

# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 9699/11

Paper 11

## Key Messages

- Candidates need to show that they have a clear understanding of sociological terms and concepts.
- Good essay answers include analysis and assessment of relevant sociological knowledge and a conclusion which identifies a new point.
- Low-scoring answers often lacked any sociological evidence.
- Candidates should allocate more time to **Section B** than to either **Question 1 (c)** or **1 (d)**
- Candidates should be made aware of the need to allocate sufficient time for answering both **Sections A** and **Section B** of the paper. Each Section is worth 25 marks.

## General Comments

Many candidates demonstrated a reasonable depth of sociological knowledge and understanding of the topic areas enabling them to respond effectively to the questions and to offer a coherent and logical analysis of relevant issues. Less successful responses addressed the broad topic of the questions in a generalised way without any direct analysis or reference to the issues raised. Such answers tended to be rather descriptive, lacking focus on the specific wording or concepts in the question. Answers that relied solely on general knowledge of the topic area, with no reference to relevant sociological studies, concepts, theories or data, invariably achieved low marks.

It is important that candidates are aware of the following in **Section A** of the paper: candidates should understand the need to spend an appropriate amount of time on each part of **Question 1**. A number of candidates wrote very long answers for **1(b)** which may have limited the amount of time they were able to allocate to the short essay-type responses required for answering **1(c)** and **1(d)**. This usually resulted in a low mark for the paper overall. Similarly, a number of candidates spent a large proportion of their time writing very long answers to **1(c)** and **1(d)** which affected the marks gained in **Section B**.

There were very few rubric errors observed in **Section B** of the paper. Candidates, in general, responded correctly to the directions and selected **one** out of the **two** option questions. There were some very well-constructed and knowledgeable answers from candidates who had taken time to plan their responses. These candidates also made appropriate use of relevant sociological studies and concepts. A number of candidates did appear to offer a hurried, jumbled or incomplete answer. This, perhaps, indicated that they had not allocated an equal or sufficient amount of time for answering each section of the paper. Candidates would be well advised to avoid providing unnecessary historical background or lengthy, unwanted definitions of basic terms such as the 'nuclear family' usually writing out Murdock's definition in some detail and quite often following on by reference to Parsons. Candidates in this category might benefit from additional guidance on how to use their time effectively in the examination. A more straightforward strategy would be to begin answers straight away and not write out the questions thereby wasting time. A very small number of candidates did not attempt any essay and a small number answered in note form which does not allow candidates to achieve the highest marks.

## **Comments on Specific Questions**

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1**

The stimulus material accompanying this question provided clear, focused information that proved helpful in enabling the majority of candidates to direct their attention to what was being asked and to offer an appropriate and focused response to each part of the question. Where there was evidence of limited sociological knowledge and understanding candidates were still able to use the stimulus phrases to offer some form of response and to gain some reward.

- (a) There were many clear and accurate definitions offered, frequently linked to mothers, but the term emotion work was not fully understood by a number of candidates. Some weaker candidates either defined emotion work as physical work or being emotional or stressed or the work you have to do.
- (b) Many responses to this question were accurate and concise. Nearly all candidates identified two benefits. The most successful clearly identified two distinctive ways the family benefits its members and explained why a family member gained benefit from it. Excellent use was made of Parsons and the way in which family life can benefit adults and children. Candidates should be aware that selecting two clearly distinct examples for this question is more successful than selecting examples which overlap. Similarly, candidates should clearly separate their two points. Indeed, those who number or introduce their answers with 'one example... a second example...' make it clear both to themselves and examiner that they have done what the question has asked and provided two examples.
- (c) The most successful responses to this question were from candidates who remained focused on what was asked and explained why children are vulnerable to abuse within the family. Some candidates tried to evaluate the idea that children in families may be abused or not. Candidates should be aware that evaluation is not a requirement of this question. Responses which described the reasons why abuse happens and the inability of children to prevent it by focusing on the particular situation of children in relation to factors such as power did well and answered the question as set. Some thoughtful explanations were offered for why it is that children are more vulnerable to abuse and a variety of reasons such as the pressure put on children to succeed at School and the position of children in dysfunctional families as well as the inability of the child to stop their mother drinking whilst pregnant offered rare but good examples of the powerlessness of children. Good use was made of contrasts between countries such as the United Kingdom with others like Somalia or Sierra Leone with the existence of child soldiers or street children and child labour in such countries as Brazil or Mexico, Others outlined the 'dark side' of the nuclear family with its 'tawdry secrets'.
- (d) The majority of candidates had a very sound understanding of the position of males in families. These types of answers were more successful than generalised descriptive ones. Another unsuccessful approach was to offer lists of studies either with little detail or over extensive detail and no assessment. The most sophisticated answers interpreted 'males' in the widest sense rather than restricting themselves to husbands. Stronger candidates were able to use the notion of 'privileged position' to good effect and offer a clear discussion about the current position of males in families today. Frequently this was contrasted effectively with the position of women or wives within the family and then assessing the extent of any changes using good references and theoretical inputs to review the situation. Some candidates made it a discussion about 'gender war' or the role of women today. Frequently such answers lost sight of the need to keep linking the discussion to the question and the need to compare this information with the position of males. Sometimes this was done in the context of society rather than the family as asked by the question.

### **Section B**

Candidates were required to answer *either Question 2 or Question 3* in this section of the paper and **Question 3** was selected more often than **Question 2**. Candidates who had allocated time to planning their response prior to answering the question usually produced a more convincing essay. However, a number of candidates did appear to offer a rather hurried or list-like answer in this section of the paper. This, perhaps, indicated that they had not left sufficient time to respond effectively to what was being asked in their selected option question. Candidates should be made aware of the need to allocate an appropriate amount of time to

answering their option question in **Section B**, noting that the option question carries 50 % of the total marks for this paper. Some candidates offered a list of points for their essay; candidates should know that this style of response does not allow a debate to develop and the opportunity to access the higher marks levels.

### Question 2

Candidates who understood the key terms in the question such as 'the New Right' were able to offer a convincing debate about the position of the nuclear family. Many candidates failed to mention the nuclear family until the end of their essay. Candidates should be aware that their answer is more likely to be focussed if they set up the debate with the New Right and the nuclear family introduced at the start. There were some well-developed answers, but some used the question as an opportunity to provide lengthy reviews of Murdock and Parsons and describe the emergence of the nuclear family. Other answers were generalised, arguing the family has, or has not, lost its functions. More sophisticated answers were able to develop the idea of family diversity and then link it to an assessment of the New Right and government policies. This frequently led to an analysis of the provision of an increasing number of welfare benefits and the emergence of a so-called 'dependency culture'. Many candidates completed their essay with a conclusion and the most successful of these introduced a new evaluative point rather than just repeating points that had already been made. A common error was to fail to mention either the New Right or the welfare state at all in the answer.

### Question 3

This was a popular question selected by many candidates. Candidates who included reference to a good range of contemporary sociologists such as Postman, Pilcher and Palmer are to be congratulated. Such answers focused on modern industrial societies, as was asked in the question, and provided a comprehensive review of the existence, or otherwise, of a child-centred families in societies today. A common error was to include irrelevant material such as the treatment of children in hunter gatherer societies and candidates should be encouraged to pay attention to the key words in the question. Many candidates provided a very detailed review of Aries' work and its historical context, without having the time to extend this analysis into modern industrial societies as required by the question. Some candidates combined this with an extensive review of the March of Progress approach, without developing an evaluation of child centeredness. Candidates also need to be aware of sociological concepts. Some candidates who attempted this question did not know what child centred meant. On the other hand, there was some excellent use of concepts such as the nurtured and the nurturing child as well as helicopter parents and toxic childhood. A number of essays were preceded by a plan and often these proved advantageous to candidates.

# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 9699/12

Paper 12

## Key Messages

- Candidates need to show that they have a clear understanding of sociological terms and concepts.
- Good essay answers include analysis and assessment of relevant and wide ranging sociological knowledge.
- Low-scoring answers were frequently generalised and lacked any sociological evidence.
- The most successful essays related answers closely to the terms and wording in the question, supported the answer with references and arguments from sociological theory and used a plan to structure the answer.
- Candidates should be made aware of the need to allocate sufficient time for answering both **Sections A** and **Section B** of the paper. Each Section is worth 25 marks.

## General Comments

Many candidates demonstrated a sophisticated depth of sociological knowledge and understanding of the topic areas, were able to respond well to the questions and to offer analysis of relevant issues in a coherent and logical manner. Less successful responses addressed the broad subject of the question without responding directly to the analytical issues raised by the specific wording of the question. Such answers tended to be descriptive and relied on value judgement or general knowledge rather than sociological evidence. The majority of candidates recognised the need to use some appropriate textbook knowledge in their responses. In order to gain more marks candidates should develop support for their answers by appropriate reference to sociological theory and studies or by the use of relevant concepts.

It is important that candidates are aware of the following. For **Section A** of the paper: candidates should understand the need to spend an appropriate amount of time on each part of **Question 1**. The allocation of marks should give candidates guidance about what is an appropriate amount of time to spend. A few candidates allocated most of their time to **1a** and **1b** and such answers were unable to score highly. Others wrote very long answers to **1c** and **1d** which left them short of time to fully develop **Section B** of the paper.

There were very few rubric errors observed in **Section B** of the paper. There were some very well-constructed and knowledgeable answers from candidates who had taken time to plan their response in advance. Candidates who had planned their essays were able to cover the points in a logical manner and provide balance to the debates they developed. The most successful of these adopted a broadly chronological approach using more recent evidence as a critique of more historical data rather than the other way around. These candidates also made appropriate use of relevant sociological theories, studies and concepts. A number of candidates did appear to offer a hurried or incomplete answer, occasionally in a listed format rather than as an essay.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1**

Many candidates used the stimulus material well to help them direct their answer. However, answers that relied solely on general knowledge of the question topic with no reference to relevant sociological studies,

concepts, theories and data, invariably achieved very low marks. The best answers placed the material in context and developed the themes of relationships within the home further. Many did this in terms of conjugal roles whilst others expanded this to include other family members. Candidates should be instructed that the stimulus material is provided in order to trigger points throughout **Question 1**. Those who had read it carefully were able to benefit from this.

- (a) There were many concise and accurate definitions of the new man which named the 'sharing' of domestic roles with wives as well as childcare and men having a caring attitude. Most candidates gained some credit but an uncommon error was to name working women or more modern and independent woman as the new man others described socialisation. More candidates would have gained full marks if they had identified the emotional aspects of the new man. Candidates need a clear understanding of sociological terms as well as understanding that the answer to this question does not need examples. It would be helpful for teachers preparing candidates in the future to have a list of all the concepts on the syllabus so that the candidates can practise writing full and accurate definitions.
- (b) There were many excellent responses to this question highlighting how ideas or approaches to parenting have changed. These included a vast array of possibilities such as both parents being involved in their child's upbringing and the acceptance, in some societies, of same sex parenting. Some candidates outlined very successfully how children are now more involved in their upbringing either through decision making or pester power. Candidates who separated the two changes made it obvious that they had identified two aspects and did not run their points together. This approach is to be recommended. Candidates need to be aware of the need to read the question carefully and think about their answer as there were some generalised responses that seemed to just list changes in ideas about marriage, the family, children or 'good' and 'bad' parenting. Some candidates described changing conjugal roles or outlined aspects of parenting, such as providing food or shelter, which did not address the issue of change in parenting.
- (c) The best responses to this question were from candidates who remained focused on what was asked in the question and developed their response accordingly. They described the roles of children in different families as well as in different societies. These varied from the naming of roles such as daughter/son to outlining the influence of class, gender, ethnicity and culture on the way that children spend their time and what roles they are expected to carry out. Others gave some good cross-cultural examples. A common approach was to compare the role of children today with the work of Aries. Again the need for a firm understanding of sociological terms was demonstrated as those who knew what was meant by 'role' were successful but some candidates confused it with socialisation. Answers which focused on the roles of children were able to do well but some described the lives of poor children as compared to those of rich ones with no comment on how the roles vary. Failing to address the 'between families' element of the question limited the ability of some candidates to answer the question successfully. In order to improve their answers candidates should aim to include some named pieces or research or theory in their answer.
- (d) There were some excellent responses with strong candidates using the notion of 'inequality in conjugal roles' to good effect and offering a comprehensive and supported argument. There was some very good use of concepts such as genderquake. Many candidates understand that the command verb "Assess" required evaluation of the view in the question. This involved an account of the current position of men and women, husbands and wives, in families and society in general. The nature and extent of the changes to conjugal roles appeared to interest the majority of candidates and some wrote very detailed answers that were supported by a range of differing sociological perspectives. As usual, the best responses were from candidates who appeared to have clearly understood the wording in the question and focused their response on assessing whether inequality in conjugal roles remained a feature of modern society. These included a good range of differing and well referenced theoretical perspectives that demonstrated that they had a good sociological understanding of the subject area. Candidates who gained limited reward often provided answers that included only thin, descriptive overviews of either marriage or the family and made use of overly historical material and stereotypical views about the roles of men and women in traditional families as opposed to those in modern industrial families. Such answers did not include any valid analysis or assessment. In order to make their responses more effective candidates need to go beyond the juxtaposition of evidence and also provide a conclusion. A number of candidates did offer a very lengthy response to this part of **Question 1**.

## Section B

Candidates were required to answer *either* **Question 2** or **Question 3** in this section of the paper. **Question 2** was selected more often than **Question 3**. The questions were usually answered well by candidates who had allocated time to planning their response. A number of answers in this section were shorter than both **1c** and **1d** and these failed to score highly. A small number of candidates who had answered **Question 1** very well ran out of time on this section. Candidates should be made aware of allowing enough time to develop their essay and they can do this by limiting the amount of descriptive detail included in their first question.

### Question 2

This question was selected by many candidates. There were responses showing consistent analysis, a clear and sometimes sophisticated style and an ability to consider and evaluate alternative explanations. Evaluation was a mark of an excellent essay and some were evaluative throughout. Another way to be successful was to offer an evaluative conclusion. Industrialisation was the most popular factor selected and its impact on family structures was well described and at the best level evaluated. Some candidates did little more than name industrialisation or write in detail about Murdoch and Parsons with very little else or explain the stages by which one family structure became another. A common error was to misinterpret the question and to answer one about whether the nuclear family is the 'ideal' family. For some candidates 'shaping' was not fully understood and subsequently there were a number of responses that focused only on overly historical or descriptive answers, with some candidates simply discussing the extended family becoming a nuclear one. Many candidates failed to acknowledge factors of influence such as life-style and 'family fit' and the emergence of diversity in family structure in modern industrial society. Other candidates seemed to confuse factors shaping the family with functions of the family again demonstrating the need to have a sound understanding of sociological concepts. Candidates who had a firm understanding of the timeline by which the debate developed produced more convincing essays as those that did not.

### Question 3

This question was much less popular but candidates with sociological knowledge of the social position and status of the elderly in different societies were able to offer developed and supported essays. A range of key thinkers were referred to such as Vincent, and the position of the elderly was seen as complex depending on many factors including status and gender. There was good use made of such concepts as infantilisation, dependency and the grey pound as well as the social construction of old age. A number of candidates were also able to provide an effective argument that explored issues such as ageing and ageism, power and exchange, structured dependency, disengagement and gender variations. Weaker answers were characterised by unsupported comments about the supposed weakness of the elderly who present a burden or by lists of problems they cause, especially in Western societies. Such answers were characterised by showing the elderly as a negative group. Candidates should not be tempted to answer questions for which they have not been prepared because they think that they can offer a convincing sociological debate based on unsupported assertion or personal experience or opinion.

# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 9699/13

Paper 13

## Key Messages

- Candidates need to show that they have a clear understanding of sociological terms and concepts.
- Good essay answers include analysis and assessment of relevant sociological knowledge and a conclusion which identifies a new point.
- Low-scoring answers often lacked any sociological evidence.
- Candidates should allocate more time to **Section B** than to either **Question 1 (c)** or **1 (d)**
- Candidates should be made aware of the need to allocate sufficient time for answering both **Sections A** and **Section B** of the paper. Each Section is worth 25 marks.

## General Comments

Many candidates demonstrated a reasonable depth of sociological knowledge and understanding of the topic areas enabling them to respond effectively to the questions and to offer a coherent and logical analysis of relevant issues. Less successful responses addressed the broad topic of the questions in a generalised way without any direct analysis or reference to the issues raised. Such answers tended to be rather descriptive, lacking focus on the specific wording or concepts in the question. Answers that relied solely on general knowledge of the topic area, with no reference to relevant sociological studies, concepts, theories or data, invariably achieved low marks.

It is important that candidates are aware of the following in **Section A** of the paper: candidates should understand the need to spend an appropriate amount of time on each part of **Question 1**. A number of candidates wrote very long answers for **1(b)** which may have limited the amount of time they were able to allocate to the short essay-type responses required for answering **1(c)** and **1(d)**. This usually resulted in a low mark for the paper overall. Similarly, a number of candidates spent a large proportion of their time writing very long answers to **1(c)** and **1(d)** which affected the marks gained in **Section B**.

There were very few rubric errors observed in **Section B** of the paper. Candidates, in general, responded correctly to the directions and selected **one** out of the **two** option questions. There were some very well-constructed and knowledgeable answers from candidates who had taken time to plan their responses. These candidates also made appropriate use of relevant sociological studies and concepts. A number of candidates did appear to offer a hurried, jumbled or incomplete answer. This, perhaps, indicated that they had not allocated an equal or sufficient amount of time for answering each section of the paper. Candidates would be well advised to avoid providing unnecessary historical background or lengthy, unwanted definitions of basic terms such as the 'nuclear family' usually writing out Murdock's definition in some detail and quite often following on by reference to Parsons. Candidates in this category might benefit from additional guidance on how to use their time effectively in the examination. A more straightforward strategy would be to begin answers straight away and not write out the questions thereby wasting time. A very small number of candidates did not attempt any essay and a small number answered in note form which does not allow candidates to achieve the highest marks.

## **Comments on Specific Questions**

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1**

The stimulus material accompanying this question provided clear, focused information that proved helpful in enabling the majority of candidates to direct their attention to what was being asked and to offer an appropriate and focused response to each part of the question. Where there was evidence of limited sociological knowledge and understanding candidates were still able to use the stimulus phrases to offer some form of response and to gain some reward.

- (a) There were many clear and accurate definitions offered, frequently linked to mothers, but the term emotion work was not fully understood by a number of candidates. Some weaker candidates either defined emotion work as physical work or being emotional or stressed or the work you have to do.
- (b) Many responses to this question were accurate and concise. Nearly all candidates identified two benefits. The most successful clearly identified two distinctive ways the family benefits its members and explained why a family member gained benefit from it. Excellent use was made of Parsons and the way in which family life can benefit adults and children. Candidates should be aware that selecting two clearly distinct examples for this question is more successful than selecting examples which overlap. Similarly, candidates should clearly separate their two points. Indeed, those who number or introduce their answers with 'one example... a second example...' make it clear both to themselves and examiner that they have done what the question has asked and provided two examples.
- (c) The most successful responses to this question were from candidates who remained focused on what was asked and explained why children are vulnerable to abuse within the family. Some candidates tried to evaluate the idea that children in families may be abused or not. Candidates should be aware that evaluation is not a requirement of this question. Responses which described the reasons why abuse happens and the inability of children to prevent it by focusing on the particular situation of children in relation to factors such as power did well and answered the question as set. Some thoughtful explanations were offered for why it is that children are more vulnerable to abuse and a variety of reasons such as the pressure put on children to succeed at School and the position of children in dysfunctional families as well as the inability of the child to stop their mother drinking whilst pregnant offered rare but good examples of the powerlessness of children. Good use was made of contrasts between countries such as the United Kingdom with others like Somalia or Sierra Leone with the existence of child soldiers or street children and child labour in such countries as Brazil or Mexico, Others outlined the 'dark side' of the nuclear family with its 'tawdry secrets'.
- (d) The majority of candidates had a very sound understanding of the position of males in families. These types of answers were more successful than generalised descriptive ones. Another unsuccessful approach was to offer lists of studies either with little detail or over extensive detail and no assessment. The most sophisticated answers interpreted 'males' in the widest sense rather than restricting themselves to husbands. Stronger candidates were able to use the notion of 'privileged position' to good effect and offer a clear discussion about the current position of males in families today. Frequently this was contrasted effectively with the position of women or wives within the family and then assessing the extent of any changes using good references and theoretical inputs to review the situation. Some candidates made it a discussion about 'gender war' or the role of women today. Frequently such answers lost sight of the need to keep linking the discussion to the question and the need to compare this information with the position of males. Sometimes this was done in the context of society rather than the family as asked by the question.

### **Section B**

Candidates were required to answer *either Question 2 or Question 3* in this section of the paper and **Question 3** was selected more often than **Question 2**. Candidates who had allocated time to planning their response prior to answering the question usually produced a more convincing essay. However, a number of candidates did appear to offer a rather hurried or list-like answer in this section of the paper. This, perhaps, indicated that they had not left sufficient time to respond effectively to what was being asked in their selected option question. Candidates should be made aware of the need to allocate an appropriate amount of time to

answering their option question in **Section B**, noting that the option question carries 50 % of the total marks for this paper. Some candidates offered a list of points for their essay; candidates should know that this style of response does not allow a debate to develop and the opportunity to access the higher marks levels.

### Question 2

Candidates who understood the key terms in the question such as 'the New Right' were able to offer a convincing debate about the position of the nuclear family. Many candidates failed to mention the nuclear family until the end of their essay. Candidates should be aware that their answer is more likely to be focussed if they set up the debate with the New Right and the nuclear family introduced at the start. There were some well-developed answers, but some used the question as an opportunity to provide lengthy reviews of Murdock and Parsons and describe the emergence of the nuclear family. Other answers were generalised, arguing the family has, or has not, lost its functions. More sophisticated answers were able to develop the idea of family diversity and then link it to an assessment of the New Right and government policies. This frequently led to an analysis of the provision of an increasing number of welfare benefits and the emergence of a so-called 'dependency culture'. Many candidates completed their essay with a conclusion and the most successful of these introduced a new evaluative point rather than just repeating points that had already been made. A common error was to fail to mention either the New Right or the welfare state at all in the answer.

### Question 3

This was a popular question selected by many candidates. Candidates who included reference to a good range of contemporary sociologists such as Postman, Pilcher and Palmer are to be congratulated. Such answers focused on modern industrial societies, as was asked in the question, and provided a comprehensive review of the existence, or otherwise, of a child-centred families in societies today. A common error was to include irrelevant material such as the treatment of children in hunter gatherer societies and candidates should be encouraged to pay attention to the key words in the question. Many candidates provided a very detailed review of Aries' work and its historical context, without having the time to extend this analysis into modern industrial societies as required by the question. Some candidates combined this with an extensive review of the March of Progress approach, without developing an evaluation of child centeredness. Candidates also need to be aware of sociological concepts. Some candidates who attempted this question did not know what child centred meant. On the other hand, there was some excellent use of concepts such as the nurtured and the nurturing child as well as helicopter parents and toxic childhood. A number of essays were preceded by a plan and often these proved advantageous to candidates.

# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 9699/21

Paper 21

## Key features

- The best responses showed sound knowledge and understanding of a range of key concepts and sociological theories and applied these effectively to the questions.
- Candidates continue to perform a little better in the essay question compared to the data response one. This was partly a skills based issue.
- The skills required for success in some elements of **Question 1** need to be developed in order to achieve higher marks.
- There was evidence that key methodological concepts and approaches are not always well understood.

## General comments

The standard of responses was similar to the previous session. Those candidates achieving the highest marks demonstrated all of the relevant skills. The data response element (**Section A**) was marginally less well answered than the essay element (**Section B**). Centres should look to develop candidates' skills in respect of the assessment objectives of each part of **Question 1**. Practising what is expected in terms of content and substance is likely to result in candidates improving their performance in this section.

**Questions 1a** and **1b** should be answered concisely with candidates clearly identifying a point and then developing it, using sociological concepts and examples. Some candidates write at great length on these questions, which is unnecessary. With 1c candidates lacked some knowledge of a key approach (feminist methodology) and this made very good answers difficult to achieve. With this question, Centres should think in terms of encouraging candidates to produce discrete points that are sociologically developed to maximise marks. It is worth pointing out that this question does not require candidates to evaluate or argue. Responses to the essay questions were generally sound with a number of candidates demonstrating very good knowledge and understanding of the material. Of the two essays, **Question 2** produced the best answers. In both questions there was evidence of sound essay construction skills and analytical understanding of different theoretical strands. Other responses needed to develop more detailed arguments in order to achieve high marks. There were no rubric errors and mostly no time related issues, although the responses to some questions were too long in relation to the marks allocated.

## **Question 1**

- (a) Candidates were permitted to take two approaches to this question and there was a fairly equal division of responses. Most obtained one mark at least but not many gave a full definition to show how bias of either kind might actually work. In terms of skills, candidates should try to provide a response that covers two aspects of the term in the question.
- (b) Most responses were clearly familiar with this issue, often citing census, crime or unemployment statistics to illustrate a strength or limitation. This question demands precision in the way candidates craft their answers. Practising the skills of identifying and then describing should improve candidates' success in this question. A proportion of candidates continue to write too much for this question. A concise paragraph with a clear identification and development of each is enough to claim full marks.
- (c) Most responses suggested that candidates were unfamiliar with feminist methodology. Many offered sound observations on the conduct and merits of unstructured interviews, with good ones linking these to interpretivism but often with limited links to feminism. Only a few responses made explicit the link between feminism and unstructured interviews, although some referred to Oakley's research. As a consequence, many candidates were not able to achieve the highest marks. In

common with previous years, a number of responses made evaluation points, which was not necessary in this question.

- (d) Most candidates demonstrated a reasonable understanding of some of the issues related to secondary data, and could suggest some specific issues with diaries or historical documents. However, a few candidates were confused about the nature of these in terms of sociological use. Anne Frank and Adolf Hitler were the most likely to be referenced. Some applied theoretical perspectives well, with good responses using concepts such as *verstehen* and ideology effectively. High achieving candidates evaluated this methodology in terms of what particular topics it might be most or least useful for, but these were in the minority.

### Question 2

Overall, candidates coped fairly well with this question, most providing a reasonably competent account of at least a couple of the main perspectives on the question. Functionalism and Marxism were often outlined well but sometimes without enough detail on the process of how order is maintained – e.g. Bowles and Gintis on Schools. Feminism was often included although this perspective could have been developed more effectively; for example, with clearer thought on whether patriarchy was more or less likely than gender equality to contribute to order. There were some good attempts at explaining how interactionist concepts explain how order is constructed and maintained, although candidates often gave definitions of key concepts and then stated rather than demonstrated their relevance. Very good answers made links to contemporary problems of social order in parts of the world, with some using these examples to craft evaluative points. These sorts of responses were well rewarded.

### Question 3

A number of candidates showed understanding of either post-modernist concepts or the general trends towards greater social differentiation, mobility, etc. since industrialisation. Other approaches were not sufficiently sociological and were often too influenced by current media views of sexuality as being an individual's master status. Many used transgender examples to illustrate this point. This approach often led candidates to assume that freedom in this area meant that other social constraints, whether economic or cultural, are of little importance. A number of candidates, therefore, did not explore these constraints in assessing the view posed in the question. This led to candidates omitting material that they probably had at their disposal.

# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 9699/22

Paper 22

## Key features

- The best responses showed sound knowledge and understanding of a range of sociological theories and were able to apply these appropriately to the questions.
- Many essay responses contained an evaluative tone and were able to analyse to good effect.
- Some evaluation remains rather juxtaposed. Higher marks will be awarded for candidates who offer more direct evaluative commentary.
- Candidates continue to perform a little better in the essay questions compared to the data response one. This is partly a skills based issue.
- The skills required for success in some elements of **Question 1** are lacking in a number of cases. Some time management issues were apparent.
- The understanding of some key concepts is variable; in particular, this undermined some responses to methods-based questions

## General comments

The standard of responses was fairly similar to the previous session. Those candidates achieving the highest marks demonstrated all of the relevant skills. The data response element (**Section A**) was less well-answered than the essay element (**Section B**). Centres should look to develop candidates' skills in respect of the assessment objectives of each part of **Question 1**. Practising what is expected in terms of content and substance is likely to result in candidates improving their performance in this section. **Questions 1a** and **1b** should be answered concisely with candidates clearly identifying a point and then developing it, using sociological concepts and examples. Some candidates write at great length on these questions, which is unnecessary. With **1c** Centres should think in terms of encouraging candidates to produce discrete points that are sociologically developed to maximise marks. It is worth pointing out that this question does not require candidates to evaluate or argue. Centres should take care to encourage candidates to make appropriate use of the stem as a prompt, and not to simply repeat its contents in their answers. Responses to the essay questions were generally sound with a number of candidates demonstrating very good knowledge and understanding of the material. Of the two essays, **Question 2** produced the best answers. In both questions there was evidence of sound essay construction skills and analytical understanding of different theoretical strands. Other responses needed to develop more detailed arguments in order to achieve high marks. There were no rubric errors, although the responses to some questions were too long in relation to the marks allocated.

## **Question 1**

- (a) A number of answers showed understanding of the term *social conformity* but many were unable to develop this enough to gain full marks. The best responses outlined two elements, for example, by referring to the notion of social acceptance as well as the idea of norms learned through socialisation. A number of responses attempted to explain conformity by reference to the term itself. Centres should advise their candidates against this. In terms of skills, candidates should try to provide a response that covers two aspects of the term in the question.
- (b) Most responses could specify two social sanctions but these were often rather vaguely cited. Many candidates did manage to describe specific types of rewards or punishments to gain marks but some struggled to then show how these encouraged good behaviour (or discouraged negative behaviour). This question demands precision in the way candidates craft their answers. In terms of skills, it is useful for candidates to think about writing a response that contains two elements in relation to outlining the term. Practising the skills of identifying and then describing should improve candidates' success in this question.

- (c) The majority of candidates were successful in defining and describing socialisation and therefore managed to obtain at least 4 marks by doing so. Many candidates were then able to exemplify their answer, typically by discussing feral children. Sometimes, however, this was overly descriptive and could have been more effectively applied to the question, especially in terms of the biological aspect. Good responses referred to the biological argument explicitly and many developed these ideas further by showing cross-cultural examples of how behaviour differs. There was a tendency for candidates to produce overlong responses to this question, which had an impact on their time management of the paper as a whole.
- (d) This question was handled fairly confidently and there was evidence of good knowledge with many candidates able to make effective assessment. Many responses gave a sound summary of the Marxist perspective and most were able to make appropriate links to social order. The best responses focused their attention directly on social order rather than lengthy overviews of the Marxist perspective. Those who used the source material to prompt a link to criticisms of the Marxist view, typically through functionalism and interactionism, were rewarded. However, a number of responses were too reliant on the source material, and some copied it out word for word. Centres should discourage the use of the source in this way. A number of candidates often scored their evaluation marks by juxtaposition. It is more effective to make some direct evaluative points rather than to outline in full the view of an alternative perspective. This is particularly the case in this question, which is not an essay as such and therefore does not require candidates to present a comprehensive and balanced argument.

### Question 2

A number of candidates were successful in answering this question, correctly identifying the core of the debate and discussing the merits of science based methods. These responses mostly went on to shape their essays by outlining the positivist position and evaluating it, typically, with reference to interpretivism. The very best tackled the key term in the question ('confidence') head on and were duly rewarded. Less successful responses tended to list positivist methods and their strengths and limitations. Some knowledge marks were gained for this but often these points were not developed in relation to the question and this limited their value. Many candidates introduced the concepts of triangulation and methodological pluralism into the discussion usually as an evaluative point or in conclusion. This was welcome although not all candidates showed explicitly how these applied to the question.

### Question 3

Most candidates who tackled this question did so effectively. A number of responses were of a high quality showing understanding of practical, ethical, theoretical and empirical knowledge. Most candidates could compare overt and covert observation and the strengths and weaknesses of each, although the majority were more confident when discussing covert observation. Many responses made good use of empirical studies to support their points, although these were not always accurate in terms of being overt studies. Weaker responses tended to simply contrast observation with a range of other methods and this limited their chances of achieving higher marks.

# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 9699/23

Paper 23

## Key features

- The best responses showed sound knowledge and understanding of a range of key concepts and sociological theories and applied these effectively to the questions.
- Candidates continue to perform a little better in the essay question compared to the data response one. This was partly a skills based issue.
- The skills required for success in some elements of **Question 1** need to be developed in order to achieve higher marks.
- There was evidence that key methodological concepts and approaches are not always well understood.

## General comments

The standard of responses was similar to the previous session. Those candidates achieving the highest marks demonstrated all of the relevant skills. The data response element (**Section A**) was marginally less well answered than the essay element (**Section B**). Centres should look to develop candidates' skills in respect of the assessment objectives of each part of **Question 1**. Practising what is expected in terms of content and substance is likely to result in candidates improving their performance in this section.

**Questions 1a** and **1b** should be answered concisely with candidates clearly identifying a point and then developing it, using sociological concepts and examples. Some candidates write at great length on these questions, which is unnecessary. With 1c candidates lacked some knowledge of a key approach (feminist methodology) and this made very good answers difficult to achieve. With this question, Centres should think in terms of encouraging candidates to produce discrete points that are sociologically developed to maximise marks. It is worth pointing out that this question does not require candidates to evaluate or argue. Responses to the essay questions were generally sound with a number of candidates demonstrating very good knowledge and understanding of the material. Of the two essays, **Question 2** produced the best answers. In both questions there was evidence of sound essay construction skills and analytical understanding of different theoretical strands. Other responses needed to develop more detailed arguments in order to achieve high marks. There were no rubric errors and mostly no time related issues, although the responses to some questions were too long in relation to the marks allocated.

## **Question 1**

- (a) Candidates were permitted to take two approaches to this question and there was a fairly equal division of responses. Most obtained one mark at least but not many gave a full definition to show how bias of either kind might actually work. In terms of skills, candidates should try to provide a response that covers two aspects of the term in the question.
- (b) Most responses were clearly familiar with this issue, often citing census, crime or unemployment statistics to illustrate a strength or limitation. This question demands precision in the way candidates craft their answers. Practising the skills of identifying and then describing should improve candidates' success in this question. A proportion of candidates continue to write too much for this question. A concise paragraph with a clear identification and development of each is enough to claim full marks.
- (c) Most responses suggested that candidates were unfamiliar with feminist methodology. Many offered sound observations on the conduct and merits of unstructured interviews, with good ones linking these to interpretivism but often with limited links to feminism. Only a few responses made explicit the link between feminism and unstructured interviews, although some referred to Oakley's research. As a consequence, many candidates were not able to achieve the highest marks. In

common with previous years, a number of responses made evaluation points, which was not necessary in this question.

- (d) Most candidates demonstrated a reasonable understanding of some of the issues related to secondary data, and could suggest some specific issues with diaries or historical documents. However, a few candidates were confused about the nature of these in terms of sociological use. Anne Frank and Adolf Hitler were the most likely to be referenced. Some applied theoretical perspectives well, with good responses using concepts such as *verstehen* and ideology effectively. High achieving candidates evaluated this methodology in terms of what particular topics it might be most or least useful for, but these were in the minority.

### Question 2

Overall, candidates coped fairly well with this question, most providing a reasonably competent account of at least a couple of the main perspectives on the question. Functionalism and Marxism were often outlined well but sometimes without enough detail on the process of how order is maintained – e.g. Bowles and Gintis on Schools. Feminism was often included although this perspective could have been developed more effectively; for example, with clearer thought on whether patriarchy was more or less likely than gender equality to contribute to order. There were some good attempts at explaining how interactionist concepts explain how order is constructed and maintained, although candidates often gave definitions of key concepts and then stated rather than demonstrated their relevance. Very good answers made links to contemporary problems of social order in parts of the world, with some using these examples to craft evaluative points. These sorts of responses were well rewarded.

### Question 3

A number of candidates showed understanding of either post-modernist concepts or the general trends towards greater social differentiation, mobility, etc. since industrialisation. Other approaches were not sufficiently sociological and were often too influenced by current media views of sexuality as being an individual's master status. Many used transgender examples to illustrate this point. This approach often led candidates to assume that freedom in this area meant that other social constraints, whether economic or cultural, are of little importance. A number of candidates, therefore, did not explore these constraints in assessing the view posed in the question. This led to candidates omitting material that they probably had at their disposal.

# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 9699/31

Paper 31

## General Comments

Most of the candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the relevant sociological concepts and ideas. However, there remains a minority who try to answer the questions using personal opinion and general knowledge rather than by referring to appropriate sociological sources. Answers of this type merit only low marks. The questions on education and religion proved most popular. There were relatively few answers to the development questions. Answers to the **part (b)** questions were often quite long, but in some cases poorly organised and lacking in the assessment that is necessary in order to gain high marks. More practice in constructing analytical and evaluative answers to the **part (b)** questions would help candidates to secure higher marks in the exam.

## Key Features

- Some effective use of research findings to support key points
- High scoring answers demonstrated a good knowledge of concepts and theories
- Higher marks could be gained by better use of analytical skills
- Some low scoring answers relied on personal observation rather than references to relevant sociological evidence and arguments

## Question 1

- (a) Most of the answers to this question demonstrated a sound understanding of the concept of cultural capital. High scoring answers often included detailed references to the work of Bourdieu and some made effective use of studies that draw on the concept of cultural capital, such as those by Ball, Bowe and Gerwitz. There were some lower scoring answers that discussed cultural capital in general terms without linking the material to the educational achievement of middle class pupils.
- (b) Good answers demonstrated a sound understanding of Althusser's idea that education systems are part of the ideological state apparatus. There were a few high scoring answers that provided a sustained critical analysis of the extent to which education systems serve ideological functions. Use of relevant studies of schooling was often a feature of high quality responses. Lower scoring answers discussed the functions of education in general, with little or no reference to the ideological state apparatus.

## Question 2

- (a) Good answers considered different aspects of the pupil-teacher relationship and provided a sustained account of the impact of these relationships on educational outcomes. There were some lower scoring answers that described just one or two ways in which the pupil-teacher relationship can affect educational outcomes.
- (b) There were some answers to this question that demonstrated little understanding of the concept of the gendered curriculum. Good responses identified several ways in which the gendered curriculum might act as an obstacle to females achieving educational success. High scoring answers also provided a detailed assessment of the extent to which the gendered curriculum impacts upon the educational performance of females. As part of the assessment, some candidates made good use of references to relevant studies, such as those by Lobban, Best, Abraham, Stanworth, and Spender.

### Question 3

- (a) There were some good answers that discussed a range of difficulties in defining the term development. High scoring responses often made good use of the distinction between economic and non-economic definitions of development. Lower scoring answers were usually confined to discussing just one or two difficulties in defining the term development. There were also some low scoring responses that outlined different definitions of development without linking the material directly to the wording of the question.
- (b) There were some good answers that discussed a range of aid programmes and how they aim to help the poor. High scoring responses provided a critical analysis of the extent to which aid programmes can succeed in abolishing poverty. There were a lot of answers in the middle of the mark range that offered a detailed account of different aid programmes without providing much assessment of how successful these programmes are in addressing poverty. Low scoring answers were often limited to a few general observations about the causes of poverty or a few personal reflections on the limitations of aid.

### Question 4

- (a) Good answers to this question provided a detailed account of several ways in which education may contribute to the process of development. Some candidates made particularly effective use of examples of education programmes to support their answers. There were some lower scoring answers that described one or two education programmes without making clear links to the process of development.
- (b) A lot of the answers to this question demonstrated only a basic understanding of what is meant by globalisation. Some candidates discussed development in general rather than globalisation specifically. Good answers explained clearly what is meant by globalisation and gave several examples of how some countries may benefit more than others from global forces. High quality responses often distinguished between economic and cultural aspects of globalisation. There were some low scoring responses that were limited to a few simple assertions about the economic impact of globalisation on developing countries.

### Question 5

- (a) Good answers considered a variety of reasons why news reports might contain bias. Some candidates made particularly effective use of theories of the media, such as the Marxist account of the influences on news reporting. Concepts such as hegemony, gatekeeping, and news values often featured in high scoring responses. There were some low scoring answers that relied on assertion about media bias rather than providing references to appropriate sociological concepts and evidence.
- (b) A lot of the answers to this question achieved marks in the middle of the range by discussing various influences on the content of the media, but with only a limited focus on government censorship. Better answers demonstrated a deeper understanding of different ways in which the government may influence the content of the media through censorship. Some candidates made good use of the pluralist and Marxist theories of the media to support their assessment of the influence of government censorship. There were also some high quality answers that made useful distinctions between the new media and the traditional media in relation to the power of government censorship.

### Question 6

- (a) Many of the answers to this question lacked a clear understanding of the cultural effects theory. There were a few high scoring responses that identified the main features of the cultural effects theory and explained how that theory differs from other models of how the media influences human behaviour. Low scoring answers were often characterised by a few general observations about the impact of the media, with no direct links to the cultural effects theory.
- (b) Good answers often used two or more theories of the media to address the issues raised by the question. References to the pluralist and Marxist theories featured in many of the responses. There were some high quality answers that considered a range of arguments for and against the idea that

the media are effective in representing the interests of all groups in society. Some candidates made effective use of references to studies of the media to support their answers. There were a few answers at the lower end of the mark range that were confined to simple assertions about whose interests the media represent.

#### Question 7

- (a) Most of the candidates who answered this question demonstrated some understanding of what is meant by 'new religious movements'. There were some responses in the middle of the mark range that explained the attractions of new religious movements for different social groups. Better answers focused on the attractions of new religious movements for disadvantaged groups specifically.
- (b) Most candidates recognised that the question offered the opportunity to discuss the secularisation theory. Good answers focussed on the debates about the role of science in the supposed decline of religious influence and belief. Some high scoring answers questioned the extent to which science has undermined religious ways of thinking. There were a lot of answers in the middle of the mark range that debated the extent of secularisation rather than providing a sustained account of the role of science in the purported loss of religious influence in society. Low scoring answers were mostly confined to a few assertions about the role of religion.

#### Question 8

- (a) Good answers to this question identified several difficulties in researching the extent of religious belief. Each difficulty was explained in detail in high scoring answers. Lower scoring answers were often limited to brief explanations of just one or two relevant difficulties. There were a few answers at the lower end of the mark range that made a few simple points about the nature of religious belief without referring to the difficulty of measuring religiosity.
- (b) Most of the candidates who answered this question recognised that it offered an opportunity to discuss the Marxist theory of religion. Good answers described the main features of the Marxist theory and made useful contrasts with other theories of religion, such as the functionalist and Weberian views. There were some high scoring answers that questioned the extent to which religion is a form of ideology that supports the interests of the ruling class. Examples of where religious groups have opposed the status quo were often cited to support the argument that religion can be a radical force for social change. Lower scoring answers presented a simplified version of Marxist theory, which often lacked references to key concepts and thinkers. There was little or no assessment of the Marxist theory in answers at the lower end of the mark range.

# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 9699/32

Paper 32

## Key Messages

- Good use of local and international examples to illustrate key points
- Scope for further references to studies in many of the answers
- Wider use of concepts would be desirable
- Higher marks could be gained for the **(b)** questions by providing more assessment
- Knowledge of theories was good overall.

## General Comments

The questions on education proved most popular again and generally elicited the best responses. The questions on the media were also popular and well answered overall. Answers to the development questions showed improvement over the previous exam session, though there remains scope for improvement in terms of the level of detail and range of sociological sources that are used in responding to the questions. The questions on religion were less well answered than in previous sessions. Many of the candidates demonstrated only a limited knowledge of what is meant by religious fundamentalism and the concept of cultural defence. Overall, better use of concepts and references to studies would be one way in which candidates could secure higher marks. A greater focus on providing assessment in answering the part **(b)** questions would also be a way of gaining higher marks.

There were few cases of rubric error and most candidates appeared to be able to answer three questions adequately in the time available.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### Question 1

- (a)** Good answers demonstrated a sound understanding of what is meant by pupil sub-cultures and linked the material well to the impact on the educational achievement of different minority ethnic groups. There were some lower scoring answers that were confined mainly to discussing pupil sub-cultures in general rather than exploring the connections with the educational achievements of different minority ethnic groups.
- (b)** Well constructed answers often began by explaining what is meant by 'negative attitudes to education' and why this might be a reason why male working class pupils underachieve at school. This was followed, in high scoring answers, by a sustained assessment of the view on which the question was based. Candidates gained credit for identifying other factors, apart from negatives attitudes, that might influence the educational performance of male working class pupils. There were also some very good answers that used references to relevant studies to question the idea that the educational underachievement of male working class pupils can be explained in terms of negative attitudes to education. There were some low scoring answers that demonstrated little knowledge of the theoretical debates about the educational achievement of different genders and social class groups.

## Question 2

- (a) Good answers identified a range of factors linked to home background that can influence pupil behaviour in schools. References to appropriate studies also featured in many high scoring responses. Lower scoring answers often lacked detail and/or covered only a narrow range of relevant points.
- (b) Most of the candidates who answered this question demonstrated some awareness of what is meant by 'compensatory education'. Good answers discussed a range of points for and against the idea that inequality in education can be overcome by providing compensatory education for disadvantaged pupils. There were some lower scoring answers that considered different ways of removing inequality in education without making strong links to compensatory education. There were also a few answers towards the bottom of the mark range where the candidates offered only a few assertions about the factors leading to inequality in education.

## Question 3

- (a) Good answers often made use of relevant examples to illustrate how transnational corporations can have a negative impact on development. Some lower scoring answers were confined to making just one or two general points about the impact of transnational corporations. A few candidates discussed development in broad terms, with no direct reference to transnational corporations.
- (b) There were some high scoring answers that made effective use of the distinction between cultural and structural theories of development. Answers in the higher mark range often included relevant examples of cultural influences on development. Some candidates discussed the factors affecting development without referring to cultural influences specifically. There were also some low scoring answers that focused on cultural theories of poverty rather than considering development overall.

## Question 4

- (a) Good answers to this question offered clear explanations of three or more reasons why it is difficult to measure the extent of poverty in developing countries. Lower scoring answers were less detailed and/or covered a narrower range of points. There were a few low scoring answers where the candidates discussed the nature of poverty in developing countries rather than address directly the issue of why it may be difficult to measure the extent of poverty.
- (b) Good answers to this question often included references to relevant theories, such as the culture of poverty thesis and the cycle of poverty. Some candidates also made effective use of references to Marxist and New Right perspectives on poverty. Lower scoring answers made less use of relevant concepts and theories. Some answers in the lower mark range relied on personal opinion rather than references to sociological sources in addressing the issues raised by the question.

## Question 5

- (a) There were some good answers to this question that provided useful examples to illustrate why governments may fear the power of global media organisations. High scoring answers often examined the impact of both the new media and the traditional media. Lower scoring responses often lacked detailed explanations and some candidates discussed the power of the media in general rather than relating the material to the relationship with governments.
- (b) High scoring answers examined a number of ways in which newspaper and television owners can influence the content of the media. Well formulated conclusions were reached about the extent to which the media are controlled by the owners. There were a lot of answers in the middle of the mark range that discussed a wide range of influences on the content of the media, without providing a sustained analysis of the role of the owners. Low scoring answers often made just a few general points about the role of the media or mentioned briefly just one or two ways in which the owners may influence media content.

### Question 6

- (a) Good answers to this question described several ways in which the media may influence the outcome of government elections. High scoring answers often included references to relevant concepts and examples of the political role of the media. Lower scoring answers were often limited in the range of points made and lacked detailed explanations. A few candidates discussed the role of the media in general rather than linking the material to government elections.
- (b) Most of the candidates who attempted this question demonstrated some understanding of the term 'ideological state apparatus'. High scoring answers often provided a detailed account of Althusser's distinction between ideological and repressive state apparatus and linked the material well to an analysis of the role of the media. Answers in the middle of the mark range often provided a sound descriptive account of the ideological role of the media, but lacked a strong analysis of how far it is correct to view the media as part of the ideological state apparatus. Low scoring answers offered only a few general points about the role of the media, with little direct reference to the idea of an ideological state apparatus.

### Question 7

- (a) There were a lot of answers to this question that gained marks in the middle of the range by discussing Durkheim's theory of religion without a sustained focus on his concept of collective conscience. By contrast, higher scoring answers discussed in detail the importance of the 'collective conscience' in Durkheim's theory of religion. There were a few lower scoring answers that offered only one or two vague points about Durkheim's perspective on religion.
- (b) Candidates who answered this question often demonstrated only a weak understanding of what is meant in Sociology by 'cultural defence'. Good answers considered a range of social groups and explained how each may use religion as a way of defending their culture. Lower scoring answers often relied on observations about the role of religion in general and struggled to articulate a clear understanding of what is meant by cultural defence.

### Question 8

- (a) High scoring answers discussed several reasons why some minority groups have high levels of participation in religious practices. Helpful references to studies and examples of religious groups often featured in the better answers. Answers in the middle of the mark range tended to focus on just one minority ethnic group and lacked detail in the explanations offered. There were some low scoring answers that discussed the reasons for religious participation in general rather than focussing on particular minority ethnic groups.
- (b) There were a few high scoring answers where the candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism and provided an effective analysis of the links between fundamentalism and the declining power of religion in society. However, the majority of the answers fell into the middle of the mark range and were characterised by attempts to answer the question by adapting material on the secularisation debate. While these answers provided a useful discussion of claims about the declining power of religion, they generally lacked a sound analysis of the reasons for the growth in religious fundamentalism. Low scoring answers often lacked clear references to fundamentalism and were confined to a few assertions about the power of religion today.

# SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 9699/33

Paper 33

## General Comments

Most of the candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the relevant sociological concepts and ideas. However, there remains a minority who try to answer the questions using personal opinion and general knowledge rather than by referring to appropriate sociological sources. Answers of this type merit only low marks. The questions on education and religion proved most popular. There were relatively few answers to the development questions. Answers to the **part (b)** questions were often quite long, but in some cases poorly organised and lacking in the assessment that is necessary in order to gain high marks. More practice in constructing analytical and evaluative answers to the **part (b)** questions would help candidates to secure higher marks in the exam.

## Key Features

- Some effective use of research findings to support key points
- High scoring answers demonstrated a good knowledge of concepts and theories
- Higher marks could be gained by better use of analytical skills
- Some low scoring answers relied on personal observation rather than references to relevant sociological evidence and arguments

## Question 1

- (a) Most of the answers to this question demonstrated a sound understanding of the concept of cultural capital. High scoring answers often included detailed references to the work of Bourdieu and some made effective use of studies that draw on the concept of cultural capital, such as those by Ball, Bowe and Gerwitz. There were some lower scoring answers that discussed cultural capital in general terms without linking the material to the educational achievement of middle class pupils.
- (b) Good answers demonstrated a sound understanding of Althusser's idea that education systems are part of the ideological state apparatus. There were a few high scoring answers that provided a sustained critical analysis of the extent to which education systems serve ideological functions. Use of relevant studies of schooling was often a feature of high quality responses. Lower scoring answers discussed the functions of education in general, with little or no reference to the ideological state apparatus.

## Question 2

- (a) Good answers considered different aspects of the pupil-teacher relationship and provided a sustained account of the impact of these relationships on educational outcomes. There were some lower scoring answers that described just one or two ways in which the pupil-teacher relationship can affect educational outcomes.
- (b) There were some answers to this question that demonstrated little understanding of the concept of the gendered curriculum. Good responses identified several ways in which the gendered curriculum might act as an obstacle to females achieving educational success. High scoring answers also provided a detailed assessment of the extent to which the gendered curriculum impacts upon the educational performance of females. As part of the assessment, some candidates made good use of references to relevant studies, such as those by Lobban, Best, Abraham, Stanworth, and Spender.

### Question 3

- (a) There were some good answers that discussed a range of difficulties in defining the term development. High scoring responses often made good use of the distinction between economic and non-economic definitions of development. Lower scoring answers were usually confined to discussing just one or two difficulties in defining the term development. There were also some low scoring responses that outlined different definitions of development without linking the material directly to the wording of the question.
- (b) There were some good answers that discussed a range of aid programmes and how they aim to help the poor. High scoring responses provided a critical analysis of the extent to which aid programmes can succeed in abolishing poverty. There were a lot of answers in the middle of the mark range that offered a detailed account of different aid programmes without providing much assessment of how successful these programmes are in addressing poverty. Low scoring answers were often limited to a few general observations about the causes of poverty or a few personal reflections on the limitations of aid.

### Question 4

- (a) Good answers to this question provided a detailed account of several ways in which education may contribute to the process of development. Some candidates made particularly effective use of examples of education programmes to support their answers. There were some lower scoring answers that described one or two education programmes without making clear links to the process of development.
- (b) A lot of the answers to this question demonstrated only a basic understanding of what is meant by globalisation. Some candidates discussed development in general rather than globalisation specifically. Good answers explained clearly what is meant by globalisation and gave several examples of how some countries may benefit more than others from global forces. High quality responses often distinguished between economic and cultural aspects of globalisation. There were some low scoring responses that were limited to a few simple assertions about the economic impact of globalisation on developing countries.

### Question 5

- (a) Good answers considered a variety of reasons why news reports might contain bias. Some candidates made particularly effective use of theories of the media, such as the Marxist account of the influences on news reporting. Concepts such as hegemony, gatekeeping, and news values often featured in high scoring responses. There were some low scoring answers that relied on assertion about media bias rather than providing references to appropriate sociological concepts and evidence.
- (b) A lot of the answers to this question achieved marks in the middle of the range by discussing various influences on the content of the media, but with only a limited focus on government censorship. Better answers demonstrated a deeper understanding of different ways in which the government may influence the content of the media through censorship. Some candidates made good use of the pluralist and Marxist theories of the media to support their assessment of the influence of government censorship. There were also some high quality answers that made useful distinctions between the new media and the traditional media in relation to the power of government censorship.

### Question 6

- (a) Many of the answers to this question lacked a clear understanding of the cultural effects theory. There were a few high scoring responses that identified the main features of the cultural effects theory and explained how that theory differs from other models of how the media influences human behaviour. Low scoring answers were often characterised by a few general observations about the impact of the media, with no direct links to the cultural effects theory.
- (b) Good answers often used two or more theories of the media to address the issues raised by the question. References to the pluralist and Marxist theories featured in many of the responses. There were some high quality answers that considered a range of arguments for and against the idea that

the media are effective in representing the interests of all groups in society. Some candidates made effective use of references to studies of the media to support their answers. There were a few answers at the lower end of the mark range that were confined to simple assertions about whose interests the media represent.

#### Question 7

- (a) Most of the candidates who answered this question demonstrated some understanding of what is meant by 'new religious movements'. There were some responses in the middle of the mark range that explained the attractions of new religious movements for different social groups. Better answers focused on the attractions of new religious movements for disadvantaged groups specifically.
- (b) Most candidates recognised that the question offered the opportunity to discuss the secularisation theory. Good answers focussed on the debates about the role of science in the supposed decline of religious influence and belief. Some high scoring answers questioned the extent to which science has undermined religious ways of thinking. There were a lot of answers in the middle of the mark range that debated the extent of secularisation rather than providing a sustained account of the role of science in the purported loss of religious influence in society. Low scoring answers were mostly confined to a few assertions about the role of religion.

#### Question 8

- (a) Good answers to this question identified several difficulties in researching the extent of religious belief. Each difficulty was explained in detail in high scoring answers. Lower scoring answers were often limited to brief explanations of just one or two relevant difficulties. There were a few answers at the lower end of the mark range that made a few simple points about the nature of religious belief without referring to the difficulty of measuring religiosity.
- (b) Most of the candidates who answered this question recognised that it offered an opportunity to discuss the Marxist theory of religion. Good answers described the main features of the Marxist theory and made useful contrasts with other theories of religion, such as the functionalist and Weberian views. There were some high scoring answers that questioned the extent to which religion is a form of ideology that supports the interests of the ruling class. Examples of where religious groups have opposed the status quo were often cited to support the argument that religion can be a radical force for social change. Lower scoring answers presented a simplified version of Marxist theory, which often lacked references to key concepts and thinkers. There was little or no assessment of the Marxist theory in answers at the lower end of the mark range.