

# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 2251/12

Paper 12

## Key Messages

- Questions requiring the straightforward identification of a feature and application of knowledge were well answered, while questions requiring more analysis needed more sociological support with examples and discussion.
- Candidates need to be clear about the meaning of the concepts of ethnicity, gender and religion.

In the compulsory question

- Questions requiring a specific number of answers would benefit from candidates numbering their answer or leaving a blank space between them. This would make it clearer how many examples have been given and eliminate confusion caused by points running together that repeat the same, or similar, information.

In the optional questions

- In part **(a)** repeating the question back is an unsatisfactory way of defining a term.
- To score full marks in part **(b)** it is necessary to identify a process and then offer some elaboration of it.
- In part **(c)** responses many candidates provided generalised answers but these questions are more stretching and require more development and greater use of examples. However, they do not require evaluation.
- Part **(d)** questions need to be supported by two arguments and offer some assessment of the question as written in order to access the higher mark bands. Many able candidates would have done better if they had included more development in their answers.

## General comments

Responses to this paper were given in a variety of ways. The very best answers displayed excellent sociological knowledge which was supported by reference to theory and offered detailed analysis. Most candidates answered the correct amount of questions. A few candidates answered all questions from the paper. A number of candidates left some sections from questions they had answered blank.

Evaluation of sociological material was evident in the best answers with detailed application of knowledge in parts **(c)** and **(d)** of the optional questions highlighting the fact that candidates from many Centres had been well prepared, especially for the compulsory question. However, a number of candidates showed limited understanding of the terms that they needed to define.

Some weaker candidates displayed a tendency to repeat back the question given in part **(a)** as their definition answer. Just using the words in the question shows insufficient knowledge of sociological terms. Likewise if a question asks for two examples then giving more than two does not gain a candidate additional marks. Candidates should pay particular attention to the marks awarded for questions and this should be reflected in the length and detail of their answers. A number of candidates giving two reasons in an answer ran both parts together making it very difficult to decide how many points had been made.

Part **(c)** of the optional questions asks candidates to explain a social phenomenon; some candidates not only did that but then evaluated which is not needed in this part.

Candidates must consider analysis in their response, particularly to part (d) of the optional questions. The inclusion of more concepts, studies, theory and material such as laws from specific societies would develop this. However, there was some excellent use of theory by gifted candidates and some clear application of sociological material to the questions as set.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Section A**

##### **Question 1**

- (a) (i) Most candidates could give an example of what a personal document was but some candidates struggled to define it. A common error was to see it as either a piece of secondary data, a historical document or a document that had been produced by earlier research.
- (ii) Many candidates understood the nature of a hypothesis and there were many succinct and accurate definitions.
- (iii) Many candidates defined subjectivity well in relation to the bias of the researcher. A common error was to define it as the subject of the research.
- (b) Most candidates described two reasons why research data may lack validity. A common error was to assert that it may have been subject to bias but to not explain why that was so.
- (c) Most candidates described two ways of collecting primary data. Some answers were limited by only identifying one method and then giving no description. An error made by a small number of candidates was to name qualitative/quantitative as methods or to say it is a survey. Some candidates included extra unnecessary information describing the strengths of the method being described.
- (d) Some candidates assumed that secondary data must be official statistics and although they are a form of secondary data candidates who did this limited the range of their answers. A common error was to link strengths and limitations to unsupported assertions about time and cost and these answers were limited. Better answers identified a factor and developed it.
- (e) Many candidates struggled with the concept of personal documents and therefore found this question challenging. A common error was to use newspapers or historical documents as types of personal documents. Some candidates argued that a strength of personal documents was that they saved time and then that they cost time as a limitation.
- (f) Candidates responded well to this question and there were many excellent answers. An error made by a few candidates was to argue that a limitation of official statistics was that they could not be recorded in numerical form.

#### **Section B**

##### **Question 2**

- (a) Clear definitions of gender were given by most candidates but a common error was to define it as biology.
- (b) Most candidates gave two, developed, appropriate examples. Some were weakly linked to the socialisation of boys and girls or relied on just one gender. An error made by a few candidates was to describe different adult roles or the difference between primary and secondary socialisation without showing how the process of gender socialisation takes place.

- (c) Many candidates produced competent responses to this question. There were many who focused on a range of ways in which the socialisation process is different for boys and girls in relation to the family, education, peer group, media and religion. The best answers pointed out differences to be found within cultures in relation to class as well as between cultures. A very small number of candidates highlighted the similarities to be found in relation to language and learning norms and values in the socialisation of both boys and girls. A small number made the error of thinking that socialisation referred to socialising.
- (d) Some candidates answered this question well and linked the way in which the opportunities available to females were limited by the way that they had been socialised both in their families and in schools. Some also noted the changes that may be occurring in some societies. A common error was to outline the way in which the opportunities of females in society can be limited compared to males but not to refer this back to socialisation. Some competent and interesting answers also highlighted how other factors such as social class and ethnicity could have more importance in influencing the life chances of females. An error made by a few candidates was to interpret life chances as purely in terms of life expectancy.

### Question 3

- (a) Candidates understood the meaning of laws but a common error was to interpret them just as rules unrelated to officials.
- (b) Most candidates did describe two agencies of social control but many ignored the instruction in the question to exclude the legal system.
- (c) Many candidates explained the functionalist view of consensus and how the laws benefit all members of society. The most comprehensive answers identified groups from different parts of the stratification system and how the functionalist view fitted them. There were some excellent descriptions of the functionalist view of society as a human body. Some very able candidates made the error of evaluating this functionalist view by comparison to Marxism and this was not a requirement of the question.
- (d) The majority of candidates outlined the way in which society (or societies) operates in favour of the ruling class. There were some good comparisons made between the legal systems in different types of societies such as totalitarian and democratic regimes. Few candidates linked their answer specifically to the way in which the legal system may or may not be linked to the ruling class.

### Section C

#### Question 4

- (a) Most candidates defined this well as mobility within one person's lifetime but a significant number confused inter- and intra-generational mobility.
- (b) Many candidates gave two examples of mobility whether up or down between generations. Other answers made reference to mobility being due to being reborn or describing why it could not happen in closed societies.
- (c) Answers to this question tended to relate to problems in gaining social mobility in general rather than concentrating on why some groups are able to be socially mobile. Education as a factor in enabling mobility featured in many responses and better ones focused on specific groups such as some ethnic minorities in some societies. Some candidates explained why people could not rather than why they could be socially mobile. Other answers focused on why individuals could be mobile through luck or by marriage rather than the mobility of groups. To their credit some candidates related this question to the nature of open and closed societies.
- (d) A common error was to overlook the issue of employment raised in the question. Many candidates described who was able to be socially mobile but did not link this mobility to employment. Better answers looked at a range of issues including the change from primary to other types of employment, or changes in technology, female employment, anti-discriminatory employment and such issues as proletarianisation, skilling and deskilling.

### Question 5

- (a) The best answers clearly described the meaning of racism as an attitude. Some answers confused this with racist actions and a very small number described it as being against females.
- (b) Most candidates successfully identified two racist actions, the best of which were specific. Although Apartheid in South Africa was correctly identified, some candidates gave the impression of it being a current and not a historical occurrence. Another common error was to identify a sexist action or one of religious discrimination as racial discrimination.
- (c) There was a fundamental misunderstanding of the meaning of the question by some candidates who described legal measures that governments should take to eliminate racism. The question specifically said the law should be omitted. Answers also included general statements of worthy things, e.g. governments could try to encourage racial harmony such as getting people of all races to mix together but few identified/suggested/mentioned specific measures such as introducing a multicultural curriculum and positive discrimination.
- (d) Some candidates produced valid responses with detailed material showing how racism is still to be found in society as well as the ways in which it has been diminished in many societies. One common error was to explain why it still exists rather than if it still exists. Many candidates were able to support their answers with specific details such as the death of Stephen Lawrence and the election of Barack Obama.

### Section D

#### Question 6

- (a) Most candidates who answered this question offered a correct definition.
- (b) Many candidates gave good descriptions of promotional and defensive pressure groups or alternatively described insider and outsider groups and both approaches were acceptable.
- (c) Some candidates gave good explanations why some pressure groups are able to use their wealth or social position to gain influence but very few showed a sound understanding of the concept of lobbying.
- (d) There were many excellent explanations of how democratic governments do represent all of their people. Good use was made of the role of pressure groups between elections and the ability to get rid of governments who do not please. Although very little evaluation of this view was given from a theoretical standpoint such as Marxist or elitist theory some candidates made good reference to feminist theory and democracies being patriarchal. Another successful approach was to quote the British Parliament abolishing capital punishment in the face of every opinion poll which shows a majority of the British people were in favour of it.

#### Question 7

- (a) Secret ballot was a term which most candidates understood.
- (b) Many candidates identified two ways in which voters cast their vote such as by putting paper in a box or raising their hands rather than identifying voting systems such as proportional representation.
- (c) Many candidates gave detailed responses to this question but limited themselves to identifying reasons why people do not vote rather than concentrating on reasons why young people do not vote such as lack of political education. A common error was to state that many young people do not have a vote.
- (d) In contrast to part (c) many answers to this question were detailed and accurate. The role of political socialisation was well addressed and contrasted to other influences on voting behaviour such as social position, ethnicity and gender. The role of corruption in influencing voting behaviour was highlighted in many answers and many were supported by reference to recent events.

# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 2251/13

Paper 13

## Key Messages

- Questions requiring the straightforward application of knowledge were answered well, while questions requiring more analysis needed more sociological examples and discussion.
- In part **(c)** of the optional questions candidates are asked to explain; a number of candidates made these questions more complex by also evaluating which was not required for this part.
- A significant number of questions, including the compulsory questions, were left blank by some candidates.
- Candidates need to have a firm understanding of key sociological terms.

In the compulsory question

- Questions requiring a specific number of answers would benefit from candidates numbering or splitting their answers by leaving a blank space.
- When describing a method it is clearer if candidates describe what the method does rather than what the method does not do.

In the optional questions

- In part **(a)** repeating the question back is an insufficient way of defining a term.
- To score full marks in part **(b)** questions it is necessary to identify a process and then offer some elaboration of it but this does not have to be lengthy.
- In part **(c)** responses many candidates provided generalised answers but these questions are more stretching and require more development and greater use of examples.
- Part **(d)** questions need to be supported by two arguments and offer some assessment of the question in order to access the higher mark bands. Many able candidates would have done better if they had included more than one theory in their answers.

## General comments

Responses at all levels were given with the very best answers displaying excellent sociological knowledge supported with detailed analysis. Most candidates answered the correct number of questions and there were almost no rushed final answers.

Evaluation of sociological material was evident in the best answers with detailed application of knowledge in parts **(c)** and **(d)** of the optional questions. However, a number of candidates showed limited understanding, or confusion, about the meaning of terms that needed to be defined.

A number of candidates gave gender or religion as an example of ethnicity.

Weaker candidates displayed a tendency to repeat back the question given in part **(a)** as their definition answer. Just using the words in the question shows insufficient knowledge of sociological terms. Likewise if a question asks for two examples then giving more than two is unnecessary. Candidates should pay particular attention to the marks awarded for questions and this should be reflected in length and detail of their answers.

Part **(c)** of the optional questions requires an explanation of how a sociological process works. Some candidates provided very generalised answers that overlooked or ignored the specific requirement of the question whilst others made the question much more complex than it was by giving a detailed evaluation of their explanation which the question did not require.

Candidates must consider analysis in their response to part **(d)** of the optional questions. The inclusion of more sociological material such as studies and theory would develop this. The inclusion of material from contemporary societies is also to be welcomed. However, there was some excellent use of theory by able candidates and some clear application of sociological material to the questions as set.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Section A**

##### **Question 1**

- (a) (i) Many candidates defined this term well. A common error was to define it as a method in three parts. A significant number of candidates did not answer this question.
- (ii) Many candidates defined ethical issues in relation to morality and the making of judgements. A small number of candidates defined the term as ethnicity.
- (iii) Many candidates defined this term correctly as researchers who adopt objective methodology. A few failed to offer any definition and a number of others defined it as researchers who need positive proof or who conduct optimistic research.
- (b) Most candidates had a good understanding of the nature of qualitative data and answered this question well giving two clear reasons. An uncommon error was to say that an interview was the best method to collect such data and this made it difficult for some candidates to find a second example of collecting data. Few candidates explored the reasons for using participant or non-participant observation which would have given them many more possible reasons for using this type of research.
- (c) Many candidates struggled to answer this question with a number not answering it at all. Those who did answer it also struggled to find a second advantage. Many candidates described triangulation as if it was a method of collecting data.
- (d) Case studies was a method that many candidates were not aware of, some candidates did not answer this question. Of those that did, many assumed that these were historical documents. However, there were some excellent points made as to the difficulties in carrying out this method and the limitations in making generalisations from case studies.
- (e) Candidates who had struggled to define ethical issues also struggled with this question. However, there were some excellent answers which highlighted the position of the researcher especially in relation to illegal activities.
- (f) Many candidates assumed that social surveys would be conducted using questionnaires and identified the strengths and limitations of conducting surveys in this way. Some candidates gave three limitations but only described one strength.

#### **Section B**

##### **Question 2**

- (a) Many candidates gave accurate definitions of this well understood concept. The majority of answers relied on highlighting the differences in norms, values and customs.
- (b) The term sub-culture was not well understood by all candidates. Some were able to identify characteristics such as dress or behaviour and a number of candidates made good use of deviant sub-cultures. Some candidates identified family as a feature of sub-culture and then went on to identify different cultures rather than different sub-cultures.
- (c) Many candidates produced competent responses to this question. These focused on the practices of socialisation that can be different from one sub-culture to another within a society by linking their answer to such features as rites of passage, social class or ethnicity. Some candidates applied



culture and sub-culture as if they were interchangeable concepts. A few candidates did not mention sub-culture at all.

- (d) Some candidates did not understand this question. Weaker answers were characterised by a tendency to write about a range of factors linked to socialisation. Some of these answers then gave examples of different agencies of socialisation and compared different societies. The best responses addressed the specific question asked and discussed the role of culture compared to other factors such as sub-culture and nature within a theoretical framework.

### Question 3

- (a) There was some confusion about the meaning of stable societies. Some candidates repeated the question back stating that they were societies that were stable.
- (b) Many responses did describe two ways in which social integration can be achieved. The ways in which agents of socialisation impose order were quoted with good effect.
- (c) Many candidates identified the ways in which value consensus is achieved with some candidates making the functionalist connection. Others included the role of parents and the use of rewards and sanctions in creating the values expected in society.
- (d) This question was well understood by candidates and there were many who covered all aspects of the question in a relevant way and supported their answers with careful analysis. A few candidates concentrated on the ways in which people in society agree and this limited the success of their answer. Better candidates were able to refer to the law, sanctions and punishment in contemporary societies. Many candidates offered assessment, and referred to theories such as Marxism, functionalism, feminism and the New Right.

### Section C

#### Question 4

- (a) Very few candidates could accurately define what embourgeoisement is.
- (b) The candidates who understood the meaning of the new working class were able to successfully identify occupations identified with them. Other candidates gave inappropriate examples such as lawyers.
- (c) Candidates adopted several successful approaches to this question. Some identified changes in the employment structure such as the greater employment of women or diversity of ethnic groups. Others identified changes such as the decline of agriculture and primary industries as opposed to the growth of secondary and tertiary industries. Other, more advanced, answers raised issues such as the glass ceiling, de-industrialisation and changes in the class structure linked to the growth of 'middle class' jobs.
- (d) Many candidates were able to answer this well with a range of reasons as to why (or why not) embourgeoisement has occurred. Some candidates described changes in the class structure with the best referring to concepts such as proletarianisation. Better answers responded to the focus in the question as to whether the process has or has not happened. Weaker answers seemed to think it was a question about poverty.

#### Question 5

- (a) The best answers clearly described the meaning of the poverty line. Weaker candidates defined it as the difference between rich and poor.
- (b) This question was well understood with groups such as lone parent families, the underclass and asylum seekers being clearly identified.
- (c) Many candidates outlined a range of strategies that governments can adopt such as providing education, welfare, minimum wages and redistribution of wealth. Some interesting examples of adopting fair trade practices were also given.

- (d) Some candidates produced valid responses with detailed material on how poor people can struggle to get out of poverty, some of whom referred to the lack of education. Better candidates identified more than one social group such as the elderly and some ethnic minorities. Better responses produced valid assessment which included such examples as welfare dependency, the cost of having to borrow from loan sharks and the expense of having to buy food in small quantities.

#### **Section D**

#### **Question 6**

- (a) Most candidates defined government well.
- (b) Most candidates identified two types of authority.
- (c) In contrast to part (b) candidates struggled with this part of the question. Some answers were limited to the control of riots in democratic societies and others considered the use of force in totalitarian regimes.
- (d) Most candidates offered powerful arguments of the proposition based on Marxist theories and some supported this with elitist theory. A few better answers contrasted these points to functionalist or pluralist theories.

#### **Question 7**

- (a) Floating voter was a term that virtually no one who answered this question could define correctly.
- (b) Some candidates suggested ways in which voters cast their vote rather than suggesting changes such as class de-alignment.
- (c) This was answered in a limited way by most candidates who identified the media as an influence on voters. A few more advanced answers described how the media may be a form of ideological control under the influence of its owners.
- (d) Most candidates agreed that political socialisation was the most important influence on voting behaviour and quoted the family and peer group to support this. Few looked at any other potential influence such as class or trends such as class de-alignment or floating voters.



# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 2251/22

Paper 22

## Key Messages

- Candidates should read the questions carefully to avoid misunderstandings.
- Candidates need to be able to clearly define and understand sociological concepts.
- Candidates should be taught to differentiate between similar sounding concepts e.g. to know the difference between 'lone parent family' and 'one parent family'; 'cultural' and 'material deprivation'.
- Candidates need to recognise that 'How far....?', 'Assess...' and 'To what extent...?' questions are asking them to argue for and against. It is not expected to be a balanced argument.
- Candidates should be aware of the main sociological perspectives on all topics, in particular the Marxist, Feminist, Functionalist and Pluralist views. Some topics such as the media have perspectives which are particular to them.
- Finally, although it is sometimes not specifically mentioned, the questions generally relate to Modern Industrial societies. If relevant, marks will still be awarded for references to other cultures.

## General Comments

The most popular topics were Family, Education and Crime – **Questions (2, 3 and 5) 1,2,5, and 6** were the most popular questions.

In order to gain high marks candidates need to be aware of differing sociological perspectives and to present both sides of the argument in the 8 mark questions. For example in **Question 6(d)** *How far is social order based on the power of the ruling class?* Candidates needed to recognise the power of the ruling class but also to be aware of other factors which are a check on this power. For example, everyone is subject to the law. The media has power in its own right and does not always support the ruling class. This can be presented as a Marxist v Pluralist discussion. The best candidates demonstrated clear understanding and the ability to take into account a wide range of factors in their answers to the higher mark questions.

Candidates should be advised not to answer a question if they have not studied the topic in class or if there is a concept in it which they do not understand.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### **Section A: The Family**

#### **Question 1**

- (a) Misunderstanding of 'one person' household understood as 'lone parent' or 'one parent' households. Unfortunately, if the concept was misunderstood it invalidated or limited the responses to the first three parts of **Question 1**. Some candidates mistook 'household' as meaning 'family'.
- (b) In order to achieve full marks candidates needed to provide two clearly defined answers, e.g. elderly person living alone after death of their partner or business man living away from home.
- (c) Some good answers mainly focused on divorce. Other factors included student or business man living alone. Candidates could also have referred to increased affluence, concentration on careers, people marrying at a later age and longer life expectancy.

- (d) This question was misunderstood by many candidates whose answers featured teenagers preferring friends to their family. Most answers did not attain Level 3, but those that did outlined how some of the functions of the family are being performed by friends, as the nuclear family is separated from extended family.

### Question 2

- (a) Very few candidates were able to gain two marks by providing a correct definition – ‘*The number of live births per thousand women or people per year.*’ Two marks were awarded if candidates referred to ‘thousand’ and ‘time’ and one mark if candidates referred to the number of births over a period of time. This is a difficult definition as it contains several factors but the key ones are **births per 1000 in a year.**
- (b) Some good answers including contraception, career ambitions of women, expense of raising children, marrying at a later age and government policy, as in China.
- (c) Potentially many reasons were acceptable for this question: secularisation, changing social attitudes, number of babies born to co-habiting couples, changing status of women and others. ‘Rape’ was not accepted as a reason. A few candidates interpreted the question to mean births as the result solely of extra marital affairs and rape.
- (d) This question, like the previous question, referred to modern industrial societies. As this was unclear, answers which referred to the cultures where strict sanctions are imposed on people, especially women, involved in co-habitation and illegitimate births were credited. In modern industrial societies many co-habitee families provide the same functions as the married families. The state can provide economic support. There are also some problems in married families e.g. the ‘dark side’ of the family. Marxist and Feminist views could be quoted here. Alternatively many births outside the family do not have the support once provided by the family and inadequate socialisation may lead to anti-social behaviour.

### Question 3

- (a) Candidates lost marks if they repeated the words given in the question without providing a clear definition. For two marks the definition needed to be linked to education.
- (b) Full marks were not given for two similar reasons e.g. lack of pens and books is one reason not two. Other reasons include poor diet, lack of Internet access, and poor attendance because of illness.
- (c) Some good answers here with understanding of ‘teacher expectation’ and ‘self-fulfilling prophecy.’
- (d) Many candidates did not understand ‘*cultural deprivation*’. This was often misinterpreted as ‘*material deprivation*’. To gain high marks candidates needed to understand ‘cultural deprivation’ and also to argue the importance of other factors such as material deprivation, teacher expectations and middle class values of the school which affect working class and ethnic minority groups – also language.

### Question 4

- (a) General misunderstanding of ‘vocational’ education – confusion with Personal, Social and Moral Education (*PSME*) classes which are compulsory as part of the National Curriculum or the *hidden curriculum*.
- (b) Well-answered with responses including *norms and values (Secondary socialisation)* and skills needed for work.
- (c) This question referred to the role of schools in maintaining the social hierarchy and some candidates recognised the Marxist viewpoint relating to setting and streaming, the curriculum and hidden curriculum. A few mentioned A.S. Neill, home schooling and free schools as alternatives.
- (d) Candidates who did not understand ‘*vocational education*’ did not gain marks for this question which required specific knowledge and understanding of the vocational v academic, and the differing *status* of each. Marxist views could also be discussed here.

### Question 5

- (a) Candidates had problems defining this term without using the word '*frustration*'. Answers did not need to be linked to crime for 2 marks.
- (b) Answers included peer groups, poverty, unemployment, relative deprivation, anomie etc.
- (c) Well answered with a clear understanding of '*stereotyping*' with particular reference to ethnic minorities and the working class – also police targeting of certain groups.
- (d) Some repetition from **Question (c)**. The view that criminals can reform and then conform was not generally identified. Many young male offenders do not continue to commit crimes after a certain age. They tend to settle down and conform to social norms and values. However, once someone is labelled, it is difficult for them to lead a normal life and get a job. Certain groups are targeted by the media and the police, e.g. young working class males and black ethnic groups in urban areas. Deviancy amplification and the media creation of 'folk devils' could be discussed here.

### Question 6

- (a) Some good answers – usually two marks.
- (b) Some good answers. Informal and formal control accepted if relevant agency named with explanation.
- (c) To gain high marks candidates needed to define who are the 'informal agencies' and what are the 'processes' e.g. the use of sanctions by family and society in general in order to get people to conform. A common example given was *ostracising* people.
- (d) The main problem here was not to give an alternative view. As indicated earlier, candidates could mention the Marxist v Pluralist alternative perspectives - everyone is subject to the law and the media has power in its own right.

### Question 7

- (a) A well answered question as most candidates understood 'socialisation'.
- (b) *Gender roles* and *showing what is right and what is wrong* were the two most common correct answers.
- (c) Many candidates misunderstood this question and spoke of the effects of the media on the child rather than how children are portrayed in the media. Otherwise answers commented on the stereotypical views of children, e.g. either innocent or naughty.
- (d) A few candidates aware of sociological perspectives including *Hypodermic syringe* and *Bobo doll*. Candidates also mentioned *role models* and positive and negative influences. The best answers outlined the power of other agencies such as the family, peer groups and the school.

### Question 8

- (a) This question proved difficult and only a few candidates gained two marks. The main difficulty was candidates not realising that 'publicly funded' means funding by the state/government. Candidates found it difficult to give an example of something that was publicly funded and to explain how and by what agency it was funded.
- (b) This question did not require any sociological knowledge so most candidates achieved full marks.
- (c) The Candidates' main mistake was not to identify examples of 'recent' developments in technology, e.g. Internet, cable and satellite TV as a means of globalisation, access and social communication.
- (d) This question was not well-answered. The Pluralist view that we have a range of media which can present opposing views is opposed by the Marxist view that the media are controlled by a few

wealthy individuals who can set their own agenda and act as a means of social control. Some candidates were aware of the fact that the media is run by a few owners but most candidates were unaware of any means of censorship e.g. D Notice, Official Secrets Act and legal restrictions such as the laws of libel. The question specified 'modern industrial societies' and answers should have been related to them. For example, as the media is not owned by the state it can present opposing views. There is an assumed freedom of speech with limited restrictions.

# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 2251/23

Paper 23

## Key Messages

- Candidates should read the questions carefully to avoid misunderstandings.
- Candidates need to be able to clearly define and understand sociological terms and concepts. For example, in this paper some candidates could not accurately define or had no knowledge of terms such as 'stigma'; 'serial monogamy'; and the 'press'.
- Candidates should be taught to differentiate between similar sounding concepts e.g. to know the difference between '**curriculum**' and '**hidden curriculum**'; '**monogamy**' and '**serial monogamy**'.
- Candidates need to recognise that 'How far....?', 'Assess...' and 'To what extent....?' questions are asking them to argue for and against. It is not expected to be a balanced argument.
- Candidates should be aware of the main sociological perspectives on all topics, in particular the Marxist, Feminist, Functionalist and Pluralist views. Some topics such as the media have perspectives which are particular to them.
- Finally, although it is sometimes not specifically mentioned, the questions generally relate to Modern Industrial societies. If relevant, marks will still be awarded for references to other cultures.

## General Comments

The most popular topics were Family and Education. **Questions 2, 4 and 1** were the most popular questions, in that order, followed by **Question 6** Crime.

In order to gain high marks candidates need to be aware of differing sociological perspectives and to present both sides of the argument in the 8 mark questions. For example in **Question 1(d)** *How far has the increase in dual-worker families led to greater equality in conjugal roles?*, candidates needed to recognise that there are points for and against – some families do have *joint conjugal roles* and the *symmetrical family* as evidenced by Young and Willmott, but also the increased burden on women, *triple shift/dual burden* as outlined by Feminists such as Oakley. The best candidates demonstrated clear understanding and the ability to take into account a wide range of factors in their answers to the higher mark questions.

Candidates should be advised not to answer a question if they have not studied the topic in class or if there is a concept in it which they do not understand. A good example of this is **Question 8** which required knowledge of sociological terms which are not in common usage.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### **Section A**

#### **Family**

##### **Question 1**

- (a) Some misunderstanding of 'dual', otherwise well answered. Answers needed to specify that it is the two adults who work.
- (b) Candidates who misunderstood the term 'dual-worker' families in **Part (a)** had problems in this question, too. Answers included the growing independence of women, the increase in women's employment opportunities, changing social attitudes etc.
- (c) Some good answers outlining gender socialisation, lack of economic power, particular cultures and traditions.

- (d) Candidates were required to give points both for and against greater equality. Feminists such as Oakley indicate the 'dual burden' or 'triple shift' of women in dual-worker families, whereas Young and Willmott refer to the 'symmetrical' family and 'joint conjugal roles'. Some candidates did not understand 'greater equality in conjugal roles'.

### Question 2

- (a) There were some good explanations but a few candidates did not understand the term 'serial monogamy'.
- (b) The main responses to this question discussed high divorce and remarriage rates.
- (c) Some simplistic answers about being lonely and needing help financially. The best answers recognised that divorced people tended to be disillusioned with a particular partner rather than with marriage itself; the desire for companionship, financial and emotional support.
- (d) Alternative views of harm done to children in unhappy relationships e.g. 'dark side' of the family and difficulties of living in a lone parent family. Data quoted show lack of success in education of children whose parents divorce.

### Question 3

- (a) There was some misunderstanding and a lack of knowledge of the term 'hidden curriculum' - *Norms and values imparted by school organisation and teacher attitudes*. Many candidates gained one mark for indications of it being *outside the school curriculum*.
- (b) This question proved difficult. Most candidates indicated that the government required all candidates to have access to the same information and equal opportunities. Candidates also mentioned the necessity to acquire the skills needed for employment.
- (c) There was some repetition here from candidates who had correctly answered **part (b)**. Candidates could also have mentioned 'socialisation' and 'social control'.
- (d) Candidates who had misunderstood the term 'hidden curriculum' in **part (a)** had problems with this part of the question. An alternative argument would be the Functionalist view that there is opportunity for all as well as other factors such as labelling, teacher expectations, gender or racial stereotyping etc.

### Question 4

- (a) Most candidates interpreted this to mean equal opportunities for males and females, but a better answer would be that every child has an equal chance of doing well in education to the best of his or her abilities.
- (b) This question was well answered with a good knowledge of subjects usually considered 'female subjects'.
- (c) Generally well answered – expectations of parents, teachers, peer group, traditional and cultural values.
- (d) Answers concentrated on the fact that girls usually work harder than boys, are more conformist and are regarded more positively by teachers. Also, some boys are part of an anti-school subculture. Good answers indicated that although there are equal opportunities boys still tend to have more success in some subjects such as Maths and Physics. Also in some cultures parents are still more ambitious for boys which encourages them to work harder.

### Question 5

- (a) 'Crime prevention' caused some misunderstanding.
- (b) There was a lack of knowledge of some of the means of crime prevention for example neighbourhood watch, CCTV, alarms etc.



- (c) Some knowledge of 'hacking' fraud – other factors – piracy, identity theft, illegal material etc. on Internet.
- (d) To answer this question candidates required knowledge of different means of surveillance particularly CCTV. Alternatively, human rights issues could also have been mentioned. Some candidates did not understand the question 'Assess the view that *increasing surveillance is a threat to civil liberties*'.

#### Question 6

- (a) This question proved difficult for many candidates who could not define the term '*stigma*'.
- (b) This was an easy question requiring no sociological knowledge. Candidates had a good knowledge of punishments with fines and community service being the most popular.
- (c) Stereotyping and labelling were the main reasons given by candidates along with lack of money and the fact that prisoners still had the same friends. Some candidates said prisoners were angry for having been in prison and so took revenge on society which was not the required response.
- (d) There was agreement that prison is to punish criminals but also to keep them out of society. Answers also indicated that prison also acts as a deterrent and provides some justice for victims of crime. Some candidates indicated the Functionalist view that prison helps maintain social stability and others the Marxist view that prison is an agency of social control. Other acceptable views were that prison could provide rehabilitation, is a tool of political oppression and includes revenge by society.

#### Question 7

- (a) This question caused problems for candidates. Answers that were accepted included newspapers and printed material as well as agencies for gathering and presenting news in the mass media.
- (b) Some candidates did not understand the difference between tabloid and broadsheet newspapers.
- (c) In general, this question was not well answered by candidates. Local news did not feature but age difference and the fact that printed news is permanent.
- (d) Another question which proved difficult for candidates answers included high culture v low culture, content and price, political allegiance, personal values and Marxist view.

#### Question 8

- (a) The best candidates understood this to mean the quantitative study of media content.
- (b) Amount of time and space given to different topics – could give one example from television and another from newspapers.
- (c) This was a difficult question requiring precise knowledge of the difference between content analysis and semiology.
- (d) Many candidates did not fully understand what this question required. It invited candidates to demonstrate both their knowledge of research methods and the mass media e.g. combination approach or triangulation.