that can be awarded. Also a range of points is crucial here; many answers tended to be too narrowly focused, a minimum of three different points should be made and developed.
- In the part **(b)** questions the answer should be developed as the command word is to describe, not just to list or state.

General comments

The least answered option was **Section D** (the media). **Section A** (family) was by far the most popular option with most candidates answering form this section of the examination paper.

Most candidates seemed to be aware of the need to look at both sides of the argument for the 15 mark questions which helps them to access the higher marks.

There were few answers based on 'common sense'. Most responses demonstrated some understanding of the sociological approach.

There were very few rubric errors and the overwhelming majority of candidates answered the correct number of questions. A few responses were wrongly labelled – it is important for responses to be labelled with the correct question number.

In the part **(a)** question, responses should include **two** separate elements in their definition, e.g. 'social mobility'– define the idea of the social hierarchy/social class system and supplement this with the idea of moving up or down it. Part **(b)** questions need two distinctly different points – it is good practice to separate and label these clearly e.g. 1) and 2). In part **(c)** questions more than two points should be made, evidenced and developed. For part **(d)** the same approach taken for part **(c)** should be adopted but develop points further, consider more range and ensure concepts/theory are used appropriately. In terms of the 15 mark part **(e)** questions, candidates should organise their answers into paragraphs and develop each idea fully using theory, examples and/or concepts wherever relevant. The best answers tended to include three points for and three against the claim in the question. Each point should be directly focused on the question and should engage sociologically and conceptually wherever possible.

The best conclusions in the part **(e)** questions are more than a summing up of what had already been said; they will show the skill of evaluation of the evidence given, providing an answer to the 'To what extent?' part of the question. There was often, even in good answers, a lack of balance between the two sides of the argument.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 – The Family

This was the most popular question during this examination session, attempted by the vast majority of candidates.

(a)   A considerable number of candidates took 'civil partnership' to mean civil (as opposed to religious) marriages. The majority of responses linked their definition well to same sex couples but often claimed that partnerships were the same as marriage rather than emphasizing the similarity of rights and status.

(b)   Most responses included two points. Many responses were brief and did not fully describe points made, or repeated ideas about roles in slightly different language across the two points which limited marks.

(c)   There were some 'no responses' seen for this question and many less successful answers because of a misinterpretation of the term 'cross cultural'. Some explained it as two people from different cultures getting married. Better responses discussed different family types either within modern societies (for example, types associated with different ethnic groups) or used relevant material about polygamy. The best answers had clear focus on the question, a good range of points and good sociological engagement.

(d)   This was generally answered well with a range of points made including the changing role of women, changing attitudes to equality, housework becoming easier because of new technology, the privatised nuclear family, feminism and female employment. Some answers included a lengthy passage about roles in the past, and also presented an aspect of roles today (e.g. more men helping with childcare and housework) as an explanation when there was no attempt to explain why this might be happening.

(e)   Many responses had a limited range of sociological theories or concepts, but most successfully addressed both sides of the argument, with a range of points seen about ways in which grandparents were or were not important (some choosing instead to look at whether grandparents were a positive or negative influence on families). Very few responses distinguished between grandmother and grandfather roles which could have led to further relevant material. Many responses included personal opinion in a non-sociological, anecdotal way which cannot be marked highly as it is not sociological or objective.

Question 2 – Education

(a)   There was a high proportion of very good answers to this question, usually referring to movement of individuals or groups up or down the social hierarchy or social class ladder.

(b)   This was generally well answered. The most common answers referred to rewards and punishments/sanctions (sometimes presented as a single point) and the hidden curriculum/socialisation. Some responses were repetitive, making the same point twice but perhaps with a different example e.g. two punishments and thus could not be credited for both. It is vital that the points made are significantly different.

(c)   This question proved challenging. Many responses discussed the issue in terms of individuals rather than social groups e.g. teacher favourites. Often points made were very general (positive teacher labelling etc.) and showed little real understanding, or were about negative discrimination. Better responses included discussion of examples of positive discrimination, e.g. girls being given first use of science equipment or additional funding for poorer students.

(d)   A number of answers were written in general terms, usually on the level of individuals getting jobs and good living standards. The vast majority of responses were good. Some good responses had a strong discussion of the importance of education, including ideas such as social mobility, social solidarity and national identity. The best answers were able to apply functionalist, Marxist and feminist theories to the question well.

(e)   Candidates generally did well in presenting several ways in which gender is an important factor in educational achievement. These points typically engaged with subject choices, teacher labelling, behaviour and stereotyping. A number of responses included some good material relating to social class and ethnicity. As 'social factors' these would be credited as points 'for' the debate. Answers were generally less successful in presenting alternatives e.g. the 'against' points or limited the other side of the argument to brief points about equality or intelligence. The answers that evaluated most successfully typically discussed meritocracy, equal opportunities, inherited intelligence and positive discrimination and gave these equal weight to the 'for' points. Some weaker responses included unnecessary explanations of how things were in the past.

Question 3 – Crime and Deviance

(a)   Some responses incorrectly defined victim surveys rather than self-report studies. Many responses defined the term as perpetrators giving information about things they had done, but at times confused sociological research with police investigations.

(b)   This was typically not a well answered question with many responses incorrectly interpreting the term 'relative'. Many misinterpreted it as being about the difference between crime and deviance. There were only a minority of relevant answers and some simply gave definitions of crime and deviance. Correct examples given linked to relativity of time/era, situation, culture, society etc. Some commonly seen examples included laws regarding alcohol in different societies, or acts that were criminal or deviant for some age groups but not others.

(c)   Use of relevant concepts such as deterrence, targeting and surveillance were well used in some responses. Many responses were brief including only points about the ability of the police to arrest people or to fine drivers for speeding. There was a marked tendency to not distinguish between the actions of the police and those of other formal agents such as the courts and prison system with some answers discussing types of punishment.

(d)   This was a question which produced a wide variety of answers. Many responses did not include an adequate explanation of what informal control methods were. Many responses explained formal methods such as capital punishment, exile or mutilation as examples which was not answering the

question. Better answers often made one point for each of several agencies of social control, such as the family, media and peers. This approach worked well in terms of ensuring there was no repetition whilst also enabling the introduction of relevant sociological terms and concepts with ease e.g. canalisation, agenda setting and peer pressure.

(e) Candidates engaged with this question in a variety of different ways. Discussions of status were sometimes fairly brief and limited to the idea that poor or unemployed people lacked status so therefore would turn to theft. Better answers displayed knowledge of relevant sociology such as the work of Cohen (status frustration) and Merton (strain theory). Answers tended to move quickly on to discuss a range of other explanations of crime, which were often better understood, such as labelling, masculinity and the role of the male provider and material deprivation. Sometimes alternative explanations were limited to biology (Lombroso) or psychology rather than sociology. Some responses presented material about, for example, masculinity rather than status, without making it clear which side of the argument the point was on.

Question 4 – Media

(a) Typical responses were partial, including the idea of controlling content. Responses that scored full marks often included an example – either a role e.g. editor, or a named person e.g. Rupert Murdoch.

(b) This question was mostly answered well; candidates were aware of key differences and responses made points that covered both traditional and new media, such as the level of interactivity, the form or the function.

(c) This was often a 'no response'. Better responses demonstrated good knowledge of different media models such as hypodermic syringe and cultural effects and a number of relevant examples were seen in discussion such as voting and levels of violence amongst children. Some weaker responses included material that was not relevant such as audience selection.

(d) This was generally answered well. Some responses showed good knowledge and understanding of Marxist views, though sometimes lacked the expected concepts. Common themes were inequalities of ownership, the power of advertising, ruling class ideologies and media as a form of diversion.

(e) Better responses used concepts, examples and sociological studies regarding ethnic minority stereotyping in the media. Weaker responses were typically more general. There was little application of the ideas in the question to the candidates' own experience of the media. The best responses constructed a substantiated debate linked well with ideas about equality legislation, new media and the audience as producer.

SOCIOLOGY

| Paper 0495/23 |
| Paper 23 |

Key messages

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<u>General comments</u>

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<u>Comments on specific questions</u>

Question 1 – The Family

This was the most popular question during this examination session, attempted by the vast majority of candidates.

(a) Candidates generally understood the idea of a 'commune' well and were able to define it at least partially. Examples such as hippy communities and kibbutz's were used by some candidates to back up their point and create the second aspect to their answer. Others referred to the shared values/sense of community alongside the idea of shared living arrangements.

(b) Most candidates were able to give two types of cohabitation, with common examples being a trial marriage, a long-term commitment/alternative to marriage or an intimate living arrangement with little commitment. A large number of responses did not link cohabitation to intimate relationships and instead described different types of families.

(c) This was a well answered question with a wide range of different approaches being taken in order to explain the links between urbanisation and family life. Candidates typically focused on changes to family type and structure, working women and issues of privatisation.

(d) This was generally answered well with a range of points made about the changing role of women, changing attitudes to equality, housework becoming easier because of new technology, the privatised nuclear family, feminism and female employment. There was a tendency in weaker answers to write at length about roles in the past, and also to describe symmetrical families rather than explain their increase.

(e) As long as candidates understood the term 'patriarchal', most were able to engage with the question and to debate whether nuclear families fitted this form. On the 'for' side reference was often made to segregated conjugal roles, the dual burden, differences based on ethnicity/culture

and domestic violence. On the against side female independence linked to feminism was widely referred to as was the influence of working women, female success in education and changing legislation and attitudes. Some excellent answers were seen here.

Question 2 – Education

(a)   There was a high proportion of very good answers to this question, usually referring to the lack of state control and the paying of fees. Examples were often also used as the second element of the definition e.g. Eton/Harrow.

(b)   This was generally well answered with candidates well able to demonstrate good sociological knowledge and understanding of different types of schools found in society.

(c)   This question produced a range of answers of various qualities. Better answers linked IQ tests to educational experience e.g. through teacher labelling, setting, entry to particular schools etc. Weaker responses described what an IQ test was and the problems in its validity. Answers like these did not focus enough on the question to be successful.

(d)   A number of answers were written in general terms about school norms and values, but the majority focused on relevant explanations for why students may reject school's norms and values. These typically included anti-school sub-cultures, peer pressure, reactions to negative labelling, racism, ethnocentrism and working class resistance to the middle class nature of education. Some weaker responses lacked range or development.

(e)   This question produced answers of varying quality and relevance. There tended to be a debate formed between functionalism, Marxism and feminism which meant that responses were engaged well sociologically. On the 'for' side of the argument, there was often a limited range of points made, with some repetitive answers. The 'against' side was often the stronger one, with many conceptual and well substantiated answers seen, particularly in regards to Marxism and feminism. Only a very limited number of the best responses ended with a critical conclusion that addressed the 'to what extent' part of the question.

Question 3 – Crime and Deviance

(a)   This question was generally well answered with most candidates being able to link their point with Cohen and young people.

(b)   There were some really good answers seen here that focused specifically on the police recording aspect of the question and thus were well rewarded. Some weaker responses included no reference to police recording crime and instead answered why some crimes were not reported which did not answer the question.

(c)   There was a noticeable divide in this question between those candidates who were clear on the links between the media and deviancy amplification and those that were not. The better answers referred to examples of deviancy amplification (either in society or from sociological studies e.g. Cohen – the mods and the rockers, Young – the drug takers). There were a number of candidates who simply described deviancy amplification, failing to explain how this can be caused by the media. Again, it is crucial that candidates focus carefully upon the command words in the question in order to maximize their chances of success.

(d)   This question produced some excellent and extremely sociological answers. The most popular areas of discussion centred around gender roles, pressure to be the breadwinner, proving masculinity, increased opportunities and gang culture/peer pressure to gain status. Some responses included an explanation of why the trend that males commit more crime than females may be incorrect which was not relevant to the question.

(e)   Discussions of victim surveys were sometimes fairly brief and limited to the idea of asking about victimisation being a good thing. There were some incorrect responses stating that victim surveys were done by the police. Few responses differentiated between local and national victim surveys. Few responses included theory such as feminism or Left Realism. In better responses there was some good discussion about validity, accuracy when compared to other measurements of crime and some excellent judgements were seen, well substantiated by points made, in the conclusion to the answer.

Question 4 – Media

(a)   There was some understanding of the idea of the powerful role of the audience in many responses but most responses only gave a partial definition. The idea of the media satisfying various needs came across only in a few of the strongest responses.

(b)   This question was mostly answered well; candidates were aware of key developments and described these clearly. A wide range of different approaches to the question were seen, all largely successful. Common responses were the advent of new media and digitalisation/the internet.

(c)   This was a question most candidates engaged with well. Weaker responses described the processes found in the family e.g. canalisation/manipulation with little real reference to the media which limited the marks awarded. The better responses considered ideas such as imitation, role modelling, morality and agenda setting and did so with some well chosen examples, typically concerning behaviour, fashion, body image and attitudes.

(d)   This was not a well answered question on the whole, producing several 'no responses'. A number of responses simply described ways the media affected the audience with only implicit links made to the question. Better responses used the media effects theories and/or sociological theories to demonstrate the lack of common understanding when it comes to the affects of the media on the audience, e.g. by comparing hypodermic needle, cultural effects and uses and gratifications theories.

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