

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/11
Socialisation, Identity and Methods of
Research

Key messages

- Candidates accessing higher mark bands showed a depth of sociological knowledge with their use of concepts, studies and theory particularly in **Questions 3a, 3b, 4 and 5**.
- In **Question 3a** candidates need to ensure that they explicitly relate their points back to youth identity rather than writing about influence of the media generally.
- In **Section B** candidates scoring in the lower mark bands were less prepared in their evaluative points, some producing one sided/unbalanced essay responses.
- Focus on encouraging development of points/arguments and explicit evaluation would be beneficial to candidates.

General comments

In **Section A, Question 1** candidates need only to write a brief answer. A point identifying the sampling technique followed with some development of their knowledge on that technique. Many candidates wrote too much, using time that would have been better spent on Questions **3(a)** or **4/5**. **Questions 2a and 2b** were answered well by most candidates. A significant number of candidates did not access the highest mark bands in **Question 3a**. They seemed unprepared for the question and concentrated their answers on children's identity rather than youth identity. **Question 3b** was answered well with most candidates focusing on the impact of the family upon youth identity.

In **Section B, Question 4** was the most popular question and candidates seemed to be able to evaluate well with supporting sociological evidence. In **Question 5** candidates generally seemed to be able to evaluate effectively but there was a smaller range of sociological evidence used to support points made in comparison to those that given **Question 4** responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates identified two sampling techniques but some candidates simply repeated the name of the sampling technique in the development of their answer therefore failed to gain the second mark, for example, '*random sampling, when a sample is picked at random*'. A small number of candidates could not identify any sampling techniques and identified research methods instead.

Question 2

- (a) The majority of candidates opted to describe *informed consent* and *deception* as their two ethical issues and the question was generally answered well. Candidates should be advised to ensure that they make their point, then explain it, include a sociological concept linked to their point and explain why that material supports their chosen point in order to get four marks for each ethical issue identified. If a candidate does not include the sociological material (often a concept), this limits their marks to two out of the four on offer for each point made.

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.*

- (b) Candidates generally seemed well prepared for this question and could explain two limitations of using official statistics in sociological research. The most common answers were that *official statistics are biased as they are portraying the government in a positive light therefore researchers need to take this bias into consideration, the research completed by the government to gain the statistics may not match what the researcher needs for their study and official statistics only show researchers a partial picture.*

Some candidates gave generalised answers rather than applying their points to the use of official statistics *in sociological research* which limited marks if the answer is too vague.

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 view that the media is the most important influence in shaping youth identity appeared challenging for some candidates to explain. A minority of candidates were able to successfully develop points that the media is an important influence and then link their points to youth identity.

Most candidates focused their responses on how the media influenced childhood rather than youth identity. Common responses referred to Bandura and Postman. Some candidates who referred to the work of Postman were successful at applying his study to youth identity.

Other popular responses referred to trends, fashion, music and pop culture. These responses often lacked sociological material to develop their answers. It is important for candidates to use sociological evidence to support their points to get into the higher mark bands.

- (b) In comparison to **Question 3a** candidates were generally more successful in responding to this question. Common responses used the family to show how this agent of socialisation is the most important influence on youth identity in comparison to the media. Strong responses compared the influence of the media directly to the family. Weaker responses did not compare the media to the other agent of socialisation selected and the response was juxtaposition. In these cases, candidates had a good basis for their answer but could not get past 3 or 4 marks as they did not make a direct comparison back to the media, did not emphasise the influence of the family or did not relate their answer sufficiently to youth identity.

A minority of candidates included more than one point in this answer, not following the rubric, in which case the best one was credited.

Section B

Question 4

Candidates answering this question generally showed that they had a good understanding of male identity today and developed a range of arguments both for and against the influence of 'traditional view of male identity' on male behaviour today. The rise of the new man, crisis of masculinity and changes in gender roles in the family were points commonly cited and argued well with supporting concepts and studies, gaining those candidates higher marks. Common arguments against the statement in the question centred around biological explanations, evidence of the existence of traditional male roles/identities in other countries and the rise of toxic masculinity in resisting changes to male gender roles.

Weaker answers tended to struggle to apply arguments to the question or support them sufficiently with sociological evidence.

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

Question 5

Question 5 was less commonly attempted than Question 4.

The strongest responses were well balanced in their arguments and successfully used concepts such as validity, Hawthorne effect and going native. Many candidates incorporated a description of studies to support their explanation and point development. Some candidates were able to offer a range of arguments on both sides.

Weaker responses gave few concepts/evidence and provided list like answers with limited development.

Some candidates struggled to differentiate between covert and overt participant observation and as a result, if referring to overt, lost valuable time when answering this question.

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

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/12
Socialisation, Identity and Methods of
Research

Key messages

- Candidates accessing higher mark bands showed a depth of sociological knowledge with their use of concepts, studies and theory particularly in **Questions 3a, 3b, 4 and 5**.
- To access the highest mark bands in **Questions 3(a) and 3(b)**, candidates needed to support their point/s with sociological evidence.
- In **Section B** candidates scoring in the lower mark bands were less prepared in their evaluative points, some producing one sided/unbalanced essay responses.
- In **Question 4** some candidates did not support their points with relevant sociological evidence of longitudinal studies.
- Focus on encouraging development of points/arguments and explicit evaluation would be beneficial to candidates.

General comments

In **Section A, Question 1**, the majority of candidates answered this question well. **Questions 2(a) and (b)** required careful reading. Some candidates referred to a covert approach rather than overt in **Question 2(b)**. In **Questions 3(a) and 3(b)** most candidates could generally answer the questions, many did not apply sociological evidence to support their answers.

In **Section B, Question 5** was the question answered by the majority of candidates although in both **Question 4 and 5** the range of responses were varied dependent upon the sociological evidence provided to support the points both supporting and evaluating the statements in each question.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates were able to identify two social values the most common examples being respect and honesty, many candidates developed the value identified for full marks. Those candidates that did not gain marks on this question tended to do so as they described norms as opposed to social values.

Question 2

- (a) Some candidates focused on the advantages and disadvantages of different types of interviews without focusing on *how an interviewer may influence answers* which made their responses irrelevant to the question.

For those that focused on interviewer influence, interviewer bias, presence and characteristics of the interviewer were the most common points made. Some candidates had difficulty in identifying relevant sociological material. Some candidates that did gain that mark then did not explain why that material supports their chosen point, and so they did not gain the fourth mark.

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.*

- (b)** Most candidates were able to identify one strength and one limitation of using an overt approach to participant observation. Commonly cited strengths included ethical considerations, the ability for researchers to take notes, and low personal involvement. Frequently mentioned limitations included the Hawthorne effect and potential rejection by some groups unwilling to be studied. Some candidates included unnecessary introductions rather than addressing the strength/limitation directly. While most responses achieved the first two marks, the development of why a specific point was a strength or a limitation was not always successful. Candidates may benefit from explicitly stating why a point raised is either a strength or a limitation.

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 responses were limited to two underdeveloped points for why religion is the most important influence in shaping an individual's identity.

Successful responses most commonly gave ideas surrounding identity through actions, for example, attending traditional festivals and wearing hijabs, etc. and there seemed to be a comprehensive understanding of the specific tenants of religion.

The best responses gave two developed points citing relevant sociological evidence to support their points.

- (b)** Responses to this part of the question were stronger than those for **3(a)**. Some candidates effectively used other agents of socialisation, such as family, education or peers, as sociological material to argue their case against the importance of the role of religion in shaping individual identity.

Less successful candidates struggled to explain why the selected material was more influential in shaping identity than religion. Additionally, some candidates wasted time by presenting more than one material in their argument, attempting to develop two or even three points rather than using the time to complete other questions.

Section B

Question 4

This was the least-answered question of the two essay options. Most candidates answering this question simply evaluated the strengths and limitations of longitudinal studies however a few responses confused longitudinal studies with participant observations. Others provided generic responses touching on the lack of validity, time, and cost, without clear links to longitudinal studies.

Many candidates were more comfortable presenting arguments in support of the view than against it. Successful responses utilized concepts such as validity, reliability, methodological pluralism, and the ability to provide snapshots and comparisons over time. However, less effective responses failed to fully develop the sociological material provided with examples of longitudinal studies.

The main opposing points used to argue against the view included the expense of longitudinal studies, sample attrition over time, and the Hawthorne effect. Some unsuccessful candidates focused on explaining how longitudinal studies are time-consuming without linking this to cost or other disadvantages.

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

Question 5

This was the more popular choice of essay options on this paper. Evaluative points overall were stronger than arguments for the view that sociologists exaggerate the extent to which human behaviour is shaped by socialisation. Some candidates gave a one-sided response only managing to describe why human behaviour is shaped by socialisation.

Answers that provided some balance outlined arguments that humans are born with uncontrollable instincts, possess free will, and can act unpredictably regardless of socialisation. These responses often incorporated sociobiological arguments, such as those presented by Wilson. Successful candidates also referenced scholars such as Parsons and Wrong to further their arguments.

The main opposing points included the concept of feral children, functionalist theories of socialisation, interactionist perspectives, and the significance of primary and secondary socialisation in shaping human behavior. Most candidates explained these points well and found them straightforward to address.

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SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/13
Socialisation, Identity and Methods of
Research

Key messages

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- In **Section B** candidates scoring in the lower mark bands were less prepared in their evaluative points, some producing one sided/unbalanced essay responses.
- Focus on encouraging development of points/arguments and explicit evaluation would be beneficial to candidates.

General comments

In **Section A, Question 1** candidates need only to write a brief answer. A point identifying the sampling technique followed with some development of their knowledge on that technique. Many candidates wrote too much, using time that would have been better spent on Questions **3(a)** or **4/5**. **Questions 2a and 2b** were answered well by most candidates. A significant number of candidates did not access the highest mark bands in **Question 3a**. They seemed unprepared for the question and concentrated their answers on children's identity rather than youth identity. **Question 3b** was answered well with most candidates focusing on the impact of the family upon youth identity.

In **Section B, Question 4** was the most popular question and candidates seemed to be able to evaluate well with supporting sociological evidence. In **Question 5** candidates generally seemed to be able to evaluate effectively but there was a smaller range of sociological evidence used to support points made in comparison to those that given **Question 4** responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates identified two sampling techniques but some candidates simply repeated the name of the sampling technique in the development of their answer therefore failed to gain the second mark, for example, '*random sampling, when a sample is picked at random*'. A small number of candidates could not identify any sampling techniques and identified research methods instead.

Question 2

- (a) The majority of candidates opted to describe *informed consent* and *deception* as their two ethical issues and the question was generally answered well. Candidates should be advised to ensure that they make their point, then explain it, include a sociological concept linked to their point and explain why that material supports their chosen point in order to get four marks for each ethical issue identified. If a candidate does not include the sociological material (often a concept), this limits their marks to two out of the four on offer for each point made.

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- (b)** Candidates generally seemed well prepared for this question and could explain two limitations of using official statistics in sociological research. The most common answers were that *official statistics are biased as they are portraying the government in a positive light therefore researchers need to take this bias into consideration, the research completed by the government to gain the statistics may not match what the researcher needs for their study and official statistics only show researchers a partial picture.*

Some candidates gave generalised answers rather than applying their points to the use of official statistics *in sociological research* which limited marks if the answer is too vague.

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Question 3

- (a)** The view that the media is the most important influence in shaping youth identity appeared challenging for some candidates to explain. A minority of candidates were able to successfully develop points that the media is an important influence and then link their points to youth identity.

Most candidates focused their responses on how the media influenced childhood rather than youth identity. Common responses referred to Bandura and Postman. Some candidates who referred to the work of Postman were successful at applying his study to youth identity.

Other popular responses referred to trends, fashion, music and pop culture. These responses often lacked sociological material to develop their answers. It is important for candidates to use sociological evidence to support their points to get into the higher mark bands.

- (b)** In comparison to **Question 3a** candidates were generally more successful in responding to this question. Common responses used the family to show how this agent of socialisation is the most important influence on youth identity in comparison to the media. Strong responses compared the influence of the media directly to the family. Weaker responses did not compare the media to the other agent of socialisation selected and the response was juxtaposition. In these cases, candidates had a good basis for their answer but could not get past 3 or 4 marks as they did not make a direct comparison back to the media, did not emphasise the influence of the family or did not relate their answer sufficiently to youth identity.

A minority of candidates included more than one point in this answer, not following the rubric, in which case the best one was credited.

Section B

Question 4

Candidates answering this question generally showed that they had a good understanding of male identity today and developed a range of arguments both for and against the influence of 'traditional view of male identity' on male behaviour today. The rise of the new man, crisis of masculinity and changes in gender roles in the family were points commonly cited and argued well with supporting concepts and studies, gaining those candidates higher marks. Common arguments against the statement in the question centred around biological explanations, evidence of the existence of traditional male roles/identities in other countries and the rise of toxic masculinity in resisting changes to male gender roles.

Weaker answers tended to struggle to apply arguments to the question or support them sufficiently with sociological evidence.

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

Question 5

Question 5 was less commonly attempted than Question 4.

The strongest responses were well balanced in their arguments and successfully used concepts such as validity, Hawthorne effect and going native. Many candidates incorporated a description of studies to support their explanation and point development. Some candidates were able to offer a range of arguments on both sides.

Weaker responses gave few concepts/evidence and provided list like answers with limited development.

Some candidates struggled to differentiate between covert and overt participant observation and as a result, if referring to overt, lost valuable time when answering this question.

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

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/21
The Family

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.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read through the questions and highlight/underline key words.
- Candidates should 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 in the question and apply relevant sociological material.
- Candidates need to ensure responses reflect marks available (*see comments below*).
- Further preparation for the demands of **Question 2b** and **Question 4/5** would benefit candidates.
- Learning activities encouraging development of points/arguments and explicit evaluation would be beneficial.

General comments

There was an overall improvement in candidates achieving the higher marks range, this has been influenced by improved performance in responses to **Question 1, 2a** and **Question 4**. Few candidates failed to provide a response to a question, which is encouraging. Some candidates demonstrated weak knowledge and understanding of Marxist feminism, often confusing with radical and liberal.

The **most successful** candidates produced responses that **a/reflected the requirements of the question** and **b/applied relevant sociological material to support 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 candidates to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding (AO1), interpretation and application (AO2), and analysis and evaluation (AO3). Weaker responses did not *explicitly evaluate the question*, often relying on juxtaposition of opposing points.

Many candidates were able to name relevant sociological concepts/studies; the most successful candidates **applied** these to develop their response. Less successful responses simply identified sociological material, often defining/describing it rather than applying it in a way that engages the question. This was particularly noticeable within essay responses (**Question 4/5**) and **3a/b**. Any rubric errors tended to occur within questions **Question 2a** and **3b**, 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.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

The majority of candidates answered all questions in **Section A**.

Question 1

Most candidates were able to identify two ways grandparents contribute to family life. Most described included *provide childcare, provide socialisation to grandchildren, or financial assistance*. For the additional mark, descriptions for these examples such as... *support dual earning parents so they do not have to worry about finding babysitters who they do not know/can save parents money as they would not have to pay the grandparents...ensuring the grandchildren receive social norms and values as the parents are too busy working...help support the grandchildren by paying for their education, school trips, uniforms.*

Occasionally *provide advice/guidance* and *provide emotional support* were also given by candidates. However, candidates did not always provide a relevant description for the additional mark. Therefore, at best were awarded half the marks available to them.

Some candidates wrote overly long descriptive answers, that would earn the marks within the first few lines. There were examples of almost a side of writing for a response that is worth a maximum 4 marks. Lengthy introductions and conclusions are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions.

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) This was generally well answered with most candidates able to provide at least one relevant reason with appropriate explanation, with many of these 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.*

Strong, sociologically supported responses included *women's role as shock absorbers to the husband (safety valve/Ansley)*, as well as *women's role in the socialisation of children into capitalist ideologies (Zaretsky/Althusser/ISA)*. Other but less popular responses included women's role in reproduction and consumerism.

There were several candidates who supported points through the use of functionalism for sociological material (e.g. Parsons's Warm Bath theory) and given the benefit of doubt. When discussing capitalism, a Marxist perspective is more appropriate and, in this example, women as a *safety valve* would have been expected.

Simple responses that did not apply sociological evidence included for example, *women provide free domestic labour/this refers to the housework and childcare they do that means men can concentrate on work*. Examples of weak responses included... *women wake up early to make sure the man is up on time to get to work...* and *supporting the men...* and *doing house chores...* and *women buy goods*.

Candidates occasionally provided more than the two reasons required which wasted valuable time.

To improve, candidates need to support points using appropriate sociological material e.g., concepts, studies, relevant sociologists etc. and apply these in demonstrating the original point made. Introductions and/or conclusions are not required.

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) Candidates performed less well on this question. Some showed limited understanding of the demands of it and/or the relevant knowledge of Marxist feminist views of the family. Some candidates discussed the question within the context of the workplace, rather than *the family*. A number of candidates confused Marxist feminism with radical and/or liberal, and therefore gave irrelevant/incorrect responses.

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) Candidates performed reasonably well on this question. The common approach was to discuss the *impact of secularisation on attitudes towards couples cohabitating, and women's increased financial independence meaning they no longer needed to marry for security*. Other popular responses included *increased divorce rates* as well as *changing political attitudes towards supporting family diversity* (non-marriage-based alternatives).

Weak responses included those in which candidates made claims without explanation/support, for example, *people are cohabiting due to globalisation... globalisation has led to changing attitudes...* These are too vague to award. Some candidates made assertions, such as *people are now marrying for sex rather than love... people are no longer happy in marriages... people no longer value romantic connections*.

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) Candidates answered this reasonably well. In some responses there was an over-reliance on common-sense/general knowledge rather than an application of sociological material. The most common approach to this was a cultural/religious argument, with the better responses providing specific examples to illustrate, or that marriage was simply delayed through a period of cohabiting first. Vague responses discussed the nuclear family without any reference made to the context of marriage.

Section B

All candidates provided a response to either Question 4 or 5 in *Section B*.

Question 4

58 per cent of candidates opted for this question over **Question 5**, and whilst there was mixed performance, in general candidates were successful in demonstrating a good level of knowledge and understanding of functionalism and the family, albeit successful counter arguments tended to be limited to Marxism – feminism was applied to the question less successfully whilst there were few references given to post-modernist views.

Good responses examined the *actual role* the family performs e.g. to *ensure social solidarity/social order*, versus its role in contributing to the *perpetuation of capitalism/ruling class dominance*. The best responses discussed the family's role in perpetuating patriarchy, rather simply critiqued functionalism for ignoring the dark side of the family or stated that women are burdened by what they undertake in the family. Weaker responses tended to compare functions the family performs according to differing theoretical perspectives

Examples of weak counter arguments included functionalists *fail to acknowledge family diversity*, without attempting to apply this to the context of role of the family. Thus, it is a critique of the functionalist approach to the family rather than answering the question itself.

Some candidates incorrectly cited Marxist and/or New Right ideas as functionalism

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

Question 5

Fewer candidates opted for this question over **Question 4**. Generally the responses produced were less successful, with many candidates relying on anecdotal/common-sense material, with a tendency for own cultural experiences rather than demonstrating a sociological awareness.

Weak responses included examples of simply describing what happens in childhood/what childhood can be like/only looking at/describing how childhood used to be...without addressing the question of whether *the experience of childhood today is different to the past*.

Assertions made by candidates included...*children now have a better relationship with their parents...parents now raise their children more strictly...children in the past were not parented properly...*

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

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/22
The Family

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.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read through the questions and highlight/underline key words.
- Candidates should 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 in the question and apply relevant sociological material.
- Candidates need to ensure responses reflect marks available (*see comments below*)
- Further preparation for the demands of **Question 2b** and **Question 4/5** would benefit candidates.
- Learning activities encouraging development of points/arguments and explicit evaluation would be beneficial.

General comments

There was a range of candidate performance demonstrating a good comprehension of both the requirements of the questions and sociological knowledge and understanding, and weaker responses relying on common sense/anecdotal evidence.

The **most successful** candidates produced responses that **a/reflected the requirements of the question** and **b/applied relevant sociological material to support 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 candidates to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding (AO1), interpretation and application (AO2), and analysis and evaluation (AO3). Weaker responses did not *explicitly evaluate the question*, often relying on juxtaposition of opposing points.

Many candidates were able to name relevant sociological concepts/studies; the most successful candidates **applied** these to develop their response. Less successful responses simply identified sociological material, often defining/describing it rather than applying it in a way that engages the question. This was particularly noticeable within essay responses (**Question 4/5**) and **3a/b**. Any rubric errors tended to occur within questions **Question 2a** and **3b**, 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.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

The majority of candidates answered all questions in **Section A**.

Question 1

Overall, candidate understanding of ways that gender can influence the experience of childhood was very good. Most were able to identify two ways. Some offered sociological terms for their responses, namely *Oakley's notions of gender socialisation, manipulation, canalisation and verbal appellations*. Note however, whilst most of these candidates described the terms correctly for the additional mark, there were those that did not and therefore may not have been awarded the additional mark. For example, stating canalisation for the identified way and then describing verbal appellations.

Other common responses that did not necessarily apply sociological terms included *parents give them different toys (boys given guns/trucks and girls dolls/kitchen sets)...boys are seen as more of a priority (therefore supported through schooling whilst girls are expected to stay home and become domesticated)...imitation of parents (girls imitate mothers and learn the expressive role, whilst boys copy fathers and learn to become the breadwinner)*.

A small number of candidates made the error of discussing childhood in general, not addressing the context of gender, therefore could not be awarded as irrelevant.

Some candidates wrote overly long descriptive answers, that would earn the marks within the first few lines. There were examples of almost a side of writing for a response that is worth a maximum 4 marks. Lengthy introductions and conclusions are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions.

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) This was generally answered reasonably with most candidates able to provide at least one relevant reason with appropriate explanation and some of these 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.*

Generally speaking, candidates struggled to apply their knowledge and understanding of Marxism to address the context of ruling class ideology, with many simply providing responses to how the family supports/benefits capitalism, which was not the question set. Thus, awarding of marks was limited with a relatively small number of candidates achieving in the higher marks available.

Where candidates did fulfil the requirements of the question, the most common response was *Althusser/ISA*. Occasionally, *Marcuse and conspicuous consumption/false needs* was used. The wife acting as a sponge was common, however tended not to be applied to ruling class ideology, rather to how capitalism benefits, therefore not always awarded all the marks available. Some candidates named *false class consciousness* (e.g. the family creates a false class consciousness...) however, showed no real understanding of the concept.

Weak responses included examples of candidates attempting to apply functionalist ideas rather than Marxist (*ruling class ideology is distinctly of Marxist terminology/of a Marxist approach*), often simply identifying functions the nuclear family carries out rather than addressing the context of ruling class ideology.

To improve, candidates need to support points using appropriate sociological material e.g., concepts, studies, relevant sociologists etc. and apply these in demonstrating the original point made. Introductions and/or conclusions are not required.

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) Most candidates were more successful at identifying a relevant limitation than they were a relevant strength. Common responses for strengths were, *they identify the relationship the family has with capitalism/the economy* as well as *they recognise the ideological role the family plays in supporting capitalism/the ruling class*. Popular limitations were, *they are economically deterministic...fails to consider the benefits the family brings to its members...outdated as it fails to consider family diversity/that more women have become breadwinners*.

Even the more successful candidates often did not address the element of *what is it about Marxism that leads them to have this strength/limitation*. Another error candidates tended to make was in simply stating a Marxist view of the nuclear family, for example it is a unit of consumption, it acts as a safety valve. These are not strengths/limitations of Marxist views of the family and therefore not awarded.

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) There were a small number of candidates whose responses did not answer *this* question, rather they provided a **3b** response as they discussed how increased life expectancy can have a *positive* impact on family members. Therefore, not awarded.

Candidates performed reasonably well on this question with points commonly focused on the *increased burden on women (sandwich carers)* and the *financial ramifications (breadwinner must work longer hours/get a second job to pay for medication/medical bills)*. Another popular response was the *increase in divorce as marriages have longer to go wrong*. The more successful candidates developed the point they made, unpacking it and applying sociological material in support, whilst weaker responses tended to be simple and sociologically unsupported. Very simple responses included for example, *there will be more people living under the roof so more conflicts between relatives*.

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) Candidates answered this reasonably well, but few achieved in the top band of marks as there was a noticeable lack of sociological support, and/or points made were lacking in some development. The most common approach to this question was to discuss the *contribution to childcare*, especially for dual-working parents. Another popular albeit less common approach, was *grandparents can contribute longer to the primary socialisation of grandchildren*.

A small number of candidates incorrectly discussed negative impacts, not answering the question as this is the requirement of **3(a)**, whilst again there were examples of candidates who discussed infant mortality rate (IMR).

Note: there were quite a considerable number of candidates providing numerous positives/points, when only the one is required.

Section B

Most candidates provided a response to either **Question 4** or **5** in **Section B**.

Question 4

45 per cent of candidates opted for this question over **Question 5**. Less successful candidates did not focus on answering the *actual* question set of 'Evaluate the view that the nuclear family is still important in society today.' Rather they addressed in functionalist terms: why it is the ideal type/best type/most suitable type or looked at the advantages/disadvantages of the nuclear family. *This was not a role of the family question, or functionalist view of the family question, rather a family diversity question.*

Stronger responses engaged in the continued popularity of the nuclear family in society today numerically and ideologically, versus the growth of family diversity/postmodernist debate. Weak responses tended to focus simply on functions the nuclear family performs (note: not always applied to addressing the *actual* question set). Other weak approaches to this question included criticising lone-parent families from a New Right standpoint but failed to address whether the nuclear family is still important in society today, or not.

AO3 tended to be demonstrated through a juxtaposition of points rather than explicit evaluation.

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

Question 5

Evaluate the view that there is equality between men and women in the family.

55 per cent of candidates opted for this question over **Question 4** and were generally more successful in the quality of their responses. The common approach in support was *the impact of women's increased financial independence/status, and changes in masculinity (new man/fathers)*, whilst against were *the impact of patriarchy/culture/religion in reinforcing traditional segregated roles*. Simple responses tended to present for example, that *there is the 'new man' today who takes on the domestic and child caring duties...* versus *in some traditional patriarchal societies, men are still the breadwinners and women have the expressive role, lacking development and unpacking*. Candidates could have improved by examining *why* these changes are happening (e.g. impact of secularisation, social policies)/ *why* such societies continue (e.g. religion, laws, gendered socialisation).

Weaker responses included those that simply defined the symmetrical family, new man or joint and segregated roles, without applying these to address the question of whether there is equality between men and women in the family. There was also some tendency by weaker candidates to make statements without any explanation e.g. *globalisation has led to more equality between the genders... cohabitation leads to more equal relationships...How?* These responses were often too vague to award.

There were a small number of candidates who lost focus on the question of men and women (adults) in the family, discussing boys and girls (children), as well as in discussing the workplace when family was the context of the question.

AO3 tended to be made through juxtaposition of points rather than through explicit evaluation.

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

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/23
The Family

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.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read through the questions and highlight/underline key words.
- Candidates should 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 in the question and apply relevant sociological material.
- Candidates need to ensure responses reflect marks available (*see comments below*).
- Further preparation for the demands of **Question 2b** and **Question 4/5** would benefit candidates.
- Learning activities encouraging development of points/arguments and explicit evaluation would be beneficial.

General comments

There was an overall improvement in candidates achieving the higher marks range, this has been influenced by improved performance in responses to **Question 1, 2a** and **Question 4**. Few candidates failed to provide a response to a question, which is encouraging. Some candidates demonstrated weak knowledge and understanding of Marxist feminism, often confusing with radical and liberal.

The **most successful** candidates produced responses that **a/reflected the requirements of the question** and **b/applied relevant sociological material to support 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 candidates to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding (AO1), interpretation and application (AO2), and analysis and evaluation (AO3). Weaker responses did not *explicitly evaluate the question*, often relying on juxtaposition of opposing points.

Many candidates were able to name relevant sociological concepts/studies; the most successful candidates **applied** these to develop their response. Less successful responses simply identified sociological material, often defining/describing it rather than applying it in a way that engages the question. This was particularly noticeable within essay responses (**Question 4/5**) and **3a/b**. Any rubric errors tended to occur within questions **Question 2a** and **3b**, 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.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

The majority of candidates answered all questions in **Section A**.

Question 1

Most candidates were able to identify two ways grandparents contribute to family life. Most described included *provide childcare, provide socialisation to grandchildren, or financial assistance*. For the additional mark, descriptions for these examples such as... *support dual earning parents so they do not have to worry about finding babysitters who they do not know/can save parents money as they would not have to pay the grandparents...ensuring the grandchildren receive social norms and values as the parents are too busy working...help support the grandchildren by paying for their education, school trips, uniforms.*

Occasionally *provide advice/guidance* and *provide emotional support* were also given by candidates. However, candidates did not always provide a relevant description for the additional mark. Therefore, at best were awarded half the marks available to them.

Some candidates wrote overly long descriptive answers, that would earn the marks within the first few lines. There were examples of almost a side of writing for a response that is worth a maximum 4 marks. Lengthy introductions and conclusions are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions.

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) This was generally well answered with most candidates able to provide at least one relevant reason with appropriate explanation, with many of these 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.*

Strong, sociologically supported responses included *women's role as shock absorbers to the husband (safety valve/Ansley)*, as well as *women's role in the socialisation of children into capitalist ideologies (Zaretsky/Althusser/ISA)*. Other but less popular responses included *women's role in reproduction and consumerism*.

There were several candidates who supported points through the use of functionalism for sociological material (e.g. Parsons's Warm Bath theory) and given the benefit of doubt. When discussing capitalism, a Marxist perspective is more appropriate and, in this example, *women as a safety valve* would have been expected.

Simple responses that did not apply sociological evidence included for example, *women provide free domestic labour/this refers to the housework and childcare they do that means men can concentrate on work*. Examples of weak responses included... *women wake up early to make sure the man is up on time to get to work...* and *supporting the men...* and *doing house chores...* and *women buy goods*.

Candidates occasionally provided more than the two reasons required which wasted valuable time.

To improve, candidates need to support points using appropriate sociological material e.g., concepts, studies, relevant sociologists etc. and apply these in demonstrating the original point made. Introductions and/or conclusions are not required.

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) Candidates performed less well on this question. Some showed limited understanding of the demands of it and/or the relevant knowledge of Marxist feminist views of the family. Some candidates discussed the question within the context of the workplace, rather than *the family*. A number of candidates confused Marxist feminism with radical and/or liberal, and therefore gave irrelevant/incorrect responses.

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) Candidates performed reasonably well on this question. The common approach was to discuss the *impact of secularisation on attitudes towards couples cohabitating, and women's increased financial independence meaning they no longer needed to marry for security*. Other popular responses included *increased divorce rates* as well as *changing political attitudes towards supporting family diversity* (non-marriage-based alternatives).

Weak responses included those in which candidates made claims without explanation/support, for example, *people are cohabiting due to globalisation... globalisation has led to changing attitudes...* These are too vague to award. Some candidates made assertions, such as *people are now marrying for sex rather than love... people are no longer happy in marriages... people no longer value romantic connections*.

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) Candidates answered this reasonably well. In some responses there was an over-reliance on common-sense/general knowledge rather than an application of sociological material. The most common approach to this was a cultural/religious argument, with the better responses providing specific examples to illustrate, or that marriage was simply delayed through a period of cohabiting first. Vague responses discussed the nuclear family without any reference made to the context of marriage.

Section B

All candidates provided a response to either Question 4 or 5 in *Section B*.

Question 4

58 per cent of candidates opted for this question over **Question 5**, and whilst there was mixed performance, in general candidates were successful in demonstrating a good level of knowledge and understanding of functionalism and the family, albeit successful counter arguments tended to be limited to Marxism – feminism was applied to the question less successfully whilst there were few references given to post-modernist views.

Good responses examined the *actual role* the family performs e.g. to *ensure social solidarity/social order*, versus its role in contributing to the *perpetuation of capitalism/ruling class dominance*. The best responses discussed the family's role in perpetuating patriarchy, rather simply critiqued functionalism for ignoring the dark side of the family or stated that women are burdened by what they undertake in the family. Weaker responses tended to compare functions the family performs according to differing theoretical perspectives

Examples of weak counter arguments included functionalists *fail to acknowledge family diversity*, without attempting to apply this to the context of role of the family. Thus, it is a critique of the functionalist approach to the family rather than answering the question itself.

Some candidates incorrectly cited Marxist and/or New Right ideas as functionalism

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

Question 5

Fewer candidates opted for this question over **Question 4**. Generally the responses produced were less successful, with many candidates relying on anecdotal/common-sense material, with a tendency for own cultural experiences rather than demonstrating a sociological awareness.

Weak responses included examples of simply describing what happens in childhood/what childhood can be like/only looking at/describing how childhood used to be...without addressing the question of whether *the experience of childhood today is different to the past*.

Assertions made by candidates included...*children now have a better relationship with their parents...parents now raise their children more strictly...children in the past were not parented properly...*

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

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/31
Education

Key messages

- Candidates were able to answer all questions.
- Some candidates gave lengthy responses to lower mark questions. Candidates should note the marks available for each question and use their time accordingly.
- Candidates should use sociological material that is relevant to the question.
- Essay evaluation was often juxtaposed rather than explicit. Counter arguments should be made relevant to the question.
- Candidates should practice questions using past papers to be able to understand the requirements for each type of question.

General comments

The standard of responses overall was good. Candidates were able to answer all the questions. The best responses used relevant sociological material to support the points made including studies, concepts and theories.

Some candidates did not seem to understand the requirements of each question, and this limited their marks.

Question 1 should contain two clear points with some description of how this point relates to the question.

Question 2 requires the candidate to give two points. For each point there should be an explanation of the point, some sociological material to support the point (study/concept/empirical evidence) and an explanation of how this material supports the point.

Question 3 requires an argument against the given statement. There is no requirement to give points that support the statement. This question does not require an introduction.

Question 4 should be a balanced essay. There should be equal consideration given to points that support the statement and those against the statement. The answer should show the debate between views on the statement in the question and how these may be similar or different.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Good answers were able to identify problems in using IQ tests to measure educational ability. Many candidates discussed the cultural bias of tests and the existence of different types of intelligence. Others discussed whether intelligence could be measured or how external factors such as anxiety may impact on the test. The best answers were then able to describe how tests were problematic such as the questions being culturally focused or the idea that a test could not measure intelligence.

Some candidates were confused by the question and gave answers relating to educational ability but without reference to IQ tests. Others focused on tests in education as being problematic without referring to IQ tests, such as the problems of exams.

Although most candidates were able to use relevant material some did not fully describe points which limited marks.

Question 2

Good answers focused on gender stereotypes and their impact on educational attainment and included reference to both boys and girls. These answers used material such as laddish behaviour or teachers' perceptions. Material used to support points included reference to hegemonic masculinity, the content of textbooks and anti-school subcultures. Studies included Stanworth, Norman and Jackson.

Most candidates were able to give two relevant points and explanations, but many did not support these with relevant sociological material. This limited their mark to 4. Centres should ensure that candidates are aware that the question requires appropriate evidence in support of points made to access the full range of marks.

Question 3

Good answers were able to give two detailed points relating to factors other than cultural deprivation affecting educational achievement. Popular answers included reference to material deprivation and in-school factors. The best answers were able to develop points made and use relevant concepts and studies to support their discussion. Discussions of material deprivation, for example, were developed with reference to having appropriate study materials and by the impact on health of candidates and how this would mean lower attainment. Teacher labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy were also explained in detail and with reference to different social groups. Other candidates were able to identify material deprivation but with limited development and little material to support the point.

Some candidates explained cultural deprivation before giving arguments against this view. This is not necessary in this question and does not gain any additional marks. Some candidates used inappropriate material as an argument against the view. For example, suggesting the language codes were an opposing view rather than a feature of cultural deprivation.

Question 4

Generally, candidates were able to show some understanding of the view in the question. Most were able to give relevant points from sociological theories. Good answers were able to use a range of evidence from theoretical perspectives to demonstrate how education provides economic benefits for society. Points were taken from both functionalist and Marxist perspectives. The best answers used role allocation and social order to show how education functions for the economic benefit of society. Other candidates used points from Marxist viewpoints as evidence that education provides the workforce needed for society and so gives economic benefit. Alternatively, Marxist views were used as evaluation to show how rather than benefitting society, education only benefits those in power. In some cases, these arguments were presented in a sophisticated way showing clear sociological insight. New Right and vocationalism were also used as relevant examples to support the view. Feminism was used as evaluation with varying degrees of success.

Although most candidates were able to show some knowledge of theoretical perspectives in this debate, weaker responses gave limited depth. Some responses included a range of brief points about functionalist and Marxist views without specific application to economic benefits, giving a rather general account. Weaker responses also lacked explicit evaluation. Other perspectives were mentioned but without reference to economic benefits, rather as other views on education. Centres should encourage candidates to explain how points against a view are different to the view stated in the question.

Mostly material used in answers was relevant, some candidates drifted from the question to discuss the role of education in general. In some cases, this involved a general account of a range of perspectives. Whilst showing some knowledge these did not focus on the topic of the question.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/32
Education

Key messages

- Candidates were able to answer all questions.
- Some candidates gave lengthy responses to lower mark questions. Candidates should note the marks available for each question and use their time accordingly.
- Candidates should use sociological material that is relevant to the question.
- Essay evaluation was often juxtaposed rather than explicit. Counter arguments should be made relevant to the question.
- Candidates should practice questions using past papers to be able to understand the requirements for each type of question.

General comments

The standard of responses overall was good. Candidates were able to answer all the questions. The best responses used relevant sociological material to support the points made including studies, concepts and theories.

Some candidates did not seem to understand the requirements of each question, and this limited their marks.

Question 1 should contain two clear points with some description of how this point relates to the question.

Question 2 requires the candidate to give two points. For each point there should be an explanation of the point, some sociological material to support the point (study/concept/empirical evidence) and an explanation of how this material supports the point.

Question 3 requires an argument against the given statement. There is no requirement to give points that support the statement. This question does not require an introduction.

Question 4 should be a balanced essay. There should be equal consideration given to points that support the statement and those against the statement. The answer should show the debate between views supporting the statement in the question and views against the statement. This debate should focus on the issue in the question rather than giving a general debate between perspectives.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was generally well-answered, with many candidates discussing concepts such as female role models, feminisation of education and more positive attention of teachers given to girls. The best answers were able to explain how girls were advantaged in schools such as by being given greater encouragement.

Some candidates misinterpreted the question, focusing on how education empowers women in society after leaving school. These responses emphasized long-term societal impacts, such as improved career prospects and more equitable domestic roles, rather than examining in-school factors. Many simply wrote of the benefits of education to girls rather than focusing on schools.

Question 2

Good answers tended to discuss pro and anti-school subcultures, teachers' expectations and the ethnocentric curriculum making subcultures feel marginalised. The most common sociological references made by candidates were to Farzana, Gillborn and Youdell, Sewell and to a lesser extent, Mirza, and Mac and Ghail. Most candidates were able to successfully explain these in relation to affecting educational attainment so were able to gain maximum marks for points made.

For many candidates, this question proved to be the most challenging as they referred ethnicity in general rather than specifically referring to ethnic subcultures. Another error was that candidates made class-based comments, particularly in terms of supporting material, and hence were often unable to gain more than one or two marks for each point made. The most common example of this was referring to the work of Bourdieu and cultural capital.

Question 3

Many candidates were able to identify two points against the view with the most common arguments being Marxist views, material and cultural deprivation, in particular language codes. Less common responses were references to teacher labelling, setting and streaming. Good answers included two detailed points which were linked to a lack of social mobility for working-class students. In these responses points were supported with relevant sociological material including the lack of cultural capital, cultural reproduction, material capital, the outcome of cultural deprivation, and sponsored mobility.

Many candidates were able to identify an argument and provide enough evidence to at least get into Level 2. In terms of the Marxist explanations, candidates generally demonstrated a good knowledge of Bowles and Gintis, Althusser and Bourdieu. Some candidates were not able to get into Level 3 as responses were not clearly applied to how inequality in education prevented upward social mobility for working-class students.

Weaker candidates tended to give more generic answers relating to private education and material deprivation using common-sensical material.

Some candidates did not read the question accurately and gave reasons why education helped working-class students achieve social mobility, these responses were not creditable. In some cases there was a tendency to discuss general educational disadvantages for the working class (e.g. education being an ideological tool of the ruling class) without referring specifically to in-school processes.

Question 4

Most candidates were able to draw on the works of Durkheim, Parsons, and Davis and Moore to explain the functionalist account and include several key concepts such as meritocracy, collective conscience and value-consensus. Good answers focused the points on the concept of social solidarity to show clear application of material to the question. Some candidates linked other functionalist functions of education (e.g. role allocation, producing a labour force) to social solidarity, demonstrating strong understanding of the concepts as they did so. Others chose to position these as alternative functions of education, which rivalled social solidarity as the 'main' function of education.

Some candidates only gave a general description of the functionalist view on education, without focusing on how this supported the view that the main function of education is to maintain social solidarity. Some candidates focused on how there was equality in the education system. Similarly, many candidates who presented the arguments of the New Right and the Social Democratic perspective, often did not apply these clearly to how they led to social solidarity.

Most candidates were able to provide some arguments against this view, by reference to Marxist and to a lesser extent feminist views. Most candidates were able to refer accurately to Marxist arguments of Althusser, Bowles and Gintis and Bourdieu. Many were able to do this with some sophistication and were able to apply a wide range of concepts such as ideological state apparatus, cultural reproduction, the hidden curriculum, and the correspondence principle. There were a significant number of candidates who presented these by juxtaposition and did not clearly apply these views to how the main function of education was *not* to maintain social solidarity. For a significant number of candidates, material on Marxist views were often merely presented as an alternative view and was not used evaluatively. This also applied to most candidates who presented material on feminist and postmodernist perspectives. Centres should encourage candidates to explain how points against a view are different to the view stated in the question.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/33
Education 33

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/41
Globalisation, Media, Religion

Key messages

- Most candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the issues raised by the questions.
- High quality answers made good use of relevant concepts and theories.
- Some answers lacked a sustained evaluation.
- Higher marks could be achieved by including more references to sociological studies.
- Low scoring responses mostly lacked references to sociological explanations and evidence.

General comments

The standard of the scripts overall continues to improve. More candidates are demonstrating a sound understanding of relevant sociological material, including concepts, theories and studies. Responses in the middle of the mark range often made reasonable points in support of the view stated in the question, but omitted to consider possible counter arguments and contrary evidence. There were some low scoring answers that relied on general knowledge and personal opinion, as opposed to referencing relevant sociological material. Higher marks could be gained by adopting a more analytical and evaluative approach to the questions. More use of examples to support key points would be another way to gain further marks. Not focusing on the key terms in the question was a limitation 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.

Examples of rubric error were rare. Some candidates answered more than the two questions required, which resulted in candidates having less time available to respond to the two essays required. Failure to reference answers with the appropriate question number was a feature of some scripts. Candidates may disadvantage themselves by omitting the question number or writing the number illegibly, as it makes it difficult for the Examiner to know which question is being attempted.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

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 preventing the spread of 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 the analysis. High quality answers also included a sustained evaluation, challenging the view expressed in the question. Examples of where national governments and supra-national organisations, such as Interpol, have been successful in combatting global crime were cited in some of the best responses. Lower scoring 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.

Question 2

High quality responses to this question demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of different explanations of poverty in developing countries, with reference to the impact of global capitalism. Marxist theories of development, particularly world systems theory, featured in support of the view expressed in the question and some candidates made good use of examples of poverty in particular countries to illustrate key points. Evaluation was provided by considering alternative explanations of poverty, particularly the arguments associated with modernisation theory. Some candidates also questioned the reductionism and over-generalisation in the view that poverty in developing countries can best be explained in terms of the impact of global capitalism. Lower scoring answers were often characterised by a few simple points about the nature of poverty, with no clear reference to global capitalism or other concepts that have been used to explain disparities in income and wealth between countries.

Section B

Question 3

Good answers to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of the hypodermic syringe model of media effects. High scoring responses discussed a range of arguments and evidence illustrating and supporting the model. This included references to the Marxist mass manipulation model, the concept of moral panics, evidence from studies of the impact of media violence, and ideas associated with post-modernist analysis of the media. Some candidates also referred to the role of celebrity influencers in the new media as an example of how the media can have a direct and powerful effect in shaping human behaviour. Evaluation took the form of questioning the underlying assumptions of the hypodermic syringe model. This was often supported with references to the uses and gratifications model and other theories of media effects that challenge the idea of audiences being passive and accepting of media influence. Some candidates used the digital optimist perspective to argue that in the case of the new media, audiences create much of the content rather than being passive recipients of material that is produced for them by media corporations and governments. There were some lower scoring answers that lacked focus on the hypodermic syringe model, discussing instead issues about who controls the media.

Question 4

Good answers to this question demonstrated how the interactive nature of the new media has given individual citizens and groups more opportunity to challenge the dominant power structures in society. Debates between digital optimists and digital pessimists featured in many well-informed responses. Some candidates made good use of the distinction between democratic and authoritarian regimes to structure their analysis. Evaluation was provided by challenging the extent to which the new media has helped to democratise power, noting various ways in which privileged groups are able to defend their interests in the digital world. Lower scoring answers were limited to a few basic points about how the new 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 new media specifically.

Section C

Question 5

This question provided an opportunity to consider the role and social position of women within religious organisations. Good answers offered a sustained account of feminist views about the patriarchal nature of religion. This was often supported with evidence highlighting the subordinate position of women within religious organisations. Evaluation was provided by contrasting the feminist perspectives with other theories that challenge the idea that religious organisations are patriarchal. Evidence of changing attitudes towards the position of females within some religious organisations was also used to question the feminist viewpoint. Some candidates made good use of contrasts between the way females are treated within different religions. New policies to support the position of women within some religious organisations were also mentioned in some good analytical responses. There were a few low scoring answers that outlined different theories of religion without linking the material well to debates about how far religion is a source of patriarchy.

Question 6

This question provided an opportunity for candidates to discuss the growth of new religious movements and whether this development demonstrates that secularisation has occurred. Good answers considered a range of arguments and evidence supporting the view expressed in the question. This included reflections on the challenges to established religious authority that the growth of new religious movements implies, together with references to the fragmentation of religious belief and the emergence of more individualistic forms of religious practice. Evaluation was often provided by situating the growth of new religious movements within the broader context of secularisation, arguing that the growth of these movements is evidence of religious revival and a reaction against the decline in the social significance of religion. The concept of 'believing without belonging' was also explored in providing a rejoinder to the view expressed in the question. A few candidates questioned the validity of evidence about the extent of religious belief in the past as a way of developing an analytical response to the question. Low scoring answers often sought to make the question into one about the validity of the secularisation thesis in general rather than linking the debate to new religious movements specifically.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/42
Globalisation, Media, Religion

Key messages

- Many candidates gave good use of relevant concepts and theories in both essay responses.
- High quality answers included a sustained evaluation.
- Some answers lacked focus on the key terms in the question.
- Higher marks could be achieved by including more references to sociological studies.
- Low-scoring responses mostly lacked references to sociological explanations and evidence.

General comments

The standard of the scripts continues to be high overall. Good responses combine detailed sociological knowledge with sustained analysis and evaluation. Some answers in the middle of the mark range score highly in terms of knowledge but less developed evaluation is offered. To gain high marks for AO3, it is essential to challenge and test the view expressed in the question. Many of the answers made good references to theories, but sociological concepts were less widely used and some answers lacked references to relevant studies. There were some lower-scoring answers that included a lot of material that was tangential to the question. A few candidates also continue to 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 have the opportunity to study sociological textbooks/teaching material and are encouraged to use references to sociological sources in 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 sections on Religion and Media proved most popular, with those on Globalisation less frequently attempted.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

High scoring responses to this question demonstrated a good understanding of the processes of globalisation and their cultural impact. Theories about cultural divergence 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 increasing today. Good answers also provided a sustained evaluation of the view expressed in the question. Debates about whether globalisation has led to greater cultural convergence as opposed to cultural diversity often featured as part of the evaluation. Some candidates used the concept of Westernisation to provide a critical perspective on the view expressed in the question. Low scoring answers were limited to a few points about globalisation with little or no reference to cultural effects.

Question 2

High quality responses to this question demonstrated detailed knowledge and understanding of dependency theory and its contribution to explaining global poverty. Some candidates made good use of examples of poverty in particular countries to illustrate key points about dependency theory. References to colonialism and neo-colonialism were often explored in developing an account of the view expressed in the question. Evaluation was provided by considering alternative explanations of poverty, particularly the arguments associated with modernisation theory and world systems theory. Some candidates also questioned the reductionism and over-generalisation in the view that poverty in developing countries is best explained by

reference to dependency theory. Lower scoring answers were often characterised by a few simple points about inequality, with no clear reference to dependency theory or other explanations of global poverty.

Section B

Question 3

High scoring answers to this question demonstrated a good understanding of the mechanisms through which the new media is controlled and where power lies. Pluralist theory was often cited in support of the view expressed in the question. Arguments were also made about the contribution of different audience groups in shaping the content of the new media. Owners too were identified as a group that has the power to control the media through mechanisms such as the ability to hire and fire media employees, agenda setting and gatekeeping, the global scale of media assets today, and the power of owners to make policy decisions and set broad editorial guidelines. Some candidates also made useful references to research studies highlighting the power dynamics within the media that may result in particular groups, such as owners or government, exercising considerable control over content. Strong evaluative responses included a good range of points examining the scope of governments to influence the new media and providing examples of actions taken by governments to regulate and restrict new media content. Low scoring responses often lacked references to sociological material and offered only personal opinion about who is able to control media content.

Question 4

Good answers to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of the uses and gratifications model and how it differs from other explanations of media effects. High scoring responses considered a range of arguments and evidence supporting the uses and gratifications model. Good links to pluralist and post modernist perspective often featured as a way of supporting the view expressed in the question. Evaluation was provided by considering alternative accounts of media effects, such as the hypodermic syringe, two-step flow, and cultural effects models. Some candidates made good use of studies supporting the idea that the media has a powerful influence on behaviour as a way of highlighting limitations in the uses and gratifications model. There were some lower scoring answers that lacked focus on the view expressed in the question, discussing instead issues about who controls the media.

Section C

Question 5

This question provided an opportunity to consider the role of religion with reference to social control. Good answers offered a sustained account of the Marxist and feminist views about the impact of religious practices and beliefs in supporting the status quo. This was often supported with evidence highlighting the subordinate position of the working class and/or women within religious organisations and theology. Evaluation was provided by contrasting these conflict theories with other sociological accounts that challenge the idea that religion is an agent of social control. Functionalist arguments about religion contributing to social harmony and solidarity were reprised as a counter to the Marxist and feminist emphasis on social control. Examples of where religion has contributed to social change were also cited as a way of challenging the view expressed in the question. There were some lower scoring answers that outlined different theories of religion without linking the material well to debates about whether religion is an agent of social control.

Question 6

This question provided an opportunity for candidates to discuss the growth of new religious movements and whether this development demonstrates that religion remains a powerful influence in society. Good answers considered a range of arguments and evidence supporting the view expressed in the question. These included statistics illustrating the spread of new religious movements and the scale of the membership base. Evidence of religious revival and an increase in privatised religion was also used to support the view expressed in the question. Evaluation was provided by situating the growth of new religious movements within the broader context of secularisation, arguing that the growth of these movements reflects a broader weakening in the influence of religion in society. Evidence of a progressive decline in the power of religious organisations was also used to debunk the idea that new religious movements have helped to redress the decline in the social significance of religion. Low scoring answers often sought to make the question into one about the validity of the secularisation thesis in general rather than focusing on issues relating to new religious movements directly. A few candidates appeared not to understand the concept of new religious movements.

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There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.