

SOCIOLOGY

<p>Paper 2251/12 Paper 12</p>

Key messages

- Encourage candidates to have a clear understanding of secondary data and to be able to give examples. This was important for the 2 mark **Question (1b)** on this paper, but secondary data may also feature in more extended methodological questions.
- Many responses to 1f were confined to describing ethical issues rather than engaging with the question and discussing why they can be a problem in research. Candidates should understand the core issue at the heart of a question to enable them to stay focused and achieve more marks.
- The concept of values should be distinguished from the concept of norms in teaching so that candidates have a clear understanding of how they differ and what the relationship is between the two.
- In the part (a)s in **Section B** and **Section C**, candidates should try to include two separate elements in their definition to be awarded two marks. Examples can be a useful way of adding a second element and candidates should be encouraged to add one to their definition.
- Candidates could be better prepared in terms of evidence for 'nature' rather than 'nurture' as an explanation for human behaviour.

General comments

Candidates showed a good level of engagement with the question paper and the assessment objectives, and the full range of available marks was awarded. All candidates complete the compulsory **Question 1** on Theory and Methods. Candidates must then choose to answer either **Question 2** on Culture, Identity and Socialisation or **Question 3** on Social Inequality. The majority of candidates chose to answer **Question 2**.

Time management appears to have been good, with few candidates not finishing the paper. There were some no responses on several questions, notably 1e (interpretivism), 1f (problems caused by ethical issues) and 2e (nurture v nature). Very few rubric errors were seen and generally these were weaker responses.

Some candidates showed an impressive knowledge and understanding of sociological concepts, ideas and theories. Not all applied this knowledge consistently to the questions, particularly in extended responses. On questions where the use of concepts was more challenging some candidates used relevant examples to good effect and were given credit for doing so. In essay responses the evaluation skills evidenced by some candidates were good, and many gave a two-sided response. The research methods unit was challenging for many candidates and the technique for answering the data response **Question 1c** and the methods evaluation **Questions (1d and 1e)** could be further improved.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Theory and Methods

Question 1

- (a) A particularly good response was given to the opening source-based question. Almost all candidates achieved full marks by correctly identifying Japan and Canada as the two countries that complete a census every five years. Occasionally US and UK were given but these answers were very few.
- (b) This question asked candidates to identify two types of secondary data, apart from a census. It is an accessible low tariff question, but it drew a mixed response. Candidates who understood the term 'secondary data' correctly identified two examples, the most common being official statistics,

historical documents and personal documents such as diaries and photographs. However, a sizeable minority of candidates made incorrect references to primary methods, types of sampling or qualitative and quantitative data. Others made vague references to media or the internet which were not creditworthy.

- (c) The source analysis question drew a mixed response. Candidates were asked to use the source to describe two reasons why a census is useful for researchers. Many candidates gained two marks by identifying two ideas directly from the source, for example that it gives information about the size of the population or that it gives information on age, ethnicity, health and employment. However, it was less common for candidates to develop both points in terms of how they might be useful for researchers. Some candidates made generic (i.e. non-source-based) points about the usefulness of the census, without referring to ideas in the source, which limited their marks.
- (d) This question asked candidates to describe two strengths of using pre-coded questions in sociological research. The key to success in this question was to identify an aspect of pre-coded questions and then describe why or how that is a strength. Successful responses referenced the fact that pre-coded questions are closed or tick box questions which are thus quick and easy for participants to complete, or that they provide quantitative data which can be easily turned into statistics and presented in tables and charts. Some candidates correctly identified reliability as a strength but then went on to define the term without reference to what it is about pre-coded questions that makes them reliable. A few candidates did not appear to know what a pre-coded question is and incorrectly stated that they were 'highly valid' or gave 'in-depth data'. Other candidates assumed the question was about questionnaires or interviews (rather than a type of question) and hence points made were often tangential in nature e.g. that the researcher can easily clarify the question for respondents or they lack bias.
- (e) This question asked candidates to describe two strengths and two weaknesses of using interpretivist methods in sociological research. Most candidates discussed the interpretivist approach generally rather than interpretivist methods. Such responses were creditworthy but answers which referenced methods such as unstructured interviews and participant observation often made better quality points. Candidates who scored full marks clearly identified an aspect of interpretivist methods (e.g., that they use a micro approach) which they then described in terms of a strength (e.g., that this allows an in-depth focus on individuals). The most popular strengths cited were that interpretivist methods rely on qualitative data that is more valid than quantitative data because it allows respondents to freely express their own thoughts and feelings, and that interpretivists may achieve *verstehen* by showing empathy and putting themselves in the shoes of participants who they are observing or conversing with. In terms of limitations, candidates identified the lack of generalisability resulting from a micro approach or the greater likelihood of the researcher effect and bias occurring in methods where the researcher and respondent are face to face. Candidates who scored less well did not develop their points sufficiently.
- (f) This question required candidates to explain why ethical issues may cause problems when conducting sociological research. It is an extended response question and requires a minimum of three well developed points to score in band three (8 – 10 marks) with the level of conceptuality and quality of development being the discriminator within the band. The question proved to be challenging for many candidates. A small minority of responses incorrectly gave ethnic issues instead of ethical; whilst other responses focused on general problems associated with research. Many candidates showed an understanding of ethical issues such as harm, informed consent, privacy and deception etc., but then described the issues rather than explaining why they are problematic for sociological research. Examples of the latter might be: a researcher involved in covert observation may face the dilemmas of having to report illegal activities which may mean going into hiding due to safety fears; or the requirement to gain informed consent from participants may be difficult when researching a group who cannot give consent, e.g. children or people in institutions who may be viewed as not of sound mind; or, the requirement to not invade the participant's privacy can limit the type of questions asked or method used, or limit the use of personal documents, and this may negatively impact the quality of the data gathered. Some candidates spent valuable time describing issues of bias such as the interviewer effect which were not creditworthy as ethical issues.
- (g) The essay question focused on evaluating the extent to which structured interviews are the best method for sociological research. There were some high-quality responses. The best responses achieved level four (13 – 15 marks) by identifying and developing a minimum of six points for and against the view, drawing on sociological language throughout. Most candidates understood what

structured interviews involve, though some made generic points which can apply to any type of interview and others confused structured interviews with questionnaires. The best responses developed several strengths of structure interviews, showing good understanding and drawing upon methodological concepts such as positivism, standardisation of questions, reliability and/or representativeness. In terms of evaluation some candidates chose to criticise aspects of structured interviews such as the use of closed questions limiting the level of depth and detail, or the possibility of the interviewer effect skewing the truthfulness of data. Others directly challenged the structured interview approach by showing how aspects of interpretivist methodology are more effective, offering alternative methods such as participant observation, unstructured interviews and the use of triangulation. Some responses were very brief and list-like, limiting the marks awarded.

Section B: Culture, identity and socialisation

Question 2

- (a) The definitional question asked candidates to describe what is meant by the term 'values.' Very few candidates scored both marks. Many appeared to confuse values with norms, describing values as behaviours rather than as ideals. Even if candidates misunderstood the term itself, it was still possible to gain one mark for a correct example such as honesty, equality or freedom. Those that were successful in achieving two marks gave a response which identified values as standards or beliefs that are used to judge what is right and wrong, or ideals that are precious or worth striving for.
- (b) This question required candidates to describe two features of a multicultural society. Most candidates scored at least two marks, often citing one society hosting different ethnicities, religions, languages, foods and clothing styles. These features were then developed by successful candidates in terms of examples. Others focused more on features such as many cultures living side by side respecting each other's traditions. Many candidates took a positive view of multiculturalism and the idea of living together in harmony were common. A few candidates confused multiculturalism with globalisation/westernisation which was not creditworthy.
- (c) Candidates found this question demanding. It asked candidates to explain how individuals may achieve a higher status in society. Those candidates who scored well focused on education, hard work in a meritocracy, gaining promotion, doing charity work, using talents or marriage and then briefly explained how these could improve an individual's status. Candidates often referred here to climbing the social ladder or achieving social mobility into a higher class or gaining social respect and recognition. Some candidates who scored less well wrote about ascribed status, not focusing on the word 'achieve' in the question, offering examples such as being born into an upper class family as a way. Others wrote in general terms about conforming to the norms and values of society. Neither of these two approaches were creditworthy in terms of being ways of achieving status in society.
- (d) This question asked candidates to explain why rewards and sanctions are useful for social control. Almost all candidates demonstrated an understanding of rewards and sanctions and described their operation in different social contexts such as the family, school, peer group and workplace. Some also distinguished between formal and informal agencies of social control and discussed penalties for crime and deviance in wider society. However, the majority of responses did not get beyond mid band two marks as they did not move beyond simple description of how sanctions work to address the question of why rewards and sanctions are useful in social control. Candidates were rewarded for discussions of rewards being linked to encouraging and motivating conformity and sanctions to punishing and deterring non-conformity with social expectations.
- (e) The essay question focused on the extent to which nurture is more important than nature in explaining human behaviour. There were a few one-sided responses. Weaker responses were often brief and characterised by points lacking development and conceptuality. Some candidates were confused about what was meant by nature in this context, with a few referring to plants and trees for example, and some linking nature to primary socialisation and nurture to secondary socialisation or vice versa. However, many candidates did show some understanding and achieved marks in bands three and four. Those that latched on to the idea of nurture as socialisation were able to showcase some solid knowledge and use concepts to discuss the learning of norms and values and gender roles through different institutions such as the family and education. Such responses offered evidence including studies relating to gender socialisation, such as Oakley and Margaret Mead's research. Such responses often discussed feral children and the role of different

agents of socialisation, including education, peers and media. On the nature side, more successful answers referred to genetic evidence on IQ, Lombroso's ideas on inherited criminality or Murdock's functionalist ideas about natural gender roles.

Section C: Social Inequality

Question 3

- (a) This question on 'apartheid' was answered reasonably well. Most candidates gave a definition of the term with a fair degree of clarity. Successful responses described a system of racial segregation linking to South Africa and/or White oppression of Black people. Candidates who achieved both marks defined apartheid in terms of movement between the social classes (one element) across generations such as from parents to children (the second element). Both elements were needed to score two marks. Answers which only scored one mark lacked one of the two definitional elements or simply gave an example with no definition. Other candidates did not know or understand the term and made incorrect guesses.
- (b) There was a mixed response to this question which asked candidates to describe two examples of scapegoating in modern industrial societies. Candidates either knew what scapegoating was or guessed and referred to inequalities. Responses needed to be sociological rather than commonsense such as 'someone' being blamed for something unfairly. Common sociological examples that did gain credit were related to ethnic minority groups being targeted and blamed for crime by the police or media, working class or ethnic minority candidates being negatively labelled and blamed for bad behaviour by teachers and immigrants being blamed for taking working class jobs. Examples which were focused on discrimination rather than being blamed, labelled or targeted were not creditworthy.
- (c) This question asked candidates to explain how a welfare state may cause a dependency culture. Whilst many candidates clearly understood the question it was not always answered effectively. To achieve 5 – 6 marks candidates needed to describe three points. Not many achieved this and did not move beyond the obvious point about people getting used to welfare payments and becoming lazy, feeling that they had no need to look for a job. The key to achieving higher marks was to focus on aspects of the dependency culture itself, the norms and values that influence people to remain on benefits. Examples used by higher scoring candidates were often linked to the New Right such as the idea of individuals developing fatalism, succumbing to immediate gratification, the development of an underclass with anti-social values and a sense of entitlement. Other impressive responses referred to being stuck in a poverty cycle or poverty trap or to the idea that if welfare payments become too high this encourages people to rely on the 'nanny state' and thus taking away personal responsibility.
- (d) This question asked candidates to explain why the working class may find it difficult to achieve upward social mobility. It was generally well answered and gave an opportunity for some candidates to exhibit some impressive knowledge. Key ideas that were explored by candidates included a lack of education, fatalism, the urge for immediate gratification and the culture of dependency amongst the working class which can inhibit them from moving up the social class ladder. More sophisticated answers utilised the poverty trap and poverty cycle as structural impediments to mobility or Marxist ideas of false consciousness and oppression as strategies employed by the bourgeoisie to keep working class people in a subordinate social position. Some candidate strayed from the question somewhat and discussed ethnicity or gender not linked to social class and thereby did not achieve credit.
- (e) The essay question asked candidates to discuss the extent to which institutional racism explains social inequality. The level of candidate success largely depended on their knowledge of the central concept of institutional racism, or even racism. In some cases institutional racism became another term for general inequality, and candidates wrote at length about gender and social class discrimination, clearly thinking they were giving examples of institutional racism. Some candidates were well-prepared and produced excellent answers which discussed institutional racism in the police and criminal justice system, in education and in the workplace, often supported with concepts and examples. Candidates then evaluated the view by discussing other types of discrimination which are more prevalent or arguing that institutional racism is declining in significance due to equal opportunities policies and legislation. Whilst a few responses addressed the 'to what extent' and provided focused conclusions, these tended to be in the minority.

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Paper 2251/22
Paper 22

Key messages

- Candidates do not need to write an introductory paragraph. Some candidates start their answers to 8 and 15 mark questions with a substantial paragraph briefly introducing each point they will make, and then covering these points in greater detail later in the essay. This leads to quite a lot of repetition, and lost time. It would be better for candidates to have a brief plan in note form, not intended to be marked.
- Candidates should write in paragraphs, particularly in the banded parts – **(c)**, **(d)** and **(e)**.
- **Part (e)** requires a debate, with several points for and against, and a judgement at the end in a conclusion. To further improve performance, candidates should include some form of sociological evidence to substantiate each point made. This could be in the form of examples, statistics, sociological concepts, theory or even a sociological study. This way answers will be better developed and explained.
- Responses for **parts (b)** and **(c)** can be short – perhaps a couple of sentences per point. A couple of words, however, does not meet the requirement to ‘describe’ in **(b)** questions or ‘explain’ in **(c)** questions. The command words really are crucial to candidate success.
- Points in **parts (d)** and **(e)** should be developed more fully, sociologically evidenced and always be in paragraphs with an explicit, clear focus on the question.
- Candidates’ knowledge of definitions could be further improved. This would enable them to not only obtain full marks in **(a)** questions but would also help them to understand key terminology in other questions as well. Questions are always based on the specification, and the specification gives a list of key terms. Candidates need to be familiar with all the key terms in order to ensure they can engage with the full set of questions asked.
- Candidates should show their sociological knowledge by using terms, concepts, studies and theories whenever possible.
- Candidates should spend time thinking about what the questions are asking and planning answers to those longer questions before they start to write – this is particularly important in **part (e)** essay questions to ensure that candidates remain focused on the specific demands of the question set.
- Candidates should use the marks per question as guidance for how much should be written and how long should be spent on a particular question. At times, for example, candidates were writing as much for a **part (c)** question worth 6 marks as for a **part (e)** question worth 15 marks. Time management skills and regular practice of timed examination questions in the classroom will really help with this.
- Credit is given for appropriate examples, particularly in questions where it is perhaps more difficult to demonstrate conceptual knowledge.

General comments

In general candidates responded well to the demands of the paper which balanced accessibility with a degree of challenge for more confident candidates. Many candidates had been well-prepared by centres in terms of exam technique, for example giving two-sided responses in essays and backing points up with evidence. Knowledge and understanding was generally good although some candidates did not always use their knowledge to best effect because they slightly misconstrued the question, for example **1(e)** – ‘norm’ not ‘best’. **Family** and **Education** were the most popular option questions, followed by **Crime, Deviance and Social Control** and finally the **Media** option which was chosen by very few candidates.

Rubric errors were very rare and most candidates appeared to have ample time in which to finish the paper. Some candidates did not number or incorrectly numbered their answers, however, and centres would be advised to ensure candidates are aware of the importance of doing this diligently.

Many candidates used relevant contemporary, global and localised examples alongside the more traditional ‘textbook’ evidence in order to justify and substantiate several of the points made. This demonstrated both

sociological knowledge and the ability to apply sociological concepts and theory to the real world and so should be encouraged.

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

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

In **part (c)** questions candidates need to make **more than two** sociological points, evidenced and developed.

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

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

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Family

Question 1

- (a) In general, the question was answered well, with a large number of candidates scoring full marks by stating that family diversity involves an increase in many different types of families in society and then giving specific examples such as extended family, etc. A few candidates incorrectly referred to family diversity as the roles of men and women in the family being shared equally. Others gave a confused definition but achieved one mark by giving a relevant example that did demonstrate some knowledge.
- (b) This question asked candidates to describe two positive functions of the family and most candidates scored well. The most popular correct answers focused on primary socialisation, social control, reproduction and the care and support of family members. Candidates who scored less well tended to leave points undeveloped or make points that were too vague to credit.
- (c) The question on how family roles are changing drew a variable response. Some candidates demonstrated some impressive knowledge of changes within married/partner roles such as the development of joint conjugal roles, the New Man and women as breadwinners along with the dual burden and triple shift emerging. Studies such as Wilmott and Young and Ann Oakley regularly featured. Others noted the emergence of child-centred families and the changing role of grandparents as carers and sources of financial and emotional support. A few candidates discussed the process of different social institutions taking over the role of the family in certain respects, e.g. looking after the elderly in care homes, the socialisation of children in schools etc. It was noticeable that some candidates spent too long describing the past before turning to the change in family roles which was the crux of the question. This wasted time and simpler characterisation of past to present would have sufficed.
- (d) There was a mixed response to the question on why some individuals have a negative experience of family life. Many candidates latched onto the idea of the dark side of family life and made numerous points revolving around different kinds of abuse such as domestic violence, physical abuse and child neglect. While reasons such as divorce, forced/arranged marriage, the burden on women and poverty were mentioned as well, there was a tendency to concentrate on domestic violence, making responses narrow in focus, generally lacking range and often preventing a top

band mark from being awarded. There were some intelligent references to Marxist views of the 'warm bath' theory as an explanation for male domination and violence in the home. The best responses made three well developed points, with each point explaining why particular experiences in a variety of different areas of family life had a negative impact on individuals. Candidates who fared less well tended to describe the negative experiences with little explanation of their impact.

- (e) This 15-mark essay question required candidates to discuss the extent to which the nuclear family is the norm. A noticeable feature of many candidate responses was a fundamental misunderstanding of the question. Most candidates on the 'for' side of the debate employed a variety of arguments to show that the nuclear family is the 'best' rather than the 'norm'. Many deflected from the focus of the question and even candidates with excellent conceptual and theoretical knowledge of the family did not achieve maximum credit due to this lack of focus. Candidates who did understand the question correctly gave well thought out answers, such as geographical mobility, advertising (cereal packet family), best fit thesis, modern equivalents, etc. with good use of supporting theory, i.e. functionalism, feminism and postmodernism. Evaluation was good, many argued that other types of families such as reconstituted and lone parent were now more common for a variety of social reasons including secularisation, changing laws and more liberal attitudes. Others argued that the extended family has always been the norm in certain cultures where the functional role of grandparents and the wider family network remains crucial. A few candidates even mentioned singlehood, friends as family and living in communes as alternatives to the nuclear family and thus challenged the idea of that family form remaining as the norm.

Section B: Education

Question 2

- (a) When defining 'single-sex school' the majority of candidates scored both marks by referring to schools for just one gender, either just boys or just girls. Sometimes candidates gave an example of a school or college in their local area and such examples were creditworthy.
- (b) This question asked candidates to describe two functions of education. Popular answers described education's role as an agent of secondary socialisation, the transmitter of skills/knowledge as preparation for work, an agent of social control and a conduit for national unity. A few candidates explicitly described functionalist and/or Marxist and/or feminist views and linked these well to the question. The best answers identified the function and then used examples as part of their description to develop the point and thus score full marks. Some of the responses were repetitive, not developed and/or too vague to be credited, such as 'preparing us for life' with no description pertaining to schools.
- (c) This question asked candidates to explain how gender discrimination has been reduced in schools. Common answers included the right of both genders to study the same subjects (particularly STEM), positive discrimination (such as girls getting first use of lab equipment), new laws in some countries allowing girls access to school, more positive female representations in textbooks and more female teachers in schools to act as role models. Candidates who scored less well tended to stray from discussing school actions to discuss the efforts of girls themselves through improving results or the immaturity and bad behaviour of boys in the classroom and thus had less specific focus on the question. Some responses offered vague and/or repetitive points such as 'there is more equality now' or 'there are equal opportunities', without clarifying points or sufficiently linking them to school practices.
- (d) This question asked candidates to explain why private schools are criticised by some sociologists. The quality of answers varied from simple common sense to highly conceptual. Only a few candidates concentrated on Marxist critiques demonstrating strong theoretical and conceptual knowledge. Most candidates referred to the cost of private education but not all then progressed to explain what the problem with this might be. Others linked the issue to social class inequality and often continued their point to make sound arguments about private schools breeding a sense of social superiority and giving advantages to students beyond the classroom via the old boy network and social capital. Others focused on the material advantages of private schools when compared to public or state schools – smaller class sizes and enviable facilities in which students can thrive. A few candidates described positive aspects of the private school system and did not explain why these may be problematic for some sociologists. There were some candidates who made sensible

and convincing points from feminist theory, focusing particularly on the linkage between private schools and male privilege.

- (e) The essay style question asked candidates to discuss the extent to which educational achievement is determined by a student's intelligence and effort. Many responses lacked a range of good quality arguments 'for' the view. The best points linked to functionalist arguments about meritocracy and school success being linked to natural intelligence and hard work. Other well used ideas were IQ tests and standardised testing, equality of opportunity, a national curriculum and evidence to show that lower classes or oppressed groups can overcome inequality if helped by the state, e.g. through scholarships. Some candidates treated 'intelligence and effort' separately, which typically led to a better range of points, whilst others tended to conflate both in repetitious arguments. In evaluation candidates adopted clearer lines of argument on factors over and above intelligence and effort that impeded academic success. Popular responses included the barriers to success created because of material deprivation, cultural deprivation, linguistic factors, sexism, teacher labelling and racism and the ethnocentric curriculum. The best responses demonstrated some sophisticated and impressive theoretical and conceptual knowledge. Responses that scored less well contained fewer points with less development and often had common-sense tone rather than engaging with sociological theory, concepts and studies.

Section C: Crime, deviance and social control.

Question 3

- (a) There was a mainly good response to the definitional question on material deprivation. Candidates who scored best included two aspects in their answer – for example referring to the idea of a lack of goods, money or things needed for life in society. Some candidates referred to those on a very low income. Several candidates conflated material with relative deprivation. Candidates who scored less well usually only identified one element in their answer or repeated the term 'deprivation' from the question.
- (b) Here candidates were asked to describe two examples of a criminal sub-culture. A wide variety of groups were creditworthy as 'criminal' including youth sub-cultures, hacking groups, drug gangs, delinquent gangs, terrorist groups etc. Popular answers included skinheads (violence), punks (anti-social behaviour and drugs), hippies (drugs) and the Mafia and other named gangs. Candidates who scored less well on this question incorrectly identified a group (e.g. ethnic minorities in general) and/or did not show how the particular subcultures identified are criminal, e.g. only mentioning that they are non-conformist or that they have a distinct style of dressing, and thus gaining only partial credit.
- (c) This question asked candidates to explain how formal agencies of social control deal with crime. Many candidates demonstrated understanding of the meaning of formal as opposed to informal social control agencies. The best responses dealt separately with three or more different agencies such as the police, courts and prison service and so ensured the range required and then discussed the sanctions used by each. The best answers also identified elements such as fear, deterrence, punishment, rehabilitation etc., that made such sanctions impactful. Sometimes candidates listed formal agents without making the link to how they dealt with crime.
- (d) This question which asked why white-collar crimes are not always reported to the police was a challenging question for some candidates. Few candidates specified examples of white-collar crimes in their answers, a few mentioned tax evasion and theft from a company. A common response was the idea that this type of crime is linked to the middle and upper class who have the power and connections to ensure their crimes are not reported, e.g. bribing employees and authorities to 'turn a blind eye'. Other popular answers included police being too busy targeting the working class and minorities to catch white-collar criminals, the idea that victims are frequently not aware of financial crimes perpetrated against them and the idea that businesses often deal with internal crimes administratively to avoid bad publicity.
- (e) The 15-mark essay question concerned the extent to which gender socialisation explains why females commit less crime than males. The question revolved around females but, of course, implicitly suggests that males commit more crimes. Points made needed to ensure that arguments focused on females or were brought back round to females to be creditworthy. Many points made only discussed males, e.g. the socialisation of males into masculinity which makes them more likely to commit acts of violence. So, despite many candidates offering an impressive range of

conceptual and theoretical points they could not achieve band four due to this imbalance and lack of explicit focus on the question in their answer. Those who scored best made a range of points for gender socialisation of females linked to how girls are manipulated into 'gentle' femininity and socially controlled in the home so that they lack any real opportunity to commit crimes in the public sphere. Feminist theory was well used as were studies such as Oakley and McRobbie. In evaluation, the chivalry thesis featured prominently, as did the idea that female crimes may not be detected because women are not expected by the police to commit crime due to gender stereotyping. Some candidates also noted that some self-report studies now show that female crime is on the rise. The other common strategy in evaluation was to use classic theories about why males commit more crime and utilise them to suggest why women commit less. For example, some discussed Cohen's status frustration as a reason why young males might commit crime but pointed out that the frequent 'gang' or peer element of such crimes was less likely to be a driver for females. Most candidates did produce a two-sided response with a short conclusion and scored marks in at least band two, if not band three. For those that didn't, the most common issue was candidates discussing gendered socialisation with no reference to crime or discussing ethnicity/class with no reference to gender.

Section D: Media

Question 4

- (a) The definitional question asked candidates to describe what is meant by the term traditional media. The best answers included two elements, for two marks, such as old media that people do not interact with or non-digital media. Some used an example as the second element such as newspapers or films.
- (b) This question asked candidates to describe two examples of media folk devils. Many candidates found this challenging and many responses demonstrated no understanding of the term. Those answers that were creditworthy often listed two examples but then did not describe them adequately. Responses seen included youth sub-cultures as trouble (mods and rockers, hoodies) and ethnic minorities being labelled as criminals.
- (c) The question on how males are represented in contemporary media was an accessible question which drew a mixed response from candidates. Common-sense answers were frequent, such as that men were often shown as the boss, having muscles, dominant, etc. More sociological and higher scoring responses identified males being depicted as the breadwinner and as demonstrating hegemonic masculinity. Toxic masculinity was also discussed by some candidates. A few candidates also referred to the metrosexual man or New Man.
- (d) The question on why political beliefs might be influenced by the media was generally not well done. Better responses cited real life examples such as the use of propaganda, e.g. in Hitler's Germany or the famous case of the Sun newspaper influencing the 1992 British election result. Other more general but equally creditworthy points included the idea that the ruling class use the media to justify the status quo or that the media injects its message into a passive audience (hypodermic syringe model) so that we vote for parties whose messages receive positive appraisals in the channels/programmes we watch. Very few candidates discussed the role of new media and social media platforms in influencing the public's political opinions. Candidates who scored less well made fewer developed points and/or did not focus specifically enough on the question e.g. talking about media influence but not about politics.
- (e) The essay-style question focused on the extent to which the new media has created a digital divide. Some responses demonstrated a lack of understanding of the core term 'digital divide'. On the 'for' side of the debate commonly seen answers included the idea that the poor cannot afford digital technology, that there may be areas in some developing countries where digital signals do not yet reach and that old people are not interested in, and cannot get to grips with, the new technologies. In evaluation candidates often argued that times are changing and hence the technology is becoming cheaper and therefore more accessible for all, that more people in developing countries are now accessing digital media due to government initiatives, e.g. the one laptop scheme and that the elderly are frequent and expert digital consumers, e.g. the 'silver surfer' idea.