

SOCIOLOGY

<p>Paper 9699/11 Socialisation, Identity and Methods of Research</p>

Key messages

- High scoring answers showed effective use of a wide range of sociological material.
- High scoring responses effectively used sociological material such as concepts, theories and research evidence to back the points that they made to reach the highest mark bands.
- In **Section A** many candidates would have benefitted from developing their sociological knowledge and understanding of sociological concepts for some questions, most notably **2(a)**, **3(a)** and **3(b)**.
- In **Section B**, more candidates opted for the research methods question and demonstrated a better understanding of methods throughout the paper in comparison to their knowledge of socialisation and identity.
- Some candidates produced one sided/unbalanced essay responses in **Section B**.
- Centres could focus on improving candidate's skills in supporting each of their points with sociological evidence for them to increase their marks.

General comments

In **Section A, Question 1**, many candidates wrote too much for this answer. The answer to this question should be brief. **Question 2(a)** was challenging for a high number of candidates who seemed unprepared for it. Few candidates could describe non-representative sampling techniques and score full marks, those that supported each point with relevant sociological material did achieve full marks. **Question 2(b)** was generally well. In **Question 3(a)** candidates that did not score a high mark had not effectively linked their answer to age identity and many candidates struggled to support their points with relevant sociological material. In **Question 3(b)** candidates were more successful than in **3(a)** with the most common answers relating to the media.

In **Section B, Question 5** was the most popular question of the two options available. In **Question 4** candidates were much stronger in the arguments detailing explanations of deviance but struggled to evaluate effectively explanations of deviance. In **Question 5** many candidates competently discussed the effectiveness of triangulation/methodological pluralism and mostly developed better evaluations than candidates who chose to answer **Question 4**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Most candidates were able to access the two marks for identifying two quantitative research methods in this question, with questionnaires and surveys being the most common choices. A small number of candidates were unable able to secure the additional marks for describing these methods, with some describing the idea of quantitative data instead with no link to the method identified. Some candidates chose qualitative methods such as participant observation, and others chose interviews, without specifying which type, making their answer too vague to gain credit.

Question 2

- (a) This question was poorly understood, and many candidates did not gain any marks. The most commonly creditable responses that considered why a researcher might use a non-representative sampling technique focused on the need for a very specific group of people or focused on practical issues such as access or time. Few candidates were able to secure full marks by clearly explaining their point and linking it to sociological material, such as snowball or random sampling.
- (b) Most candidates were able to explain at least one strength of group interviews. Most good answers focused on engagement of the sample, group discussion encouraging more ideas as the interviewees discussed ideas together and less interviewer bias/effect. Some candidates identified generic points which could apply to any qualitative interview, such as gaining detailed data or increased validity, unless these points were specifically applied to the group setting, they were too vague to credit. A common error was to cite greater representativeness as there are more respondents.

Centres should encourage candidates to adopt a clear and structured approach to answering **2(b)**:
A strength / limitation is.... / X have this as a strength / limitation because they... / This is a strength / limitation because...

Question 3

- (a) Many candidates did not link their knowledge of the family specifically to age identity, giving generalised answers on the family instead. Where candidates did focus on the influence of the family on age identity, very few used sociological material to support their arguments. Some candidates were able to give examples of how different ages of children are treated differently in families, and some referred to rites of passage linked to becoming an adult which families may celebrate such as bar/bat mitzvah. Some weaker responses merely focused on primary socialisation and teaching children norms and values, not engaging with age identity at all. Some candidates only offered one point when two developed points are required to be able to access full marks.
- (b) In this question, candidates needed to engage with *why* the family is not the most important influence on age identity, yet most just listed one, or several other institutions which may be important (not *more important*), which prevented them from accessing the highest mark band. Most answers for this question included, school, media (mainly social media) or peer groups with examples of age-appropriate roles but few answers were developed with sociological material in support. Some good answers on television and the media referenced Postman and the blurring of age identity. Candidates who used such material well, often could not access the top mark band due to failing to contrast with the family. A minority of candidates offered more than one agent as an alternative to the family but only one point can be credited.

Section B

Question 4

Whilst many candidates were able to explain various sociological explanations of deviance, there was often a lack of understanding that the question required them to evaluate these, either directly or by contrasting with non-sociological explanations. Most candidates cited some sociological reasons for deviant behaviour offering concepts such as under-socialisation, marginalisation, labelling and subcultures but did not include relevant sociological material beyond that.

The majority of candidates that did cite theorists often did not develop their points sufficiently. Those candidates that did provide evaluative points often used biological or psychological explanations in contrast to sociological explanations of deviance. Some candidates did not give any evaluation resulting in them receiving no marks for Assessment Objective 3.

Question 5

This was the most popular option question.

Many candidates were able to gain good marks on this question, using a range of methodological terms and engaging well with the debate that using different research methods together is more effective than using one method. Many arguments focused on practical issues. When arguing in support of the view, candidates often mentioned triangulation and/or methodological pluralism, and were able to accurately explain the impact of more than one method in data and issues like validity and reliability. The main weakness in answers to this question was that few candidates successfully illustrated their answer with reference to actual research. Centres would benefit from teaching classic studies which have either focused well on a singular method or used multiple methods, or which raise issues. Some candidates omitted to provide any evaluation.

The question produced answers across the entire mark range though most were poorly answered due to the lack of supporting material and/or evaluation.

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<p>Paper 9699/12 Socialisation, Identity and Methods of Research</p>

Key messages

- High scoring answers showed effective use of a wide range of sociological material.
- High scoring responses effectively used sociological material such as concepts, theories and research evidence to back the points that they made to reach the highest mark bands.
- To achieve full marks in **Question 3 (a)**, candidates should provide two clear and developed points. A number of candidates only provided one point.
- In **Question 3(b)**, the point made must be linked back to all aspects of the question, in this case the answer should be stated as '*the main cause of deviant behaviour*' rather than a simple alternative to cultural deprivation without any wider context being offered.
- Some candidates produced one sided/unbalanced essay responses in **Section B**.
- Centres could focus on improving candidate's skills in supporting each of their points with sociological evidence for them to increase their marks.

General comments

Candidates accessed all the mark bands in each question provided and overall the standard of responses was good.

In **Section A**, most candidates answered **Question 1** well. **Questions 2(a)** and **(b)** required specific knowledge of research methodology. Some candidates struggled with linking positivism to questionnaires in **Question 2(b)** and in **2(b)** it was clear that some candidates had not prepared for a question on field experiments. It is worth noting that two developed points are required to access the highest mark bands for **Question 3(a)** but most candidates only gave two underdeveloped points. Candidates were more successful in detailing one developed point for **Question 3(b)**.

In **Section B** more candidates choose to answer **Question 5**. The standard of responses was variable with some candidates not providing a balanced essay in **Section B** which minimised their chance of accessing the higher mark bands. The most effective responses in both sections of the exam paper effectively applied their knowledge and understanding of sociological evidence to the response they gave to the question.

Comments on specific questions.

Section A

Question 1

Candidates' responses were varied. Many responses could describe two creditable social characteristics associated with the elderly. Popular answers included wisdom/being a grandparent and being a burden due to ill health/being unable to work. In some cases, there was an element of repetition of points limiting candidates to half the available marks. The answer to this question should be brief. Many candidates are writing too much for this answer.

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates were able to identify two reasons why positivists favour the use of questionnaires. The best answers had good explanations of the points they made by clearly linking this to an aspect of positivism. These answers also contained relevant material, often concepts such as reliability were explained in relation to how they supported the point made.

Candidates lost marks on this question by not following the correct format to be able to access all marks. Without supporting material, answers can only get two marks for each separate point offered. In some cases, candidates gave a strength of questionnaires but did not make the link to positivism. Other responses used general points such as time or cost which were not specific to questionnaires or linked to positivism. Some candidates focused their responses on questionnaires in general. Developing the point to show how the material supported their point was an area of difficulty for many candidates and some candidates did not attempt this aspect of the question.

- (b) Many candidates provided two strong limitations of field experiments and gained high marks in this question. Common credible responses included lack of reliability, problems controlling variables and ethical considerations. In some cases, the explanation for points offered did not fully explain why that point was a limitation, for example, points discussing ethical issues were often developed by stating that there may be a lack of consent but without fully explaining *why* this is a limitation.

Some candidates had issues differentiating between laboratory and field experiments while others discussed observations in place of field experiments.

Centres should encourage candidates to adopt a clear and structured approach to answering **2(b)**:
A strength / limitation is.... / X have this as a strength / limitation because they... / This is a strength / limitation because...

Question 3

- (a) Although some candidates were able to give two relevant and developed points for why **cultural** deprivation is the main cause of deviant behaviour, many responses used material that was more relevant to **3(b)**. Good answers were able to discuss inadequate socialisation and develop these points by linking to studies of perspectives such as New Right thinking. Those answers that used inappropriate material often discussed marginalisation or social resistance in some form showing a lack of understanding of cultural deprivation.
- (b) This question tended to be well answered in many cases. Candidates were able to discuss marginalisation, subcultures or biological factors and include relevant material to support the points made. For those candidates who had used the wrong material for **3(a)**, this often meant they did similarly in **3(b)** for example, using under socialisation as a point in this response, rather than in **3(a)**. Alternatively, some candidates did not relate their points back to deviant behaviour which meant that they lost the opportunity to reach the higher marks. To achieve full marks, candidates need to provide two clear, developed points using supporting sociological evidence. Doing so enables candidates to achieve full marks.

Section B

Question 4

There were a wide range of responses covering all aspects of the mark bands in all assessment objectives. Good answers were able to discuss a range of points relating to the influence of peers on shaping an individual's identity. These often included reference to studies and other evidence to support the points made. Willis and Sewell were key studies that were commonly discussed. Reference to gender and ethnicity were seen in many answers but these factors needed to be explicitly linked to peers to receive credit. Evaluation was mainly given in the form of other agencies of socialisation that could shape an individual's identity. The family and the media featured regularly in answers. Some candidates also linked to perspectives such as postmodernism to support the points made.

Weaker answers tended to lack sociological references and gave a more common-sense approach to the answer such as describing how peers impact on an individual but not always making a link to identity. Some

answers focused on why peers did not have an influence by discussing family or the media but again without properly linking their answer back to identity in particular.

Some candidates lost marks due to the quality of their evaluative points. Often points were simply juxtaposed rather than making a clear comparison back to how a specific agency was *more important than peers* in shaping an individual's identity. High-quality answers provided clear evaluative points and consistent comparisons throughout the response.

Question 5

This was the more popular question of the two options offered in **Section B**. Many candidates approached the question by describing quantitative and qualitative methods. Stronger responses successfully linked both quantitative and qualitative methods to scientific approaches through use of interpretivist/positivist debate, providing thorough evaluations of their relevance and limitations. Overall, well-developed answers explicitly referred to scientific methods, ensuring a comprehensive discussion both for and against their value in sociological research.

Weaker responses often did not link quantitative and qualitative methods to the value of scientific methods in sociological research, leading to underdeveloped responses. Quantitative techniques were mostly described without connecting them to scientific principles, showing a partial understanding of the question. Alternatively, while some of the candidates understood qualitative methods well, their responses did not critically evaluate the role of *scientific methods* in sociology.

As with **Question 4**, evaluation in weaker answers was more list-like and lacked engagement with the debate in the question. Some candidates struggled with the 'value' aspect of the question and misinterpreted this as scientific methods having value freedom rather than the value of the use of scientific methods within sociological research.

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Socialisation, Identity and Methods of Research

Key messages

- High scoring answers showed effective use of a wide range of sociological material.
- High scoring responses effectively used sociological material such as concepts, theories and research evidence to back the points that they made to reach the highest mark bands.
- In **Section A** some candidates would have benefitted from more careful consideration of the requirements of some questions notably **2(a)** and **3(a)**.
- To achieve full marks in **Question 3(b)**, candidates can only be credited for one point. Many candidates included more than one point in their answer.
- Some candidates produced one sided/unbalanced essay responses in **Section B**.
- Centres could focus on improving candidate's skills in supporting each of their points with sociological evidence for them to increase their marks.

General comments

Candidates accessed all the mark bands in each question provided and overall the standard of responses was good.

In **Section A** candidates had some difficulty in answering **Question 2(a)** whereas all other questions were answered well by the majority of candidates. It is worth noting that two developed points are required to access the highest mark bands for **Question 3(a)** but most candidates only gave two underdeveloped points. Candidates were more successful in detailing one developed point for **Question 3(b)**.

In **Section B** candidate's choice of essay was divided evenly between the two optional questions to answer. These candidates that answered **Question 4** showed some difficulty in evaluating the argument of age identities changing over time. Some candidates provided only generalised responses relating to age as opposed to how age identities had changed. For **Question 5** candidates seemed better prepared to discuss and evaluate the limited value of questionnaires due to them lacking validity. Centres would benefit from reinforcing the principle of supporting points for and against with empirical evidence/sociological theory and concepts in order to provide developed points to access the higher mark bands.

Comments on specific questions.

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates were able to achieve full marks on this question with covert/overt or participant/non-participant observation being briefly described as a type of observation. Very few candidates failed to identify a type of observation. Most candidates did not waste time by giving unnecessarily detailed responses.

Question 2

- (a) Many candidates seemed to misinterpret this question and rather than focusing their answer on the reasons why it is difficult to be objective when *conducting* sociological research, gave generalised answers as to why research may not be objective or why the participants may not be objective. To score full marks on this question, candidates need to make two initial points, explain them, support them with relevant sociological material such as a concept/study/theory and then explain how that material supports their points. Due to misinterpretation of the question, some candidates did not score full marks. Successful candidates identified reasons such as the *choice of research method being influenced by the personal interests of the researcher* or *the interpretation of data collecting being influenced by sociological perspective/beliefs* as explanations for a lack of objectivity when conducting research.
- (b) This question was answered well on the whole with most candidates being able to identify two limitations correctly. Candidates that failed to gain full marks on this question tended to provide generalised limitations of interviews and were not specific enough in identifying the limitations of *group* interviews in particular. Good responses gave explanations such as *social desirability*, *some participants being too dominant/taking over in the group interview* and *some participants failing to speak up and give their opinion in the group dynamic*. The chosen points once identified should explain why they limit that research method, three marks being available for each point identified.

Centres should encourage candidates to adopt a clear and structured approach to answering **2(b)**:
A strength / limitation is.... / X have this as a strength / limitation because they... / This is a strength / limitation because...

Question 3

- (a) Many candidates explained why those in subcultures act deviantly. Weaker responses did not link their answers to the *norms and values* of subculture and explain whether they *caused* people to act in deviant ways. Generally answers on subcultures linking to deviant acts were therefore underdeveloped and this prevented candidates that answered in this way, from accessing the top mark bands. Most candidates could at least provide one underdeveloped point but the majority gave two. To reach the top marks bands, candidates must give two developed points providing sociological evidence, normally a study or theory with concepts, to back each of their points in detail. It is not necessary for candidates to provide an introduction for this answer, for example defining a subculture, before starting their first point, a conclusion is also not required.
- (b) There were several valid approaches to answering this question. Candidates could either give one argument detailing why subcultural norms and values do not cause people to act in deviant ways, for example, the deviant acts of those in subcultures is often exaggerated/many within subcultures are actually conformists or, they could offer an alternative argument as to why people act in deviant ways. Most candidates chose to offer an alternative argument such as *under-socialisation*, *marginalisation* or *resistance*. As in **Question 3(a)**, for an argument to successfully reach the top mark band it needed to be developed and therefore needed supporting sociological evidence. Most candidates managed to provide an underdeveloped point. A minority of candidates provided two arguments in answer to this question which consequently put them at a time disadvantage or they sacrificed detail in their answer as they are writing more than they need to.

Section B

Question 4

The most successful candidates answering this question tended to detail distinct age identities such as childhood, teenagers, adulthood and the elderly and then described in detail the changes that had occurred to each of these age identities. Candidates that were able support their answers with sociological theory often referring to Postmodernism and the blurring of age boundaries to show the changes that had occurred. Aries was often quoted in supporting the changes that have occurred in the identity of childhood over time.

Candidates in the lower mark bands did manage to discuss the changes to one or more age identities but tended to do so in more general terms with less sociological evidence in support of their chosen points. Candidates seemed to find it harder to evaluate these arguments but those that did so well managed to describe the lack of protection in law for example, for children who are expected to work in underdeveloped

countries or they described how age identities had stayed the same over time, with adult responsibilities remaining fixed.

Some candidates were not well prepared for a question on age identity and tried to relate their answer in some way to class and gender identities which failed to score marks if not related to age at all.

Question 5

Responses to this question were more balanced in comparison to those given in **Question 4**.

Candidates that successfully reached the top mark bands structured their answers around the sociological theories of interpretivism and positivism. Interpretivist arguments specified that questionnaires with closed questions lack validity due to their lack of detail and understanding of the reasons behind the answers given.

Many candidates gave two or more developed points, many referred to interpretivist sociologists such as Weber and his arguments for the need for detail in sociological research. Many candidates were awarded the top mark bands for Knowledge and Understanding as well as Interpretation and Application. Weaker candidates in the lower mark bands provided less supporting sociological evidence and/or gave generalised answers detailing the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires therefore not tackling the specific requirements of the question. Those candidates that successfully detailed the interpretivist arguments often also did well in detailing the positivist arguments that questionnaires have value in sociological research for Analysis and Evaluation marks. Some candidates detailed the different types of questionnaires, closed, open and semi-structured, and successfully described the extent to which each could be deemed valuable.

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<p>Paper 9699/21 The Family</p>

Key messages

- Candidates should ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination – familiarisation through **use of past exam papers/mark schemes** would be beneficial, particularly for **Question 2(b)**.
- Candidates need to ensure responses reflect the marks available.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read through the questions and highlight/underline key words.
- Candidates need to focus responses on the context of **the family**, as this is the unit focus.
- More successful responses applied relevant sociological theories, concepts, and research to demonstrate a sociological awareness.
- Candidates should ensure essay responses (**Question 4/5**) engage in competing views, looking at different sides of the issue and apply relevant sociological material.
- Teachers should provide learners with activities encouraging point development and explicit evaluation.

General comments

Overall, a mixed performance from candidates, with some achieving in the higher mark range, some achieving very few marks, and a range of achievement in between. A large proportion of candidates demonstrated limited sociological knowledge and understanding, as well as skills of application and analysis. A significant number of candidates relied on common sense/anecdotal evidence. Many candidates appeared **unprepared for the demands of particular questions** (see *individual question comments below*), suggesting that they may not have had prior familiarisation with past exam papers, a point raised on previous PE reports.

The more successful candidates responded to question prompts appropriately, and produced responses that **a/ reflected the requirements of the question** and **b / applied relevant sociological material to support and develop their responses**. Candidate responses that achieved lower marks tended not to answer the question set, and/or tended to be descriptive, lacking an application of relevant sociological material in providing evidence of analysis and assessment. These often relied more on common sense/general knowledge. The extended writing questions were excellent discriminators for students to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding (AO1), interpretation and application (AO2), and analysis and evaluation (AO3). However, few candidates explicitly evaluated the question, often relying on juxtaposition of opposing points. Unfortunately, there were candidates that failed to provide a response in **Question 4/5** that addressed contrasting sides of the debate, providing one-sided responses.

Most candidates were able to name relevant sociological concepts/studies/sociologists; less successful candidates did not **apply** these to develop their response, often relying on simply stating them or defining/describing them rather than applying them in a way that engages the question. This was particularly noticeable within essay responses (**Question 4/5**). Any rubric errors tended to occur within **Questions 1, 2(a)** and **3(b)**, whereby candidates provided more points than were required.

In general, candidates need to be better prepared for the requirements of the questions and be more aware of their use of time reflecting the marks available. For example, in **Question 1** lengthy introductions and conclusions are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The majority of candidates were able to identify two relevant ways fatherhood today is different than in the past. Mostly frequently described included *fathers more involved in childcare* and *not always the breadwinner*. Occasionally *stay at home fathers* and on the rare occasion *super dads/new fathers* were given. However, candidates did not always provide a relevant description for the additional mark. Therefore, at best were awarded half the marks available to them.

Weak responses included those that discussed men without the context of fatherhood, therefore often relying on being given the benefit of doubt for the identified way, whilst irrelevant responses included candidates who discussed how fatherhood used to be, without any indication/discussion of how it is different today.

Other irrelevant responses included a small number of candidates who discussed changes in the lives of women/mothers, as well as childhood.

Some candidates wrote overly long descriptive answers, that would earn the marks in the first few lines, or lost focus on providing a relevant answer. There were examples of almost a side of writing for a response that is worth a maximum 4 marks, suggesting these candidates may not have been prepared for, or were not familiar with, the examination question format.

Note: Candidates should be encouraged to structure their **Question 1** responses as two bullet points or numbered 1/2, avoiding introductions and unnecessarily lengthy answers. Also provide just the two responses required.

Question 2

- (a) The majority of candidates were able to provide at least one relevant way with appropriate explanation, with the majority of those able to provide two.

Candidates should be encouraged to construct their responses in a clear and structured way:

- *Identified way/point*
- *Way explained*
- *Relevant supporting sociological material*
- *Application of this material to demonstrate the original point.*

Common responses included *economic (provide workers/act as consumers)*, *socialisation/teach norms and values (ensure children grow to become functional members of society/are not dysfunctional)*, and *reproduction (provide future workers/ensure human population)*, taking a functionalist approach. Occasionally a Marxist approach would be provided for example, *how the family acts as an ideological state apparatus to ensure capitalism goes unquestioned/provide docile workforce*.

The more successful responses clearly demonstrated two ways, supported with the application of appropriate sociological material. Where sociological material was used in support, this tended to rely on *primary socialisation, functionalism/Parsons, warm bath theory, Zaretsky*.

Weaker responses relied more on common-sense and included *teach language/skills, paying taxes*. Weak/irrelevant responses included those that discussed how the individual/family benefits rather than society.

Note: Candidates should be encouraged to structure responses as two separate paragraphs identified as 'The first.... The second....' for clarity and only provide the two points required.

- (b) It is encouraging to see an improvement in the proportion of candidates understanding what is required of them in answering this question. By far the most popular responses included *functionalists ignore the dark side of the family, and they ignore family diversity*.

A common mistake candidates made with their response, was in criticising the nuclear family or in highlighting a consequence of it e.g., *it limits women to the expressive role*. Another common error was in simply stating something functionalist sociologists think about the family, for example, men should be the breadwinner and women the carer. This is *not* the same as limitations of functionalist views of the family.

Note: *Candidates would benefit from using the mark schemes to create a table of strengths and limitations of the key theoretical stances in relation to the family during their studies, to aid their learning and revision.*

Centres should encourage candidates to adopt a clear and structured approach to answering **2(b)**: *A strength / limitation is.... / X have this as a strength / limitation because they... / This is a strength / limitation because...*

Question 3

- (a) Common arguments referred to *the impact of technology exposing children to adult content/themes, the growth in child consumerism, and the increased toxicity of childhood...resulting in the erosion of child innocence*. Very occasionally, other points were made included the *blurring of the distinction between childhood and adulthood as adults increasingly adopt child-like lifestyles (kidults)*, and the *loss of third places for children*, particularly post Covid lockdown.

Weak responses were reliant upon descriptive common-sense (e.g., *children are growing up too fast*) which lacked any significant development and/or sociological support.

Note: *a small number of candidates wasted time providing an unnecessary evaluation of the claim. This is not a requirement of the question (they do this in 3(b)). Furthermore, lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of the nuclear family are unnecessary, and candidates should be discouraged from doing this on this question.*

- (b) Most candidates were able to provide a reasonable response, most commonly the *introduction of protective policies/compulsory schooling, separating childhood from adulthood*. Other responses included how *families have become child-centred and the rise of helicopter-parenting, concluding how these reinforce childhood as a period of innocence and protection*.

The more successful responses engaged sociological material to develop the point made, whilst weaker responses tended to be descriptive and underdeveloped. A very small minority of responses were irrelevant, for example, discussing how childhood should be, or described how childhood used to be in the past, without formulating any discussion to how childhood is not disappearing today.

Section B

Question 4

70 per cent of candidates opted to answer this question over **Question 5**, and responses were of mixed quality.

The more successful responses applied sociological evidence to support claims made about *conjugal roles (Parsons, instrumental/expressive roles), gendered socialisation (Oakley & canalisation, manipulation etc.) and freedoms/restrictions (McRobbie) for example, versus the influence of social class/family economics (various Marxist sociologists, cultural/social capital, Hecht), and ethnicity (Song), for example*. Very few candidates took a postmodernist approach, for example discussing the declining influence of gender, gender neutral socialisation etc.

Weaker responses tended to descriptively focus on gender roles/the different roles men and women have in the family, often demonstrating repetition. These tended to be countered through the impact of having / not having wealth.

Further weak included simply stating what feminists think *should* happen in the family, as opposed to discussing what is *actually* happening, discussing within the context of schools/workplace rather than the family. Relevance to the context of family could have been made here, such as discussing how the workplace reinforced men as the breadwinner, giving economic dominance, decision making etc. and would have made for quite a sophisticated discussion, however, candidates did not do this.

Note: *candidates need to be more aware of the importance of analysis/evaluation (AO3) within essays, given its weighting in the mark scheme.*

Question 5

Fewer candidates opted for this question and generally the responses produced were weak. This was due in large part, to candidates failing to comprehend the term *structure* in the question, and instead discussed roles or relationships within the family. This is not a new format of question, with numerous examples of such a question having been sat beforehand for reference, so centres/candidates should be aware of how to approach this type of question.

Where candidates did focus correctly on structure, they tended to discuss why there has been an increase in same-sex and lone-parent families versus the dominance of the nuclear family. Very simple answers stated that structures such as same-sex and lone-parent exist and described them.

Other examples of weak responses included discussing New Right views on the negatives of family diversity, and why there should/should not be family diversity, whilst weaker responses included why the nuclear family is the best/ideal family.

Note: *candidates need to be more aware of the importance of analysis/evaluation (AO3) within essays, given its weighting in the mark scheme.*

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<p>Paper 9699/22 The Family</p>

Key messages

- Candidates should ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination – familiarisation through **use of past exam papers/mark schemes** would be beneficial, particularly for **Question 2(b)**.
- Candidates need to ensure responses reflect the marks available.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read through the questions and highlight/underline key words.
- Candidates need to focus responses on the context of **the family**, as this is the unit focus.
- More successful responses applied relevant sociological theories, concepts, and research to demonstrate a sociological awareness.
- Candidates should ensure essay responses (**Question 4/5**) engage in competing views, looking at different sides of the issue and apply relevant sociological material.
- Teachers should provide learners with activities encouraging point development and explicit evaluation.

General comments

Overall, a range of candidate performance with some demonstrating very good comprehension of both the requirements of the questions, and the sociological knowledge and understanding to answer them effectively. There were clear indications that some centres have taken on board comments and guidance in particular relating to Question **2(b)**, where there was a significant improvement.

The more successful candidates responded to question prompts appropriately, and produced responses that **reflected the requirements of the question** and **applied relevant sociological material to support and develop their responses**. Candidate responses that achieved lower marks tended not to answer the question set, and/or tended to be descriptive, lacking an application of relevant sociological material in providing evidence of analysis and assessment. These often relied more on common sense/general knowledge. The extended writing questions were excellent discriminators for students to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding (AO1), interpretation and application (AO2), and analysis and evaluation (AO3). However, few candidates explicitly evaluated the question, often relying on juxtaposition of opposing points. Unfortunately, there were candidates that failed to provide a response in **Questions 4/5** that addressed contrasting sides of the debate, providing one-sided responses.

Most candidates were able to name relevant sociological concepts/studies/sociologists; less successful candidates did not **apply** these to develop their response, often relying on simply stating them or defining/describing them rather than applying them in a way that engages the question. This was particularly noticeable within essay responses (**Q4/5**). Any rubric errors tended to occur within **Question 1, 2(a)** and **3(b)**, whereby candidates provided more points than were required. A minority answers **3(a)(b)** back to front; that is, the response to **3(a)** was more suited to **3(b)**, and vice-versa, perhaps demonstrating some confusion with the term '*exaggerated*'.

In general, candidates need to be better prepared for the requirements of the questions (*see notes below*), and be more aware of their use of time reflecting the marks available. For example, in **Question 1** lengthy introductions and conclusions are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The majority of candidates were able to identify at least one way that the family has become more child-centred, with some appropriate description for the additional mark. Stronger responses identified the two ways required, with appropriate descriptions. Common responses included *children increasingly considered innocent and in need of protection/parents are more concerned with the child's welfare/protection...people are having fewer children/focus more on those they have to ensure their happiness...* Other occasional responses included *growth in helicopter parenting, parents invest more in their children e.g., their education, and increase in new fathers.*

A particular error candidates made, was in their response not explicitly addressing the context of the family. For example, *child labour laws or compulsory education*. These relied on benefit of doubt being given for the identified way (as these *could* have an impact on parenting/child-centredness in the family), however the descriptions needed to explicitly be within the context of family for the additional mark. Most did not do this.

Some candidates did not discuss child-centredness within the context of family but rather society, and there were some examples of simply discussing childhood/what happens in childhood e.g., primary socialisation.

Some candidates wrote overly long descriptive answers, that would earn the marks in the first few lines, or lost focus on providing a relevant answer. There were examples of almost a side of writing for a response that is worth a maximum 4 marks, suggesting these candidates may not have been prepared for, or were not familiar with, the examination question format.

Note: Candidates should be encouraged to structure their **Question 1** responses as two bullet points or numbered 1/2, avoiding introductions and unnecessarily lengthy answers. Also provide just the two responses required.

Question 2

- (a) The majority of candidates were able to provide at least one relevant way with appropriate explanation, with the majority of those able to provide two.

Candidates should be encouraged to construct their responses in a clear and structured way:

- *Identified way/point*
- *Way explained*
- *Relevant supporting sociological material*
- *Application of this material to demonstrate the original point.*

Common responses included how *women act as an emotional support/warm bath for men*, and *how men only need to fulfil paid employment, whereas women in paid employment are still expected to carry out their expressive role duties, therefore have more leisure time*. The more successful responses clearly demonstrated two ways, supported with the application of appropriate sociological material. Weaker responses included for example, discussing how men benefit from family life, without linking to how they benefit *more* than women. Weaker responses included *men can do what they want* and, *men don't need permission to do anything*.

A common error candidates made, was to focus on the burdens women endure, or the oppression they experience rather than how men benefit more. For example, stating that *women have a dual burden or triple shift, leading women to be exhausted*, does not tell us how men benefit more than women from family life. *Very few candidates used these concepts successfully to demonstrate how men benefit more than women*. Other irrelevant responses, include those that discussed the workplace e.g., how women face sexual harassment. Occasionally, candidates discussed children rather than men and women.

Note: Candidates should be encouraged to structure responses as two separate paragraphs identified as 'The first.... The second....' for clarity and only provide the two points required.

- (b) Overall, there was a significant improvement in performance of this question. *What was very encouraging to see, were examples of candidates using the exact language/structure as advised in the PE reports.*

Overwhelmingly, responses were that *radical feminism fails to acknowledge the improvement in the lives of women in the family, or that radical feminists assume all heterosexual relationships are oppressive towards women, or that they fail to recognise that there are women who actively choose the expressive role within the family.* The more successful responses were those that acknowledged what it is about radical feminism that leads them to have this as a limitation.

The most common error candidates made, was in simply making statements such as, radical feminists say men see women as baby making machines, or that women need to live separately to men. These are statements of something they believe. They are not limitations.

Note: *Candidates would benefit from using the mark schemes to create a table of strengths and limitations of the key theoretical stances in relation to the family during their studies, to aid their learning and revision.*

Centres should encourage candidates to adopt a clear and structured approach to answering **2(b)**: *A strength / limitation is.... / X have this as a strength / limitation because they... / This is a strength / limitation because...*

Question 3

- (a) Most common responses were, the *universality of the nuclear family, how the nuclear family is the most common type, how the nuclear family forms the basis of most other types, and how the nuclear family has simply adapted to become neo-conventional/dual earner.*

Some candidates discussed the positives/importance/consequences/ of family diversity, as well as the loss of functions debate. All irrelevant and thus not awarded. Note that, suggesting the nuclear family *should be* dominant, is not the same as saying *it is* dominant, therefore not awardable as this is not answering the question.

Note: *a small number of candidates wasted time providing an unnecessary evaluation of the claim. This is not a requirement of the question (they do this in **3(b)**). Furthermore, lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of the nuclear family are unnecessary, and candidates should be discouraged from doing this on this question.*

- (b) Note: *as pointed out above, there were a small number of candidates whose responses did not answer this question, rather they provided a 3a response as they discussed why diversity has been exaggerated. Therefore, not awarded.*

The common approach to answering this question, was to claim an increase in different family types and describe these. The more sophisticated responses examined a reason for the growth in diversity such as, *the impact of secularisation, changes in social policies or changes in women's ambitions.*

Irrelevant responses included discussing the positives/problems of/judgements made towards (e.g., same-sex families and the harm done to children) family diversity. Other examples include discussing positivism, Parsons' warm bath and how the family is not a safe place, as well as an increase in child-centredness.

Section B

Question 4

More than 50 per cent of candidates opted to answer this question rather than **Question 5**, and responses were of mixed quality although generally not as well answered as **Question 5**. Overall, responses tended to be imbalanced, with candidates much more confident in arguing against rather than in agreement with, the statement.

Arguments in agreement commonly were, how *women now expect men to undertake an equal share of the domestic work*, and *how women will no longer tolerate abusive relationships*. Arguments against, tended to be *changes in laws, secularisation and changes in social attitudes leading to a loss in stigma towards divorce*. The more successful answers were supported with sociological evidence and evaluations made explicitly, rather than relying on juxtaposition.

A common approach resulting in weaker responses, was where candidates failed to address the **increase** in divorce, simply stating reasons why people get divorced for example, they fall out of love, infidelity or domestic violence. Other weak responses discussed how women's attitudes/ambitions have changed but failed to discuss within the context of how/why this leads to divorce.

Irrelevant responses tended to be in discussing why women choose not to marry at all, or why women delay marriage, cohabitating rather than getting married, what family life *should* be like, or why women should not get divorced. All irrelevant and therefore, not awarded.

There were examples of points that could have been made relevant to addressing the question, but the candidates did not do this. Such as, stating in some cultures women cannot get divorced or divorce is frowned upon, without linking back to the context of the question. Here, candidates could have discussed how whilst women may have increased expectations of marriage, their culture/laws of their country do not permit them to get divorced.

Note: *candidates need to be more aware of the importance of analysis/evaluation (AO3) within essays, given its weighting in the mark scheme.*

Question 5

Candidates in general, were able to demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of Marxist (commonly Zeretsky, Althusser, Ansley) and functionalist (commonly Murdock, Parsons, Horwitz) views on the role of the family, whilst less so the different branches of feminism. Postmodernism was used occasionally and with limited effect. However, few candidates achieved in the top level of marks as they neglected to address the context of **the best understanding**, relying instead on a discussion that simply examined the roles/functions of the family. The weakest of these, tended to simply almost list off the different functions/roles of the family according to Marxism/functionalism, without development of discussion.

Note: *candidates need to be more aware of the importance of analysis/evaluation (AO3) within essays, given its weighting in the mark scheme.*

SOCIOLOGY

<p>Paper 9699/23 The Family</p>

Key messages

- Candidates should ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination – familiarisation through **use of past exam papers/mark schemes** would be beneficial, particularly for **Question 2(b)**.
- Candidates need to ensure responses reflect the marks available.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read through the questions and highlight/underline key words.
- Candidates need to focus responses on the context of **the family**, as this is the unit focus.
- More successful responses applied relevant sociological theories, concepts, and research to demonstrate a sociological awareness.
- Candidates should ensure essay responses (**Question 4/5**) engage in competing views, looking at different sides of the issue and apply relevant sociological material.
- Teachers should provide learners with activities encouraging point development and explicit evaluation.

General comments

Overall, candidate performance demonstrating some very good comprehension of both the requirements of the questions, and the sociological knowledge and understanding to answer them effectively. There were clear indications that some centres have taken on board comments and guidance issued from PE reports and elsewhere. In particular, there was a marked improvement in how some candidates approached **2(a)** and **2(b)**, laying out responses in a logical and clear way. The language that some used in responses for **2(b)** is encouraging to see, providing clarity to the construction of candidate responses.

The more successful candidates responded to question prompts appropriately, and produced responses that **reflected the requirements of the question** and **applied relevant sociological material to support and develop their responses**. Candidate responses that achieved lower marks tended not to answer the question set, and/or tended to be descriptive, lacking an application of relevant sociological material in providing evidence of analysis and assessment. These often relied more on common sense/general knowledge. The extended writing questions were excellent discriminators for students to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding (AO1), interpretation and application (AO2), and analysis and evaluation (AO3). However, some candidates relied on juxtaposition of opposing points.

Most candidates were able to name relevant sociological concepts/studies/sociologists; less successful candidates did not **apply** these to develop their response, often relying on simply stating them or defining/describing them rather than applying them in a way that engages the question. This was particularly noticeable within essay responses (**Questions 4/5**). Any rubric errors tended to occur within Questions **1**, **2(a)** and **3(b)**, whereby candidates provided more points than were required.

Some candidates need to be better prepared for the requirements of the questions and be more aware of their use of time reflecting the marks available. For example, in **Question 1** lengthy introductions and conclusions are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Although specifically named policies were not required as an identified way, it was very encouraging to see that a large proportion of candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of social policies, whether national or as often was the case, UK based.

Most candidates were able to identify at least one way with some appropriate description for the additional mark. Stronger responses identified the two ways required, with appropriate descriptions. Common responses included *Divorce Reform law/women are now able to leave abusive marriages*, *Civil Partnership act/same-sex couples are now entitled to the same privileges as heterosexual married couples*, *Equal Pay Act/women can now be breadwinners giving them greater equality in the relationship*, and *welfare provision/help financially support lone-parent mothers provide the necessities for their children*.

Note: Candidates should be encouraged to structure their **Question 1** responses as two bullet points or numbered 1/2, avoiding introductions and unnecessarily lengthy answers. Also provide just the two responses required.

Question 2

- (a) The majority of candidates were able to provide at least one relevant reason with appropriate explanation, with the majority of those able to provide two.

Candidates should be encouraged to construct their responses in a clear and structured way:

- *Identified way/point*
- *Way explained*
- *Relevant supporting sociological material*
- *Application of this material to demonstrate the original point.*

Common responses included *how women are now more financially independent, and therefore do not need to be married for financial security*, *the impact of secularisation means less pressure/social expectation to get married*, as well as *the growth in individualism in seeking to fulfil personal goals/ambitions over getting married*. The more successful responses clearly demonstrated two reasons, supported with the application of appropriate sociological material, whilst irrelevant response tended to be due to candidates discussing why people are *delaying* marriage. This was not the question.

Furthermore, there were a small number of candidates who discussed why people get divorced, and even an example of why people get married. Again, not answering the question and therefore not awarded. Points considered too vague to award, include for example *due to globalisation...* without explaining how globalisation has caused fewer people to get married today.

Note: Candidates should be encouraged to structure responses as two separate paragraphs identified as '*The first.... The second....*' for clarity and only provide the two points required.

- (b) Overall, a mixed success to this question. *What is encouraging to see, is that there continues to be some centres encouraging their candidates to use the exact language/structure as advised in the PE reports.* This serves the candidates well in constructing their responses.

Predominantly, responses focused on how the New Right *highlight the role of state policies in eroding marriage/nuclear family*, as well as the *attention it brings to the importance of the nuclear family in bringing social stability*. The more successful responses were those that acknowledged what it is about the New Right that leads them to have this as a strength. This element is often overlooked.

The most common error candidates made, was making statements such as, they are against diversity, or they prefer the nuclear family. These are statements of something they believe. They are not strengths.

Note: Candidates would benefit from using the mark schemes to create a table of strengths and limitations of the key theoretical stances in relation to the family during their studies, to aid their learning and revision.

Centres should encourage candidates to adopt a clear and structured approach to answering **2(b)**:
A strength / limitation is.... / X have this as a strength / limitation because they... / This is a strength / limitation because...

Question 3

- (a) The question was well answered by most. Commonly, responses focused on how *grandparents could provide care for grandchildren, particularly in dual worker families, or how they can provide financial support as they may still be working due to law changes/they receive a pension, or that they can ensure the transmission of cultural heritage*. What did act as a discriminator, was more able candidates applying sociological concepts/sociologists to create a developed point, potentially pushing them into the top level of marks available. Weaker responses relied on anecdotal/common sense examples.

Note: a small number of candidates wasted time providing an unnecessary evaluation of the claim. This is *not* a requirement of the question (they do this in **3(b)**). Furthermore, lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of the nuclear family are unnecessary, and candidates should be discouraged from doing this on this question.

- (b) The overwhelming approach to answering this question, was to claim grandparents as a burden. This tended to state how they were financially, due to needing medicines, and physically/emotionally as they needed care. The more sophisticated responses tended to discuss how the daughters would become sandwich carers, possibly having to give up their paid work and the consequences of this for example, losing their independence or becoming more reliant on the husband.

Weaker responses included simply stating for example, grandparents will create a dual or even triple burden on the women...without explaining this point, examining what these dual or triple burdens actually are.

Section B

Question 4

60 per cent of candidates opted to answer this question over **Question 5**, and overall, arguments for Knowledge and Understanding (AO1) tended to be better linked to the question than arguments against (AO3). Concepts such as reproducing social solidarity or social consensus were often overlooked, tending to simply examine positive functions the family carries out.

Most candidates tended to focus on the role/s the family performs, rather than address whether it was the *main* role, and often simply became a discussion of Marxist views versus functionalist views of what the roles of the family are, without addressing the context of whether inequality is produced. For example, the family has the role of consumerism, without discussing how this creates inequality in society.

Weaker responses, tended to discuss inequality in the family or simply state the different gender roles, without linking to how this related to inequality in society. For example, some responses made simple statements such as, *the family is an ideological state apparatus...*without any explanation how or examining how this produces inequality in society.

There were some examples of candidates used material from the education unit rather than family. This was acceptable, if it was linked back to family e.g., cultural capital.

Note: a small number of candidates wasted time providing an unnecessary evaluation of the claim. This is *not* a requirement of the question (they do this in **3(b)**). Furthermore, lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of the nuclear family are unnecessary, and candidates should be discouraged from doing this on this question.

Question 5

The more successful responses overwhelmingly examined gender socialisation (Oakley and canalisation, manipulation etc.) and gender expectation (e.g., McRobbie), with a tendency to also examine the impact on children of traditional gender roles of parents (expressive/instrumental). Counter arguments commonly examined the impact of social class (e.g., Hecht, Lareau) and ethnicity (Song) and/or cultural traditions (including religion). Occasionally, postmodern arguments about the declining influence of gender, would be examined.

Weaker responses demonstrated more of a common-sense approach to how boys and girls are dressed in different coloured clothes, are given traditionally masculine/feminine toys and are expected to undertake different tasks when helping parents. Counter arguments would often be simple examples of how different levels of income/wealth can have an impact.

However, many candidates did not focus on the context of main influence, instead simply discussing the different influences.

Note: *a small number of candidates wasted time providing an unnecessary evaluation of the claim. This is not a requirement of the question (they do this in 3(b)). Furthermore, lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of the nuclear family are unnecessary, and candidates should be discouraged from doing this on this question*

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/31
Education

Key messages

- Candidates should allocate their time according to the marks awarded for each question and aim to spend a minute and a half for every mark. For example, 6 minutes would be given for a 4-mark question.
- Candidates should read each question carefully and responses should directly address the question.
- Candidates should fully explain their points in relation to the question asked.
- Practising on questions from past papers and looking at the mark schemes will help candidates to prepare for the exam.

General comments

To gain good marks candidates must use relevant sociological evidence. Every point should have some evidence (study, theory, concept, statistics, relevant examples). Marks can only be awarded if the evidence used is related to the question asked. Phrases such as ‘this study supports the argument that...’ is helpful in demonstrating relevance.

In **Question 3** candidates are arguing against a given statement. They do not need to give any arguments supporting it. Arguments against it can include criticisms of the logic or evidence on which it is based, as well as presenting alternative points of view.

In **Question 4** candidates should be encouraged to present balanced essays, which include arguments from both sides. As well as presenting the two opposing arguments, the strongest responses will evaluate each of them. This means looking critically at the evidence used on both sides and showing that an argument need not be completely true or false. It may be more or less applicable for different people at different times and in different places. A conclusion should be given. This should briefly explain how far the issue stated in the question is useful. To weigh this up, candidates may consider all the evidence used and the points of view discussed in their response.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates answered reasonably well. The most common correct responses were the ideal pupil being seen as feminine, the negative labelling of boys, differences in expectation or discipline between genders, the gendered curriculum, and the feminisation of schools in terms of role models or assessment methods. Some candidates missed out on a second mark by not explaining why the reason selected meant boys were disadvantaged – for example, some mentioned boys being pushed into masculine subjects, but did not explain why this meant boys were at a disadvantage.

Question 2

The most successful responses focused the on impact of the ethnocentric curriculum and on the differences in family expectations/motivations, many candidates referred to 'Tiger mums'. However, many candidates were unable to score beyond 4 marks due to the lack of sociological material in their answers. Some examples provided seemed to relate to the candidates own experiences rather than sociological evidence, and therefore the material was not credited.

Question 3

Good answers focused on in-school factors such as habitus, labelling or streaming, or the structures of society or education systems being reasons for class differences in attainment. However, many candidates misunderstood what this question was asking. Some answered the question by explaining that social class does not always lead to differences in educational attainment rather than looking at *causes for the difference other than* home background. Some stated that the education system is meritocratic and therefore everyone is treated equally but did not go on to explain *why there are* still social class differences in attainment. Other candidates explained how material factors lead to differential attainment, not realising that this is counted as 'home background'. Others explained that gender and ethnicity are more important in determining attainment than social class, but not answering the question.

Question 4

Good essays referred to Althusser's ideological state apparatus and Bowles and Gintis' correspondence theory and contrasted these with functionalist and social democratic perspectives. Some candidates also pointed out areas of resistance and alternative approaches to education. However, a number of candidates simply listed the ideas associated with these theorists without explaining them. The best responses referred to how particular policies or studies of school processes demonstrated whether education does or does not serve the interests of capitalism. A lot of responses were very short. Candidates need to be clear about the expectations for both quality and quantity of sociological knowledge required for an A Level essay.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/32
Education

Key messages

- Candidates should allocate their time according to the marks awarded for each question and aim to spend a minute and a half for every mark. For example, 6 minutes would be given for a 4-mark question.
- Candidates should read each question carefully and responses should directly address the question.
- Candidates should fully explain their points in relation to the question asked.
- Practising on questions from past papers and looking at the mark schemes will help candidates to prepare for the exam.

General comments

To gain good marks candidates must use relevant sociological evidence. Every point should have some evidence (study, theory, concept, statistics, relevant examples). Marks can only be awarded if the evidence used is related to the question asked. Phrases such as 'this study supports the argument that...' is helpful in demonstrating relevance.

In **Question 3** candidates are arguing against a given statement. They do not need to give any arguments supporting it. Arguments against it can include criticisms of the logic or evidence on which it is based, as well as presenting alternative points of view.

In **Question 4** candidates should be encouraged to present balanced essays, which include arguments from both sides. As well as presenting the two opposing arguments, the strongest responses will evaluate each of them. This means looking critically at the evidence used on both sides and showing that an argument need not be completely true or false. It may be more or less applicable for different people at different times and in different places. A conclusion should be given. This should briefly explain how far the issue stated in the question is useful. To weigh this up, candidates may consider all the evidence used and the points of view discussed in their response.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates were able to give two clear ways of how schools reinforce ethnic stereotypes, with labelling, streaming and the ethnocentric curriculum the most common answers. However, many students only gave an example of teacher labelling, the ethnocentric curriculum etc. without linking this to *how* it reinforced ethnic stereotypes, thus missing the second mark. A few candidates did not understand the term 'reinforce' and instead wrote about measures that schools can take to reduce the stereotyping of ethnicities. Some wrote about the actions of peers or parents, without any reference to the actions of schools. Others discussed gender stereotypes perpetuated in schools, thereby completely missing the point.

Question 2

Most of the high-scoring answers for this question discussed the impact of Bourdieu's habitus and Bernstein's speech codes on educational attainment. Many candidates were unable to score beyond 4 marks due to the lack of sociological material in their answers. A significant number of candidates identified cultural capital without explaining *why* it affects educational attainment. For example, identifying parental support/investments in children's educational attainment without explaining how this could affect attainment. Some candidates were unclear on what cultural capital was, with many answers referring to economic or

social capital, or the attitudes and actions of parents without explaining the role of cultural capital in these. Other candidates discussed material deprivation in general rather than focusing specifically on cultural capital, which limited the number of marks awarded.

Question 3

The majority of students were able to fully engage with this question due to a good understanding of the of arguments against the view that the education system advantages males. Most were able to identify two arguments against the view with the most common arguments being, the feminisation of education, policies to reduce the gendered curriculum, the crisis of masculinity, gender-based school subcultures, teacher labelling and to a lesser extent, functionalists arguments relating to meritocracy and evidence on lower qualifications of males. A significant number referred to the work of Crespi, Francis and Skelton, Mac and Ghail, Willis etc. While a few candidates were able to explain the points in detail for each argument, many gave less developed arguments that lacked appropriate sociological materials. The most common problem was for candidates to use material related to out-of-school factors, such as workplace changes or Sue Sharpe's study of girls' attitudes, without any link to the education system. Some candidates adopted structural explanations without relating their point to the school system. Others wasted time on introductory paragraphs referring to historical gender inequality. A few mistakenly gave arguments in support of the view.

Question 4

The most successful responses focused on key functionalists and their view of the role of education, including Durkheim, Parsons, Davis and Moore. Stronger answers showed some depth with reference to concepts like meritocracy, role allocation, social mobility, comprehensive education, the correspondence principle, universalistic values and equality of opportunity. Some of the responses were general accounts of functionalist views without clear application to role allocation. Some answers also made use of the Social Democratic and New Right perspectives. The main counter arguments were from the Marxist perspective such as the views of Bowles and Gintis, Althusser, and Bourdieu. While some candidates showed explicit evaluation, others merely presented a juxtaposition of the opposing view. Often candidates struggled to link their detailed explanations back to the central point: whether the main function of education is to allocate individuals to appropriate roles in society. Some candidates successfully used Marxist analysis to support the quote and functionalist views on other functions as evaluation.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/33
Education

Key messages

- Candidates should allocate their time according to the marks awarded for each question and aim to spend a minute and a half for every mark. For example, 6 minutes would be given for a 4-mark question.
- Candidates should read each question carefully and responses should directly address the question.
- Candidates should fully explain their points in relation to the question asked.
- Practising on questions from past papers and looking at the mark schemes will help candidates to prepare for the exam.

General comments

To gain good marks candidates must use relevant sociological evidence. Every point should have some evidence (study, theory, concept, statistics, relevant examples). Marks can only be awarded if the evidence used is related to the question asked. Phrases such as ‘this study supports the argument that...’ is helpful in demonstrating relevance.

In **Question 3** candidates are arguing against a given statement. They do not need to give any arguments supporting it. Arguments against it can include criticisms of the logic or evidence on which it is based, as well as presenting alternative points of view.

In **Question 4** candidates should be encouraged to present balanced essays, which include arguments from both sides. As well as presenting the two opposing arguments, the strongest responses will evaluate each of them. This means looking critically at the evidence used on both sides and showing that an argument need not be completely true or false. It may be more or less applicable for different people at different times and in different places. A conclusion should be given. This should briefly explain how far the issue stated in the question is useful. To weigh this up, candidates may consider all the evidence used and the points of view discussed in their response.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates answered this well, most commonly referring to school rules, authority structures, assemblies and teamwork. Some students did not give specific examples from schools, just referencing a general norm or value, while others only gave an example of a school process without linking this to *how* it contributed to social cohesion, thus missing the second mark. A few students wasted time writing a lot more than was needed.

Question 2

Many students could identify valid reasons, such as teachers’ positive perceptions of girls, the feminised curriculum and number of female role models in school. There was some good use of sociological evidence to support answers, but some candidates were unable to score beyond 4 marks due to the lack of sociological material in their answers. Some identified a process in the school without explaining *why* it advantaged females. Others did not focus on females being advantaged in school but only discussed wider changes in society.

Question 3

This question was well answered. Good arguments on the impact of ethnicity on educational attainment included reference to teacher stereotypes and expectations, discipline, streaming the ethnocentric curriculum and the impact of family and peer group. Most students developed each point with sociological evidence e.g. Tony Sewell. A few candidates misread the question and discussed ethnicity *not* being an important factor compared with class or gender.

Question 4

Most students used a functionalist versus Marxist approach in their essay. There was good use of the opposing theories of Parsons and Davis and Moore against Althusser, Bowles and Gintis and Bourdieu. The best responses referred to specific policies and studies of processes within schools to provide evidence for or against the theories. Candidates need to remember to frequently link the material they are using back to the question asked – in this case *how it shows* whether or not education enables working class children to achieve social mobility. Very few candidates got into the top band for Knowledge and Understanding (AO1) and Analysis and Evaluation (AO3).

SOCIOLOGY

<p>Paper 9699/41 Globalisation, Media, Religion</p>

Key messages

- Most candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the issues raised by the questions.
- The strongest responses included a sustained evaluation.
- References to appropriate sociological evidence was absent in some responses, further marks could be gained by referring to relevant sociological studies.
- Weaker responses often relied on assertion and general knowledge.
- More use could be made of sociological concepts to support key points.
- Some answers lacked focus on the wording of the question.

General comments

The overall standard of the scripts continues to improve, with more of the candidates successful in demonstrating the higher order skills of analysis and evaluation. Some responses are still too descriptive, however, relying on a summary of relevant knowledge without providing any related evaluation. Strong responses often included detailed references to relevant concepts and theories. Some candidates also made good use of evidence from research studies to support key arguments and analysis. Weaker responses lacked references to appropriate sociological material, relying instead on assertion and general knowledge. Some answers were too short to provide sufficient demonstration of the skills required to trigger the higher mark bands.

Most candidates answered two questions in the time available. A few candidates answered more than two questions, though they appeared to derive no benefit from this strategy in terms of marks achieved. There were a few scripts where the answers had not been numbered or had been numbered incorrectly. Candidates may disadvantage themselves in such instances as it can make it difficult for the examiner to identify which question is being attempted. The questions from the sections on Religion and Media proved most popular, with those on Globalisation less frequently attempted.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Good responses to this question demonstrated a good understanding of the arguments supporting the view that only rich countries benefit from globalisation. Marxist perspectives on development often featured in this part of the answer, with references to both dependency theory and the world systems model. Some candidates widened the discussion by considering more than just economic impacts of globalisation, examining possible benefits in terms of health, education, culture, and the environment. Good evaluative responses questioned whether it is only rich countries that benefit from globalisation. Some answers distinguished between developing countries that have clearly benefitted from globalisation, such as Singapore and South Korea, and those that have not benefitted to the same extent. Modernisation theory was often used to support arguments that globalisation can be helpful for developing countries. Weaker answers often discussed the impact of globalisation in general terms without considering whether or not it is only rich countries that benefit.

Question 2

There were a few high-scoring responses to this question that combined references to relevant concepts and theories with well-informed insights into the difficulty of policing global crime. Good answers offered an accurate account of how global crime differs from local or national crime, linking this to an explanation of why governments may struggle to respond effectively to criminal activity that reaches across national borders. Some candidates made effective use of different examples of global crime to support their analysis. Good answers also included a sustained evaluation, questioning the implication that global crime is harder to police. Examples of where national governments and supranational organisations, such as Interpol, have been successful in combatting global crime were cited in some of the best responses. Weaker answers were often confined to observations about the nature of cross-border crime, with few links to the issue of whether globalisation has made it harder for governments to combat this form of criminality effectively.

Section B

Question 3

Good answers to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of arguments and evidence supporting the view that the media is unable to influence human behaviour directly. Relevant models of media effects, such as two-step flow and uses and gratification, were often used to identify factors that intervene between media exposure and behavioural outcomes. Some candidates made good use of studies showing that the media has little discernible influence on behaviour. Evaluation was provided in most cases by referring to direct models of media effects, such as hypodermic-syringe and mass manipulation. Some candidates also gave examples of where the media appears to have played a direct role in influencing human behaviour, including the case of moral panics. Examples from social media featured as a way of illustrating the influence of celebrities and opinion formers on social ideas and behaviour. The subject of propaganda was explored in some higher scoring evaluative responses. There were some weaker answers that lacked focus on the issue of whether or not the media has a direct and powerful influence on behaviour, discussing instead issues about who controls the media.

Question 4

Good responses demonstrated a detailed understanding of the view, associated with conflict theories, that media content reflects the interests of the rich and powerful. Evidence from relevant studies was used to illustrate different ways in which the rich and powerful may be active in influencing media content. High quality responses also included a sustained evaluation, often focusing on the competing claims of different theories of where power lies in relation to the media. Some candidates made good use of examples to argue that audiences exercise the dominant influence over media content. This was often linked to an analysis of pluralist theory. Editors and journalists were also cited as actors who may exert a lot of control over media content. Useful contrasts were often made between the traditional media and the new media in terms of how content is produced and transmitted. Weaker answers were limited to a few assertions about how the media may reflect the interests of the rich and powerful, with no critical analysis. A few candidates discussed control of the media generally rather than linking the discussion to the rich and powerful specifically.

Section C

Question 5

This question was answered well by candidates who were able to distinguish between theories that emphasise the contribution that religion makes to social order and those that see religion more as a source of conflict and opposition in society. Durkheim's ideas often featured in points supporting the view expressed in the question. More detailed answers also referenced the ideas of other functionalists, such as Parsons, Radcliffe Browne and Malinowski. Marxist and feminist theories too featured in accounts of how religion helps to maintain social order. Evaluation was provided in many cases by using examples of where religion challenges the existing social order and leads to social change. Some candidates linked this line of analysis with the work of Max Weber. Credit was awarded for making contrasts between the traditional functionalist and Marxist theories of religion and more recent strands of thinking within these broader perspectives that recognise a role for religion, under certain circumstances, in challenging established authority and bringing about social change. Evidence that some religions have become more willing to question the status quo and to campaign for underprivileged groups, was also cited in some well-conceived responses. There were some weaker answers that outlined different theories of religion without linking the material well to debates about how religion might contribute to social order.

Question 6

Good responses to this question demonstrated a detailed understanding of the possible links between globalisation and the existence of religious fundamentalism. Good answers also considered the limitations in explaining fundamentalism in this way and offered a sustained evaluation of the view expressed in the question. Examples of fundamentalist religious groups often featured in well informed responses and, in some cases, this was supported by references to relevant sociological studies. There were a lot of responses that discussed links between secularisation and globalisation, suggesting that the two work together to stimulate a reaction from traditional religious groups that leads to a strengthening of fundamentalist beliefs and practices. A few candidates rightly questioned the extent to which there has been a growth in fundamentalism coinciding with the rise of globalisation, as examples of fundamentalist groups from much earlier periods are well documented. Some answers discussed changes in religion generally rather than addressing the issue of the growth of fundamentalism specifically. These responses were too tangential to gain high marks.

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Key messages

- Most candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the issues raised by the questions.
- The strongest responses included a sustained evaluation.
- References to appropriate sociological evidence was absent in some responses, further marks could be gained by referring to relevant sociological studies.
- Weaker responses often relied on assertion and general knowledge.
- More use could be made of sociological concepts to support key points.
- Some answers lacked focus on the wording of the question.

General comments

The standard of the scripts overall was high. Good answers combined detailed sociological understanding with sustained evaluation of the issues raised by the question. Use of sociological evidence and theories to support the evaluation was a further feature of strong responses. While most candidates demonstrated reasonable knowledge of relevant sociological material, many were less successful in deploying the higher order skills of analysis and evaluation. There were also some responses that included a lot of material that was tangential to the question. Retaining focus on the wording of the question is a key requirement for achieving the higher marks. There continue to be a few candidates who rely on assertion and general knowledge as a basis for their answers. The marks awarded for responses that lack references to appropriate sociological material are inevitably low. It is important therefore that candidates study sociological material in order to support their answers.

Most candidates answered two questions in the time available. Some candidates answered more than two questions, though they appeared to derive no advantage from this strategy in terms of marks achieved. The questions on Media proved most popular, with those on Globalisation less frequently attempted.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Good responses to this question demonstrated a good understanding of the possible links between the activities of transnational organisations and global inequality. Different types of transnational organisation were discussed, including alliances of nation-states such as the United Nations, the EU, and the G7; transnational trade organisations such as the WTO, the World Bank, and the IMF; charities such as Oxfam, Save the Children, and World Vision. Good answers often used examples of aid projects and other interventions by transnational organisations to illustrate points for and against the view in the question. Low-scoring answers were limited to a few points about global inequality with little or no reference to transnational organisations.

Question 2

This was the more popular of the **Section A** questions. Good responses identified a range of ways that global migration may result in negative consequences for developing countries. Points were often supported with reference to Marxist and feminist analyses of the impact of global migration. Case studies were also used to illustrate key arguments in some answers. Evaluation was provided by considering the possible positive consequences of global migration for developing countries. Neo-liberal analyses of global migration

often featured as a way of challenging the view in the question. Some lower-scoring answers focused on the consequences of global migration for the individual migrant rather than for developing countries. A few responses also included tangential material on the consequences of global migration for developed countries.

Section B

Question 3

There were relatively few candidates who answered to this question. Good responses provided a detailed account of postmodernist ideas about the significance of the media in contemporary societies. Concepts that were used to support the analysis included hyper-reality, simulacra, social identities, and media representations. High-quality answers also included a sustained evaluation of the view that postmodernists have exaggerated the influence of the media in people's lives today. There were some answers in the middle of the mark range that discussed the influence of the media generally rather than linking the discussion to postmodernist concepts specifically. This type of response often consisted of a summary of the strengths and limitations of different models of media effects. Low-scoring answers tended to discuss the role of the media in general, with little reference to the issues raised by the question.

Question 4

Most candidates who answered a question from **Section B** attempted this question. Good responses demonstrated a detailed understanding of different views about who controls media content. This material was used to explain why governments might be limited in their ability to influence or control the media. Some candidates made good use of examples of where government efforts to exert influence over the media have failed. Good evaluative responses considered the opposite case, pointing to various ways in which governments may be able to control the media. A distinction was often drawn between the respective situations with authoritarian and democratic governments.

While authoritarian regimes were cited as having extensive powers in relation to the media, some candidates noted that in less direct ways democratic governments may also have significant levers for controlling media content. Good use was also made of contrasts between the traditional media and the new media, with the point often being made that digital forms of media may be harder for governments to control. Lower-scoring answers accepted uncritically that governments have no power to control the media.

Section C

Question 5

High-scoring answers to this question demonstrated a detailed understanding of the Marxist theory that religion supports the interests of the ruling class. Concepts that were used to support the discussion included false consciousness, ideological control, hegemony, spiritual solace, and religious indoctrination. Different strands of Marxist theory featured in high-quality responses and some candidates used examples to illustrate how religion has been used as a means of enhancing and protecting ruling class interests. Evaluation was often based on a contrast between functionalist and Marxist ideas about religion. Some candidates also referenced other theories, including the feminist and Weberian viewpoints. Another helpful line of analysis was to consider examples of where religion has sided with the oppressed rather than being a way of promoting ruling class interests. Lower scoring answers provided little detail about the Marxist theory of religion and lacked evaluative content.

Question 6

This was a popular question that was answered well by many of the candidates. Good responses discussed several reasons why religion may have lost social significance today. Links to the secularisation thesis were made in many of the higher scoring answers and evidence from appropriate research studies was used to support the analysis. Strong evaluative responses considered a range of arguments and evidence used to refute the claim that religion has less social significance today. Some candidates questioned the extent to which secularisation has occurred in all communities and affects all religions. Difficulties of defining and measuring the extent of religious belief and practice was a further line of analysis seen in good evaluative responses. Lower-scoring answers lacked references to relevant sociological material and relied mainly on personal opinion and assertion.

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Key messages

- Good knowledge of relevant sociological material demonstrated in many of the scripts.
- The strongest responses included a sustained evaluation.
- References to appropriate sociological evidence was absent in some responses, further marks could be gained by referring to relevant sociological studies.
- Weaker responses often relied on assertion and general knowledge.
- More use could be made of sociological concepts to support key points.
- Some answers lacked focus on the wording of the question.

General comments

The standard of the scripts overall was good, with the majority of candidates being able to combine sound understanding of relevant sociological material with considered analysis of the issues raised by each question. Strong responses used a range of arguments and evidence to evaluate the strengths and limitations of the view expressed in the question. Other responses covered less evaluative material and were more descriptive. Not focusing on the key terms in the question was a problem with some of the answers. Encouraging candidates to make a note of the key terms in the question before starting to answer is to be recommended. Referring back to the key terms at regular intervals in the answer is also advisable. Higher marks could also be gained by making more use of appropriate research evidence to illustrate key points and to support analysis and evaluation.

Most candidates answered two questions in the time available. Some candidates answered more than two questions, though they appeared to derive no advantage from this strategy in terms of marks achieved. The questions on Religion proved most popular, with those on Globalisation less frequently attempted.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Good responses to this question demonstrated a good understanding of the processes of globalisation and their impact on cultural differences between countries. Theories about cultural convergence were used to support the view expressed in the question and some candidates made good use of examples to illustrate how cultural differences may be disappearing today. Good answers also provided a sustained evaluation of the view expressed in the question. Debate about whether globalisation has led to greater cultural diversity as opposed to cultural convergence often featured as part of the evaluation. Some candidates drew useful distinctions between different countries, arguing that some have been more prone to cultural convergence than others. Low-scoring answers were limited to a few points about globalisation with little or no reference to cultural effects.

Question 2

The best responses to this question showed a good understanding of the consequences of global migration for poor people in developing countries. These answers generally considered a range of cultural, economic, social, and psychological impacts of migration. Contrasts between the benefits of global migration for poor people in developing countries and the possible benefits for other groups in developing and/or developed countries featured in the analysis in higher-scoring answers. Some candidates included well-chosen

references to studies of migrant workers to illustrate the impact of migration for different countries. There were some responses that focused on the argument that poor people derive no benefit from global migration. While this approach gained some credit, it lacked a direct response to the question about who benefits most from global migration. A few candidates discussed only the consequences of migration for developing countries as a whole and ignored the reference in the question to poor people specifically.

Section B

Question 3

High-scoring answers to this question demonstrated a good understanding of the mechanisms through which the media is controlled and the groups involved. A range of theory and evidence was used to support the view that editors and journalists are the main actors in determining media content. Concepts such as agenda setting, gatekeeping, news values, hierarchies of power, and interlocking elites featured in the best explanations of the role of editors and journalists. Good responses also included a sustained evaluation of the view expressed in the question. Pluralist theory was often cited in arguing that no one group controls the media. Arguments were also made about the influence of different audience groups on the media, particularly in relation to the creation of new media content. Owners were also identified as a group that can have considerable influence over the content of the media. Low-scoring responses often lacked references to sociological material and offered only personal opinion about who is able to control media content.

Question 4

This was a popular question that was answered well by many of the candidates. Good responses provided a detailed account of evidence and theories supporting the view that media content has a direct impact on human behaviour. Some candidates made good use of the distinction between direct and indirect models of media effects to structure the discussion. High-quality responses questioned the validity of the arguments and studies that purport to show a direct link between media content and influences on human behaviour. Contrasts between the new media and the traditional media also featured in some well-directed responses. Weaker answers often accepted uncritically the view expressed in the question, omitting to consider alternative arguments questioning the evidence about media influence on behaviour.

Section C

Question 5

The best answers to this question demonstrated a good understanding of the concept of religious revival and offered sound arguments about whether some societies are experiencing an increase in religious practice and belief today. Concepts such as re-sacralisation, new religious movements, new age spirituality, and civil religion was used to support claims that a religious revival is occurring in Western societies specifically. Evaluation of this view was often provided through a summary of arguments and evidence associated with the Secularisation thesis. Some candidates also showed good analytical skills by considering the difficulties in defining and measuring the level of religious belief and practice in a society. Contrasts with the situation in previous time periods, in particular, are difficult to make on an accurate basis. There were some answers that described the secularisation thesis without considering arguments for the claim that some societies are experiencing a religious revival today. A few answers at the lower end of the mark range were confined to a discussion of the functionalist and Marxist theories of religion with no direct links to the question set.

Question 6

Good responses to this question demonstrated a detailed understanding of the view that religion promotes social solidarity. High-scoring answers included references to a range of relevant theories and research evidence. This was complemented by a sustained evaluation of the strengths and limitations of the view expressed in the question. Some candidates made good use of examples to show that while religion may sometimes promote social solidarity, in other instances it contributes to conflicts and divisiveness in society. Marxist and feminist theories were also used to suggest links between religion and conflict. There were a few answers that discussed conflict theories of religion without offering any contrasts with functionalist theories that emphasise the contribution of religion to social solidarity. Weaker responses demonstrated little understanding of the concept of social solidarity and relied on a general discussion of the role of religion instead.