

Sociology

Advanced GCE A2 H581

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H181

Report on the Units

June 2009

HX81/MS/R/09

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Chief Examiner's Report

This was the second session for the new AS sociology specification. G671 had a very similar number of entries compared to January, whereas G672 had the vast majority of entries this session. Overall there was a large variation in the performance of candidates; those who attained high marks were able to demonstrate that they understood, interpreted and evaluated sociological evidence with clarity and accuracy, whilst lower level responses had a very basic understanding of sociological evidence, tending to rely instead on anecdotal and asociological material. The term 'sociological evidence' refers to concepts, studies, data, theories, and contemporary examples and candidates are encouraged to use a range of these in order to demonstrate they have a wide-ranging knowledge and understanding. Candidates often attempted to use material learned from G672 to apply it to questions in G671. Whilst there may be some opportunities to do this, candidates tended to drift away from the specific question and their knowledge became generalised and not specifically relevant. There follows a report on each of the two units from this session, with some suggested teaching tips for teachers, focusing particularly on the skills needed to achieve success in this specification. Teachers are encouraged to read the relevant sections and to attend INSET courses during the autumn term to gain further feedback should they require it.

G671 Exploring Socialisation, Culture and Identity

General Comments

Overall, candidate performance was marginally better than in the January sitting. Generally, candidates had a slightly more accurate and clear knowledge and understanding of appropriate sociological evidence and were able to apply this to the specifics of each question. There was a wide range of candidate performance from those who were almost purely anecdotal, lacking in any sociological evidence, to those which included a plethora of sociological concepts, and studies. The vast majority of candidates answered all four questions and most candidates seemed aware of the time requirements for each question, spending the longest amount of time on question 4, which is worth just over half of the marks. There were, however, some timing issues; in particular, many of those candidates who chose to answer question 4 first did not leave themselves enough time to answer questions 1, 2 and 3. Likewise, some candidates spent far too long on question 1 and they need to be reminded that this 8 mark question should take them no longer than 5 minutes. Many assistant examiners commented on issues of quality of written communication and they felt that a significant number of responses were not able to articulate a written argument in an effective way. There was a big difference between the high attaining candidates, who understood, interpreted and evaluated sociological evidence with clarity and accuracy, and low achieving candidates, whose answers contained vague, asociological common-sense knowledge with only assertive evaluative commentary. Sociological evidence can include concepts, theories, studies and contemporary examples and candidates should be encouraged to use a range of these in their answers. However, candidates need to be taught that 'contemporary examples' are not the same as vague, anecdotal stories; they need to be verifiable and accurate, for example, by using references to relevant films, newspaper articles and not sweeping inaccurate generalisations such as "Asian parents are more strict than white British parents".

Some candidates referred to the pre-release material in questions 1, 2 and 3. They were rewarded for this, but those that included reference to the pre-release material as their only sociological evidence could not go beyond the 'basic' level 2 mark band. Finally, whilst there is significant variation in performance between individual candidates, there is also a noticeable centre effect. Some centres appeared not to have spent an adequate amount of time preparing their students for the pre-release material and, as such, their answers tended to be overly descriptive, focusing on the findings of the research rather than the methodology. Given that this question is worth over half the marks, centres need to ensure that candidates are fully familiar and confident with interpreting the pre-release material. Further comments regarding the candidate performance of question 4 can be found below.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question (1)

This question required candidates to offer a wide ranging and detailed definition and at least two examples. Few candidates were well prepared for this question in terms of being able to pin point a definition of identity. Most candidates had some understanding of the concept 'identity' but many struggled with articulating a clear definition. Many were confusing the definition with reference to culture, values and roles. Good responses were able to offer a range of knowledge and understanding of the term; for example, a response which stated "identity refers to how we see ourselves and others see us; identity can be active or passive and most sociologists argue that we are socialized into our identity; we have multiple identities, such as class, gender, ethnic and age identities" would get full marks for the definition. The majority of candidates did offer

some supporting examples, but these were often vague, lacking in evidence, containing little sociological knowledge. A number of candidates, however, did not offer any supporting examples at all. Stronger responses were able to include concepts (such as hybrid identity) and / or reference to studies into identity for their examples, for example Hodkinson's study of Goth identity.

Teaching tip: Ensure that students are given a full definition and two clear sociological examples for each of the concepts stated in the specification.

Question (2)

This question required candidates to focus on two ways in which education socialises children. The mark scheme allowed for responses which referred to a particular identity, such as how children are socialized into a gender identity, or ethnic identity. Responses which took this route tended to score highly as they were referring to a greater range of sociological evidence. Candidates could also refer to the process of socialisation, in terms of 'how' children are socialised (e.g. role models, imitation) to be rewarded knowledge and understanding marks.

There was a lot of variation between responses, and between centres on this question. At the top end, candidates clearly focused on education as an agency of secondary socialisation, and included relevant concepts, studies and contemporary examples, for example, in relation to gender role socialisation, responses explained the hidden curriculum in relation to Lesley Best's reading schemes research. However, there were lots of weak responses. Some candidates didn't clearly understand what socialisation was, referring to socialising ('chatting with friends') rather than the process of learning a society's culture. Others tried to use the concepts of formal and informal curriculum with little accurate understanding of the differences between them. Some candidates wasted time by writing lengthy introductions about the differences between primary and secondary socialisation. All centres would benefit from reminding candidates to clearly state "one way", then "another way" as well as teaching them about the process of socialisation; that is, HOW it occurs. A significant number of candidates only used concepts and/or examples, without support from empirical evidence.

Question (3)

This question required candidates to focus on the agency of the family in both creating and reinforcing ethnic identities. As with question two, there was significant variation in responses, although candidates generally included more sociological evidence in this question. Strong responses were well prepared having a range of sociological evidence on how families socialise individuals into their ethnic identity, focussing on the question and referring to both creation and reinforcement. Such responses often included reference to sociological studies on ethnic identity such as Ballard, Butler, Song, as well as Barron from the pre-release material. Some centres had tried to relate ideas to Oakley, with varying degrees of success. For example, some candidates explained that the process of manipulation and canalisation can be seen in socialising ethnicity, supporting this with relevant examples. Some of the weaker responses ignored ethnicity and focused on gender which was not relevant. Many responses were awarded level 1 (limited) or level 2 (basic) for AO1 and AO2a because there was an over reliance on vague examples without substantiation with reference to food, clothes and religion. For example, a common response was to state that "Muslim Asians value family life more than white British" or that "Afro-Caribbeans don't value family life because they are all single parents". The best way for candidates to avoid such sweeping, often inaccurate generalisations is to support their statements with sociological studies. Other weaker responses wrote general answers about the family as an agency of socialisation with reference to Functionalist and Marxist theory and, whilst they attained some knowledge marks for this, they were often lacking focus on ethnic identities. Question 3 contains an element of evaluation (4 marks) and most

candidates did make some evaluative comments. Indeed, there were some very strong evaluative comments about changing ethnic identity in relation to the importance of the family. The most common revolved around the ideas of hybrid identities and the concepts 'white mask' and 'code switching'. Some of these were only evaluative in an implicit way and candidates need to be encouraged to be explicit in their evaluation with direct reference to the question. For example, "the family may not be important in socialising people into their ethnic identities because...". A significant number of candidates only attained 1 mark for evaluation by asserting at the beginning of their answers that "the family is VERY important...".

Question (4)

This question is based on the pre-release material and is worth just over half the marks of the exam paper. In terms of knowledge and understanding, responses are rewarded marks for concepts, the wider research process, theory in relation to research and the method / research strategy of ethnography. The standard of responses to this question did vary enormously between both individual candidates and whole centres. There were some very strong responses which were able to discuss Barron's work in terms of key research concepts (reliability, validity etc) with sustained contextualisation and evaluation which was organised around a strong conceptual awareness. Such responses, for example were able to offer a range of reasons for which the method lacked reliability and why the findings may not have been valid. Answers awarded level three marks for AO2a offered an unbalanced contextualisation by, for example, focusing on age rather than ethnicity/ ethnography. In this question, assessment objective 2a (Interpretation and application) is largely about the context of research; in this question candidates were required to explain the methodological approach of ethnography in relation to young children's ethnic identity. In order to get beyond level 2 for AO2a, candidates needed to explain why the method was a particular strength/weakness when studying this issue with this group, rather than just paying lip service to 'young people' or 'ethnic identity'.

Teaching tip: When teaching the content of the specification for this unit, ask students to assess why that researcher used that method in that context. For example, why did Jackson use semi-structured interviews in her study of laddish behaviour of school children?

A significant number of candidates offered no knowledge or understanding of ethnography or the key concepts, which is surprising given the fact that centres and candidates have access to the pre-release material for approximately 8 weeks before the examination. Some of these responses stated that ethnography was something to do with ethnicity; some described it as unstructured interviews, whilst others just ignored it altogether.

Teaching tip: When preparing students for question 4, ensure that every single concept in the pre-release material is clearly defined and explained.

Reliability and validity are still confused. A real problem this session has been candidates copying from the pre-release. Many have seemed to focus on this rather than using their own words and therefore, didn't go beyond using words such as 'subjective' and 'respondent validation' which were taken from the pre-release. It appears that for some centres, this has been the uniform approach, to copy and briefly analyse. It must be noted that the pre-release is stimulus material and not source material. Candidates should use it to set their responses in context; to use it as a spring board to analyse research methodology on a particular issue, but they need to go beyond the wording given in the material. Another concern has been that candidates are focussing far more on findings than in the previous session, and are not rewarded any marks for this. Candidates have copied the findings from the pre-release and used other studies to back up these findings and not analysed any of the methodology, thus scoring poorly.

G672 Topics in Socialisation, Culture and Identity

General Comments

A wide variety of responses were seen this session with evidence that some candidates were very well prepared in terms of knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological theories, concepts and contemporary evidence. There were, however, a number of centres whose candidates almost all produced very weak responses that lacked any sound sociological material and which achieved marks from the lower end of the mark bands.

In terms of options, in this session, the Family was by far the most popular, followed by Youth, Religion and Health. An overwhelming majority of candidates chose to answer both Family questions and there were a good number of responses covering both Youth questions. Only a small number of candidates opted for Health and Religion. It was noticeable that a significant number of candidates who answered the Health questions did not include much in the way of detailed sociological evidence.

There were a small number of scripts with rubric errors. Where there were errors, typically candidates failed to answer the required number of questions or attempted to mix and match part a and b questions contrary to the rubric of the paper.

Generally candidates used their time appropriately, producing approximately three quarters of a side of A4 for part (a) and at least two sides for part (b). Few appeared to run out of time on the second part (b) question.

Most candidates performed quite well on part (a) questions, with the majority reaching marks in level 3 of the mark scheme. More candidates appear to be starting their answers with a clear identification of the two points to be discussed but a significant minority continue to cover more than two points in their answers, or offer explanations that do not clearly relate to the two points that the candidate has identified. Some candidates also explain two points which overlap to a considerable degree preventing them from achieving the marks available for two clearly separate points. Candidates need to be aware of the need for a reasonably full and clear explanation in addition to the identification of relevant points and that they will be rewarded for the use of conceptual, theoretical or empirical material in their answers.

The most common issues that prevent candidates from achieving level 4 were:

- Candidates identifying more than two points.
- Candidates identifying and explaining only one valid point.
- Candidates failing to fully explain their two points often simply identifying and giving a brief explanation.
- Candidates identifying two points which overlap to such a degree that they can only be treated as one point.
- Candidates failing to make use of sociological theories, concepts and/or contemporary evidence to develop their answer and demonstrate sociological knowledge and understanding
- Candidates included explanations that had little relevance to the point identified
- Candidates using time inappropriately on material not required by the question, for example, by including criticisms or evidence against their explanations.

Teachers' Tip - To achieve the top band marks for part (a) questions, two points need to be

identified and then explained using relevant sociological evidence including theories, concepts and/or contemporary evidence. It is important that candidates be encouraged to select points that will enable them to show **wide-ranging and detailed** knowledge and understanding. In part (a) questions, candidates need to identify two clear and distinct factors with explanations that do not overlap. Candidates should be encouraged to write their responses using a separate paragraph for each of the two points identified and explained to make it clear that they have offered two different points and explanations. Candidates should aim to write between $\frac{3}{4}$ to one side of a page on a part (a) answer.

Most candidates displayed some sociological knowledge and understanding with many showing a sound grasp of key concepts and theories. Candidates' ability to apply relevant empirical material was sometimes weaker and they should be made aware of the need to support theoretical arguments with sociological research data or, at least, relevant contemporary examples. Most candidates seem aware of the need to offer balance in their answers but this was often in the form of juxtaposition of theories and ideas. Better responses used alternative theories or empirical data to question the view highlighted in the question and to reach a reasoned conclusion.

On part (b) questions weaker answers tended to suffer from the following problems:

- Candidates had insufficient sociological knowledge and responses were mainly anecdotal or drawn from common sense. Better responses made use of sociological theories, concepts and/or studies.
- Some candidates produced answers that were well informed sociologically but they used material that was of only marginal relevance to the question on the paper.
- Candidates failed to interpret and apply sociological data to support the issues they identified, for example through the use of statistics and findings of sociological studies or examples from current events or broader social trends.
- Candidates produced one-sided answers that only considered evidence agreeing or disagreeing with the view.
- Candidates produced balanced answers but these simply juxtaposed arguments or evidence with little explicit evaluation. Better responses offered critical comments, weighed up arguments and evidence and drew a reasoned conclusion about the view.
- A number of candidates wrote part (b) answers that were only a little longer or even shorter than their part (a) answers. Candidates should be aware that part (b) requires a response that is at least twice as long as part (a), reflecting the marks allocated.

The skill of knowledge and understanding was the one where candidates were most able to achieve the top mark band. To do this they needed to include a wide-ranging and detailed knowledge and understanding of sociological evidence and clearly present knowledge of counter arguments.

Teachers' Tip - To achieve the highest marks in the skill of knowledge and understanding candidates need to include sociological evidence i.e. theories, concepts and/or accurate contemporary evidence on various sides of the argument. They need to show a wide-ranging and detailed understanding and so must learn as much about the evidence as they can to be able to write about it in an informed way. Teachers should aim to select teaching material that will best facilitate this process.

The skill of interpretation and application seemed challenging to a number of candidates, some of whom were able to produce responses with sound knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts, studies etc. but were unable to apply these effectively to the question. Some simply listed evidence without reference to the question while some responses were characterised by a superficial, anecdotal approach.

Teachers' Tip - To achieve the highest marks in the skill of interpretation and application candidates need to select and apply different types of data including theories, concepts and/or

contemporary evidence in support of various sides of the argument. Candidates should aim to identify the most relevant data and then show how this relates to the question, highlighting patterns and trends, supported with evidence where appropriate.

The skill of analysis and evaluation is a testing area for candidates. Analysis involves breaking down an argument to gain a clearer understanding. This is an essential stage in the evaluation process. Most candidates offered some evaluative comments. However, a significant number of candidates evaluated by juxtaposing arguments and theories without any exploration of strengths and weaknesses of evidence. A sustained evaluative approach throughout the answer should be aimed for, with candidates adopting an evaluative tone from their introductory paragraph onwards. Some candidates produced responses that only gained marks for evaluation in the concluding sentences whilst others evaluated only one side of the view.

Teachers' Tip – Candidates should be encouraged to write in a way that shows that they have engaged with the views involved in the question and which shows they have got to grips with these views. This process produces an in-depth understanding of sociological data that will then enable candidates to construct a clear set of arguments and an evaluation of these arguments. A sustained evaluative approach can be demonstrated by candidates writing an evaluative introduction, making some pertinent evaluative points about the studies, theories and ideas that they have used, and summarising the different views in relation to the wording of the question. Candidates should aim to evaluate specific sociological arguments from more than one side of the view, based on the available evidence, explanations and methods used. Candidates could be encouraged to use key evaluative terms that signal that they are evaluating the evidence or the argument at that point e.g. 'however', 'on the other hand', 'conversely', 'on the contrary', 'in contrast'.

Overall, candidates fulfilled the requirements in terms of quality of written communication, producing work written in continuous prose and with clarity of expression, although there were a noticeable number of candidates with significant spelling, punctuation and grammar errors.

Comments on Individual Questions

OPTION 1 THE FAMILY

- 1) (a) This question was generally well answered. Candidates cited a range of reasons, the most common were secularisation, women's greater independence, concerns about risk of divorce with higher divorce rates and couples wishing to undertake a trial marriage. Weaker responses often did little more than identify reasons while better answers included fuller explanations. The best answers tended to use theories, concepts and/or research data to develop their explanations. For example, some candidates cited writers such as Giddens and concepts such as individualism and confluent love. Others referred to studies such as Sharpe to illustrate how women's attitudes to work and marriage had changed. Most candidates were able to identify two relevant reasons but, in some cases, there was a degree of overlap between their points for example discussions of secularisation and changing social norms. Some candidates gave only a partial explanation that cited valid evidence which was not then used in a way that showed how it helped explain increased cohabitation.

Where responses reached the top band, they did not typically achieve full marks because the explanation needed to be further developed or was sufficiently developed for only one reason.

- (b) This question produced a wide range of responses. Weaker answers tended to have only a basic and generalised knowledge of feminism. Some candidates simply summarised what different sociological perspectives had to say about the nuclear family with a more limited focus on feminism. Other candidates used material on conjugal roles in their answers and, though they often showed quite extensive knowledge, did not focus on feminism in interpreting and evaluating material. Better responses showed a clearer focus on feminism and tended to use empirical material on gender roles in order to illustrate feminist approaches and criticisms of them, for example research on domestic labour, emotion work, decision making, organisation of finances and domestic violence. The best answers typically distinguished different feminist approaches eg liberal, Marxist, radical and black feminists though some were not entirely clear on the distinction between these. Better responses also tended to balance their arguments with material critical of feminism e.g. empirical studies showing greater equality in gender roles and new masculinities as well as alternative theoretical approaches such as functionalism, new right and postmodernism.
- 2 (a) Most candidates were able to at least identify two effects of an ageing population on family life, although in a small minority of cases the two points identified overlapped to such a degree that they were virtually identical. For example, some candidates focused on different aspects of the burden of care created by elderly relatives or different aspects of the spread of extended families. In addition to these, candidates identified a range of other consequences including the role of grandparents in caring for grandchildren and providing other support, women delaying marriage and childrearing and the greater importance of vertically extended relationships in extended families. Candidates were largely differentiated in terms of the quantity and sophistication of the explanation offered. The best responses tended to use relevant concepts and studies for example, Brannen's work on 'beanpole families' or Grundy & Henretta's work on the 'sandwich generation'. A small number of candidates seemed unprepared for this part of the specification and had no real understanding of the concept of the ageing population. There were also some candidates who drifted from the question of affect on family life and made more general comments about wider social consequences.
- (b) Most candidates showed an understanding of family diversity and many prefaced their answers with quite extensive lists of types of diversity but, in a large number of cases, failed to explain or develop these. In many cases candidates focused on only two or three forms of diversity, for example, sexual, ethnic and/or class diversity. Nevertheless some candidates were able to explain these in some detail using relevant research and/or concepts. Some candidates, however, simply briefly summarised different theories about the family in general with a weak focus on diversity. Evaluation on this question was not well developed by many candidates. Many answers were either entirely one-sided or only contained very brief consideration of arguments against diversity. Those candidates who were able to evaluate tended to focus on whether diversity was a good thing rather than whether it was happening, typically using functionalist and/or New Right arguments to criticise the effects of diversity on society. Only a few candidates were able to consider evidence against diversity in any detail, pointing to continuities in family life e.g. using feminist research to demonstrate the widespread patriarchal nature of families or Chester's work on neo-conventional families. Some candidates also questioned the extent of class and ethnic diversity by arguing that divisions of class and ethnicity were now blurring, so consequently these were becoming less important as sources of diversity.

OPTION 2 HEALTH

- 3 (a) There were very few candidates who chose this option. Most who did were able to identify two ways in which class affected health but weaker responses tended to be quite anecdotal, for example, citing risks of workplace accidents, lack of resources to buy medical treatment or factors such as diet and smoking. Better responses produced more conceptual answers, for example focusing on cultural or structural factors in class and health. Surprisingly few candidates were able to develop explanations using relevant sociological concepts or studies in answering this question.
- (b) This question produced a broad range of responses. A few candidates simply did not understand the interactionist approach to mental illness and produced generalised or anecdotal discussions of mental illness. Better answers showed a basic understanding, for example of the notion that mental illness was a label or a means of controlling people. The best responses were able to develop these ideas in greater depth or range, for example by reference to sociological studies such as Scheff, Goffman and Rosenhan. Good candidates were also able to clearly explain the relevance of concepts such as the social constructed nature of mental illness, the labelling process and the consequences of labelling. Some candidates offered very little evaluation but good answers included a more sustained evaluation, typically focusing on the idea that mental illness was real rather than merely socially constructed and on the benefits of psychiatric treatment for many patients.
- 4 (a) There were a variety of responses to this question, although a large number of candidates produced only anecdotal explanations. Few responses reached the level 4 mark band and those that did typically referred to labelling theory, stereotypes and research evidence from Oliver or Shakespeare. Most responses were less well informed and although they cited valid factors, like barriers created by society, explanations were very superficial, for example, referring to issues such as difficulties in using public transport that were unsupported with evidence.
- (b) There were few very good responses to this question. Better answers typically discussed key elements of the bio-medical model but most failed to support these in sufficient detail to reach the top mark band. Most candidates struggled to present counter views and, where they did attempt this, there seemed to be a good deal of confusion about the distinctions between the different perspectives. The best responses engaged with a variety of views such as the social model, iatrogenesis and feminist analyses and used these to evaluate the bio-medial model.

OPTION 3 RELIGION

- 5 (a) Only a small number of candidates opted to answer this question. Of those who did, most were able to identify two difficulties in measuring religious belief. These included the problem of church attendance statistics not necessarily reflecting belief, the issue of those practicing religion outside established organisations not being measured, the validity of surveys purporting to measure belief and problems of defining what should be included in the category of religious belief. Better responses were able to refer to concepts and research e.g. Davie's notion of believing without belonging, the privatisation of belief and differing definitions e.g. Durkheim's view.
- (b) Most candidates had some understanding of the functionalist view of religion but in some cases this was fairly basic. Better responses were able to cite key concepts such as social integration, consensus and collective conscience and these also, typically, referred to evidence from Malinowski, Parsons and Durkheim. In some cases, candidates simply juxtaposed brief summaries of different perspectives on religion with little explicit application of these to the question of the role of religion in society. Some references to Marx and Weber's work were made but this was not always clearly understood and was not always used to evaluate functionalist views. Few responses attempted to apply material to more contemporary situations.
- 6 (a) This question produced a variety of responses. Most candidates were able to identify two reasons for the appeal of New Age movements and develop their points reasonably well, commonly citing increased reasons such as diversity and choice, spiritual shopping, individualism, secularisation and marginalisation. Some candidates referred to the differential appeal of NAMs in relation to age, ethnicity, gender, or social class. Others included relevant examples such as yoga and astrology. Weaker responses offered superficial explanations that lacked sociological evidence.
- (b) There were few good answers to this question. A number of candidates simply produced a generalised secularisation debate response that made little or no reference to the rise of religious fundamentalism. A surprising number of candidates had little real understanding of fundamentalism or confused it with functionalism and produced a very brief response. Better answers were able to explain fundamentalism and use examples of contemporary movements. Such responses typically evaluated the view with a range of arguments drawn from the secularisation thesis and used these effectively to evaluate the view in the question.

OPTION 4 YOUTH AND CULTURE

- 7 (a) Most candidates were able to successfully identify two features of female subcultures but some weaker responses tended to describe two subcultures without clearly identifying features. A few candidates also identified features of youth subcultures in general that were not specific to female subcultures. Candidates identified a range of features including being bedroom focused, challenging male dominance and traditional stereotypes of femininity, being less overtly delinquent/anti-school and being constrained by double standards about sexuality. Answers were differentiated in terms of the amount of explanation and illustration of the identified features and the extent to which concepts and studies were used. There were some very good answers drawing on McRobbie

and Garber's (and in some cases Lincoln's) work on bedroom subculture, Lee's work on female sexuality and Blackman's work on New Wave girls.

- (b) A small minority of candidates simply had no understanding of the Marxist approach to youth subcultures. Another section of candidates had only a fairly basic knowledge of Marxism, e.g. in terms of youth subcultures rebelling against capitalist society. Some of these candidates appeared to have more knowledge of other perspectives such as functionalism and postmodernism and attempted to use these in evaluation with varying degrees of success. Nevertheless a significant proportion of candidates demonstrated good or very good knowledge of Marxist approaches and often used concepts such as resistance, magic solution, semiotic analysis and incorporation in their discussion. Widely cited studies were Clarke, Hall and Jefferson and Hebdige. Better responses integrated empirical material e.g. on skinheads and teddy boys with discussion of theory. Most candidates were able to offer some form of evaluation but this was not always sustained. Weaker responses typically pointed to Marxists' failure to address issues of gender and ethnicity but failed to expand on this or juxtaposed functionalist and Marxist accounts. Better answers developed these issues in a more focused evaluation and often used more contemporary material e.g. Bennett's work on neo-tribes and the urban dance scene or Hodkinson's work on Goths to question the Marxist approach
- 8 (a) There were few strong responses to this question. A surprising number of candidates did not understand the term moral panic, suggesting, for example, that a moral panic was where young people were uncertain about moral norms. Most candidates, however, showed some understanding, though weaker responses often described moral panics rather than identifying their features. Better answers typically identified features such as media exaggeration/sensationalism, creation of fear in the audience, stereotyping and labelling of an identified group and an over-reaction by social control agencies such as police. The best responses tended to illustrate these points with relevant examples and made use of appropriate concepts such as amplification and folk devils. Some candidates referred to classic studies such as Cohen and Hall et al while others used contemporary examples such as knife crime and hoodies.
- (b) Most candidates had some understanding of this question but a significant minority relied on purely anecdotal material to support their answers. Most candidates were able to cite at least some ways in which gender affected the experience of education. Points covered included comparative levels of achievement, subject choice, teachers' expectations, differences in classroom behaviour and sanctions used, involvement in sport and the role of peer groups and school subcultures. Better answers were less anecdotal and included references to relevant concepts although only a minority of candidates appeared to have good knowledge and understanding of sociological research on this topic. Most candidates offered some kind of evaluation but this was often focused on a brief discussion of the role of ethnicity and/or class in education. Better answers developed these issues and some also pointed to the declining importance of gender differences e.g. due to school equal opportunities policies and girls becoming more career orientated.

Grade Thresholds

Advanced GCE Sociology H181 H581
June 2009 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
G671	Raw	100	69	60	52	44	36	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G672	Raw	100	69	60	52	44	36	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
H181	200	160	140	120	100	80	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
H181	15.3	33.1	53.2	70.7	85.0	100	5357

5357 candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:

http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html

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