GCE

Sociology

OCR Report to Centres

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

G671 Exploring Socialisation, Culture and Identity

General Comments

This session, once again, saw a wide range of candidate performance, and overall, candidates slightly improved upon their performance compared to last year. As centres become increasingly familiar with the structure of this examination paper, there is some evidence that candidates are more aware of the assessment requirements of each question. There were very few rubric errors and the vast majority of candidates attempted to answer all four questions which indicate that the questions were clear and accessible to all. Most candidates allocated their time appropriately, recognising, for example that since question 4 has half the marks for the exam paper, they should be spending half the time answering this question. There is some evidence that candidates performed better on questions 1 and 2 compared to previous sessions. To achieve better marks in question 3, candidates needed to answer it in a sociological way and some lacked knowledge and understanding of sociological evidence about age identities. There is a more detailed commentary on this question in the section below.

It may be useful to clarify the role and purpose of the pre-release material. The pre-release material is specifically related to question 4 on the examination paper as this question contains the instruction "using the pre-release material…". The focus of question 4 is always on sociological methods and the research process and the aim of this question is to enable candidates to discuss methodological issues in the context of a piece of contemporary research focused on culture and/or identity and/or socialisation (the pre-release material). The other three questions on the examination paper aim to test candidates on the specification content from this unit which is outlined clearly and explicitly under seven key issues in the specification content. That is not to say, however, that the pre-release material can *only* be used for question 4. As the instructions on the front of the examination paper state*: "You may interpret and apply the pre-release material as well as your own sociological knowledge for any question, wherever it is relevant and appropriate".* This is because the pre-release material is based around research into culture, socialisation and identity which means that any other questions asking candidates to write about these areas may wish to draw upon the pre-release as a piece of sociological evidence. It may happen, as it did this session, that the pre-release material could be referred to in every question: For question 1, candidates could make references to the value attached to consumer goods in our society; question 2, mobile phones as an example of consumer culture; and question 3 – media technology use and young people. Of course, candidates who rely on the pre-release material as their only source of evidence are not going to score highly as they will fail to display a 'wide range' of knowledge and understanding which is required for the top band. In other series, there may not be so many links to the pre-release material in questions 1, 2 or 3 and candidates will need to be able to draw on a range of sociological evidence.

Teachers' tip: Keep copies of previous pre-release studies, not just to use as mock examination practice, but also as a bank of resources to add to the range of evidence candidates could draw upon.

With every question, in order to achieve marks in the highest mark band, candidates need to include a range of sociological evidence and to discuss these with some depth. This was particularly well done in responses to question 2 where many candidates were able to draw upon a range of sociological studies and examples in relation to types of culture. A large number of responses, however, failed to include the required range and depth of sociological evidence. "Evidence" can include studies, theories, concepts and contemporary examples, although it should be noted that responses which rely heavily of contemporary examples will not score very highly as, on their own, contemporary examples are not good sociology. It is also

worth noting that there is a difference between contemporary examples and anecdote. Contemporary examples mean events in society that can inform sociology but may not have been formally researched or studied; or events that are happening as sociologists are carrying out their research. For example, some candidates used the examples of personalities/celebrities who have arguably been the victim of ageism in the BBC. Anecdotal evidence, on the other hand, is bordering on 'common sense' knowledge and this is not rewarded in the examination, for example, by claiming that "many elderly people I know are lonely and dependent".

Most candidates allocated the use of time effectively, spending the longest on question 4 which is worth just over half marks of the whole paper. There is some evidence that question 4 responses have improved in quality since the start of this new unit. Some candidates did experience timing issues, most commonly by spending too much time on question 1 which should be allocated approximately five minutes, or by spending too long on question 4 at the expense of the other three questions. Some candidates spent far too long on question 2, sometimes writing up to 2 sides for a question which should be answered in approximately 15 minutes. There is some evidence that where candidates choose to answer question 4 first, they often spend too long on this and then run out of time for questions 1, 2 or 3. Candidates who had been prepared well, even those who were clearly of weaker ability, managed to pick up marks on all questions by knowing the assessment requirements and using sociological evidence appropriately.

There was a clear difference between the achievements of candidates. At the top end, there was a range of sociological evidence contained in answers to all of the questions. Such responses included relevant and detailed explanations including sociological studies, concepts and theories where appropriate. The lower achieving candidates were often unable to provide sociological knowledge and understanding and their answers became very anecdotal and common sense like. Candidates must be encouraged to back up their answers with sociological evidence be it concepts, studies, relevant contemporary examples or theory. For example, in answers to question 2, candidates who discussed types of culture in relation to studies, concepts and theories scored more highly than those who wrote about, for example, how Goths wear black and dark make-up.

In terms of assessment objectives, Knowledge and Understanding (AO1) remains the strongest area; good candidates were able to offer a whole range of sociological knowledge, mainly in the form of concepts and studies, but sometimes making relevant use of contemporary examples and theory. AO2a (Interpretation and analysis) seemed to be the most difficult skill area for candidates; whilst many have been trained to evaluate evidence and arguments, they are less successful at interpreting knowledge and applying it to the specific question or context. For example, in question 3, candidates were able to offer good explanations of age identity and the cultural characteristics of different age groups, but they failed to focus explicitly on the media as an agent of socialisation. It is also worth pointing out that a significant number of candidates are not offering any evaluation for question 3, which is worth 4 marks and candidates should be reminded that there is also an evaluative element to this question.

Teaching tip: Devise a mark sheet (or request one from a fellow sociology teacher on the Community), based on the published mark schemes that you can attach to your candidates' work so that they are aware of being marked according to the three separate assessment objectives.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1. In general this question was answered very well and most candidates understood the core meaning of the concept of 'values' by relating it to the things which society sees as important and worthwhile. Some candidates confused the concept of 'values' with 'norms' by, for example, stating that values are about acceptable behaviour and actions. This type of answer

was awarded marks for being a 'partial answer' as it did not focus enough on the idea of something being seen as important/worthy. There were many candidates who achieved full marks for this question and most of these started by offering a clear one-sentence definition (2 marks), followed by some development of this by, for example, explaining that values are closely linked to norms, or that values differ between cultures, or that Functionalists believe we need core agreed values to enable society to run smoothly (this would gain another 2 marks). Four out of the eight marks are available for giving examples and a lot of responses used the examples cited in text books, such as the value of human life being reflected in the norm of wearing a seatbelt. Those who achieved the full four marks for examples were able to explain fully, rather than just stating that we value life, or we value material possessions.

Some candidates are spending too long on this question and writing a whole page answer. This obviously has implications for later questions and candidates should be reminded that they should spend approximately 5 minutes only on this question.

Teaching tip: Question 1 is always a concept question taken from the specification content. Ensure that your candidates have detailed definitions and examples for each one. Encourage candidates to keep a glossary with all of these key terms.

Question 2. This question was well answered and most candidates were able to identify two types of culture, the most popular being high culture, popular culture, consumer culture or subculture. The best responses used sociological concepts and/or studies, such as Hodkinson and Sewell (when discussing subculture, for example) or Strinati (popular culture). However, there was a lack of a range sociological evidence (particularly studies) in some responses which limited answers to level 3. Although, there was some understanding of types of culture, candidates often failed to back this up with appropriate evidence, or tried to tie in evidence that was not directly relevant (but required in other questions, particularly question 3) to the type of culture being described. Candidates who chose examples that were not part of the core cultures identified in the specification often struggled to include a range of knowledge (for example, candidates citing things like British culture, Muslim culture, gypsy culture etc) as they lacked sociological evidence and there was a clear reliance on contemporary or vague examples, usually limiting the mark to level 2. As stated earlier, those that purely relied on contemporary examples tended not be able to demonstrate enough breadth or depth of knowledge to reach the higher mark bands. Weaker responses were confused and/or anecdotal, showing no real understanding of different types of culture for example, discussing norms and values in a generalised and vague way.

Question 3. The best answers contained a wide range of evidence and a real focus on how the media reinforces age identity for example, discussing Postman's views of how the media has changed childhood or Thornton's study on how the media creates youth deviance. There were, however, a number of issues with this question. In many responses, there was a heavy focus on general topic of age, which was not applied to the media. A large number of candidates made reference to youth, middle and old age, but with only implicit knowledge and a lack of explicit sociological evidence. A large number of responses only answered through contemporary examples and this, alone, cannot reach beyond level 2 of the mark scheme. Some of the weaker answers purely listed examples of different age categories and how that was reflected in television shows. When evidence was used, there was distinct underdevelopment and application to the specific question. In a number of instances candidates tried to shift the focus away from age to gender. For a number of candidates they applied these well to the media highlighting how role models affect young girls citing McRobbie's notion of 'slimblondness', for example. However, a larger number were too heavily focused on gender at the expense of age. Such responses where unable to reach beyond level 2 for AO1 and AO2a.

One feature of stronger responses was the presence of explicit evaluation of the question. The most common approach was to note that there are other important agencies of socialisation, notably, the family in socialising individuals into their age identities. However, candidates need to be reminded that their evaluation needs to contain sociological evidence; it is not enough to simply state that other agencies of socialisation are important. Where evaluation was weaker, candidates only evaluated in an implicit way by, for example, just stating there are positive and negative portrayals of age identity in the media. Many candidates only offered an assertive point of evaluation, by for example, asserting that "the media is very important in reinforcing age identities". This was only a limited response. Some candidates spend far too much time evaluating the view in the question whilst there are also a significant number of candidates who do not offer evaluation points at all and therefore lose four potential marks. Candidates need to be reminded that this question will always start with the instruction to "*explain and briefly evaluate*".

Question 4. A wide range of responses was seen to this question. The vast majority of candidates knew how to define a questionnaire, linking it with positivism and quantitative data. Most candidates were able to discuss issues surrounding the wider research process, such as sampling, ethics and operationalisation. A key differentiator in marking this question was candidates' use of the key concepts as highlighted in the specification – validity, reliability, representativeness and generalisability. Some weaker responses did not explicitly use these concepts and therefore achieved marks at the bottom of level 2. Others did attempt to use the concepts but were very confused, partial or undeveloped. To reach level 3 of the mark scheme, and beyond, for both AO1 and AO2b, responses needed to address the key concepts in an accurate, wide-ranging and developed way. Even where candidates correctly discussed the key concepts, they were often not developed enough in explanation. Another feature of weaker responses was in candidates' understanding of methodological pluralism or triangulation. It was often the case that candidates included a generic discussion of these terms but they did not always understand how to apply it to this context and make it relevant.

The high achieving responses tended systematically to explain the method, offering a range of strengths and weaknesses and including key concepts. Another characteristic of strong responses was the discussion of aspects of the wider research process, for example, sampling, access, ethics and the impact of these. Many candidates made good use of theory in their responses, linking Haste's research design to the Positivist tradition and offering an interpretivist critique. There was some confusion around whether this was primary or secondary research and whilst it is certainly primary (as it was gathered for the specific aims and purposes of Haste's study), some candidates discussed the advantages and disadvantages of Haste not being involved herself. It is clear that some candidates had only a basic understanding of the pre-release material for example, stating that the questionnaires used generated qualitative as well as quantitative data. Strong responses recognised the quantitative nature of the findings and used these to illustrate strengths/weaknesses of the method. Teachers need to ensure that they spend some time teaching the content of the pre-release material in preparation for the exam. One real problem is in the number of candidates who waste time copying out the pre-release material and describing the findings of the study, once again, it should be reminded that this is stimulus material, not source material. The philosophy behind the pre-release material is to give candidates the opportunity to look at some real research in depth but the exam question will always require them to go wider than this, to address research issues, methods, process and concepts and using the pre release as an illustrative example.

It should also be noted that twelve marks are awarded for AO2a and in this question it is about how well the candidate contextualises their responses. The majority of candidates offer very generalised answers or just threw in the words 'students' or 'mobile phones'. To score highly in this skill area, candidates need to be asking themselves "What is the problem/advantage of using this method for studying THIS particular group (young people) on THIS particular topic (the importance of consumer goods to identity)?"

Candidates need to be encouraged to highlight the actual question on the question paper, particularly where it states "to research....". Stronger responses in this area offered some very thoughtful comments about, for example, how the issue of identity may need more qualitative methods as it's a complex topic area, or how technology has changed so much in the last 5 years, that the study may no longer be valid. Other good contextual references discussed changes in technology, peer pressure, fear of teacher in regards to phone usage in class, cyber bullying, embarrassment for not having a phone, or for it being particularly out-dated and therefore unable to personalise it! Candidates who did score more highly on this skill engaged much more fully with the context, often using the sampling procedure as an opportunity to explore the possible differences in the attitudes of different types of young people. Discussion of operationalisation also tended to result in good contextualisation.

The findings were included in the pre-release material to enable candidates to gain an understanding of the value of this research and to discuss the idea of the method being 'fit for purpose'. There were some strong responses which linked the findings into the research methodology for example by recognising the limitations of asking questions with fixed choice responses. Some centres had trained candidates to make reference to other research which had either used a similar methodology or which was focused on a similar topic. This was rewarded where they were being used to support or criticise a methodological issue but centres need to advise candidates not to spend time describing the findings of other studies as this is a question about methods.

G672 Topics in Socialisation, Culture and Identity

General Comments

The Family was by far the most popular option, followed by Youth, Religion and Health. An overwhelming majority of candidates chose to answer both Family questions and only a very small number of candidates opted for Health. Generally candidates used their time appropriately, producing at least three quarters of a page of the answer booklet for part (a) and at least three pages for part (b). Few appeared to run out of time on the second part (b) question. Only a few candidates answered either too many questions or only one question. Overall, candidates fulfilled the requirements in terms of quality of written communication, producing work written in continuous prose and with clarity of expression.

Most candidates were able to show sociological knowledge and understanding by accurately referring to theories, studies and concepts. Some needed to explain ideas more fully and apply them so that the evidence they included was developed in a way that answered the question. The best answers were both wide ranging and detailed and showed a broad and in-depth knowledge of the topic. Some responses were brief and needed a wider focus on different aspects of the topic. Others covered a range of issues but needed greater depth or development of evidence to achieve higher marks.

Part (a) Questions

Many candidates correctly identified two points and could develop these using evidence. Others needed more focused answers that clearly identified and then explained each of the two points. Candidates can improve their performance by making sure that they:

- Carefully select the two points that can be best supported with evidence.
- Fully explain the two identified points with relevant sociological theories, studies, concepts and/or contemporary evidence to develop their answer.
- Choose two points that do not overlap.
- Avoid lengthy and unnecessary introductions to part (a) answers before actually. proceeding to identify and explain the two points.
- Include only material that is required eg criticisms are not needed in part (a) questions as there are no marks for evaluation.

Teachers' Tip for part (a) questions – Use a separate paragraph for each of the two points to be identified and explained.   An effective format to start the first paragraph is, for example, 'One way in which...' The second paragraph can then begin with 'A second way in which...' Candidates should be encouraged to write about ¾ of a page for a part (a) answer.

Part (b) Questions

Most candidates attempted to use knowledge of sociological concepts, theories and research in answering questions. Perspectives based answers on the lines of 'functionalists would argue x while Marxists would argue y' also need to offer evidence to illustrate/support these arguments, for example, in the form of a study, example and/or statistical data. Most candidates were aware of the need to include alternative perspectives and arguments as part of their evaluation. Some candidates, who juxtaposed different views, needed to explicitly evaluate evidence and arguments and use evaluative language to assist this process.

Candidates can improve their performance by making sure that they:

- Include sufficient sociological evidence to demonstrate wide and detailed knowledge and understanding. The best responses made use of a range of sociological theories, concepts and/or studies.
- Carefully select the material to be included to make sure that it is relevant and can be used in such a way that it supports of refutes an argument being made and avoid simply listing evidence.
- Address different sides of the argument and support with evidence.
- Offer critical comments about evidence, weigh up arguments and draw a reasoned conclusion.
- Offer a response that includes sufficient depth and detail within the time allowed.

Teachers' Tip on Knowledge and Understanding – To achieve the highest marks in the skill of knowledge and understanding candidates need to show a detailed understanding and so must learn as much about the evidence they are using 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 and use evidence that gives depth and detail.

The skill of interpretation and application is challenging to some candidates who tend to list evidence without applying it to the question.

Teachers' Tip on Interpretation and Application – 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 on 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. Applying sociological material to the question can be enhanced by including phrases that explicitly use the wording of the question eg 'This study shows that radical feminists view relationships in the family as oppressive to women'.

Many candidates demonstrate very good skills in analysis and evaluation. Others need to avoid juxtaposing views by analysing arguments so that they can then evaluate the strengths and weaknesses. Analysis involves breaking down an argument to gain a clearer understanding. This is an essential stage in the evaluation process. A sustained evaluation is needed to achieve the best marks and this involves candidates using an evaluative tone from their introductory paragraph onwards so that evaluation is evident throughout their answer.

Teachers' Tip on Analysis and Evaluation – A sustained evaluative approach can be demonstrated by candidates writing an evaluative introduction, making some pertinent evaluative points about studies, theories and ideas used, and summarising the different views in relation to the question. Candidates could be encouraged to use key evaluative terms that signal that they are evaluating the evidence or the argument at a given point eg 'however', 'on the other hand', 'conversely', 'on the contrary', 'in contrast', 'this evidence can be criticised because...'

Comments on Individual Questions

1 (a) Excellent responses to this question included detailed explanations that showed a clear understanding of the ways in which families vary according to ethnicity. Some cited two different ethnic groups and used studies to explain variations. A number of candidates had difficulty in identifying explicit variations and talked about 'some ethnic groups' in general and needed to have a clearer understanding of what the variations were so that they could develop their answer with relevant material. Some candidates, who were unclear about what the question was asking, wrote about class, religious or other differences that they did not relate to ethnicity.

1 (b) Most candidates had a good understanding of different views on the role of the family in society and were able to locate the view in the question within Marxism and/or feminism. The best responses discussed a range of sociological views, supported these with evidence and used evaluative language as they examined the different arguments. Candidates were differentiated in terms of depth and range of knowledge with the best answers typically drawing on a wide range of perspectives including some or all of Marxism, Marxist-feminism, radical feminism, radical psychiatry, postmodernism, functionalism and New Right. Some candidates responded by listing different views but the discussion needed to be more focused on the view expressed in the question with counter arguments presented as critical or alternative to this view.

2 (a) This question was well answered with the majority of candidates able to offer to relevant reasons. The best answers tended to focus on factors relating to declining fertility rates in contemporary UK eg changes in the role of women, costs of children, individualist/consumerist lifestyles and supported their answers with theories, concepts or empirical studies. Some answers focused too much on historical material eg decline in infant mortality, children being unable to go out to work or industrialisation reducing the prevalence of extended families. Some candidates also referred to changes in overall size of families rather than number of children eg due to divorce/lone parent families. In questions of this kind, some candidates drift from the question and describe a feature of the reason without linking it back to explain how it relates to the decrease in family size.

2 (b) This question produced a wide range of answers. Some responses showed both breadth and depth but many candidates produced rather uninformed and/or non-sociological responses and made common sense points. Better answers tended to examine a range of changes in childhood and support these with evidence. Some responses lacked evidence or analysed a narrower range of issues eg changes in fatherhood which were well supported. Some answers needed a more developed evaluation which could be gained though discussing views that argued that changes had been exaggerated and by weighing up whether changes had been positive or negative.

3 (a) There were few responses to this question. The best answers showed a clear understanding of ways in which disability is socially constructed and explained these using evidence. Most responses needed to be clearer in demonstrating their understanding of the concept of social construction related to disability and most needed to provide support using sociological evidence.

3 (b) There were some very good answers that discussed the Weberian view in detail and used evidence in support before examining counter views. Some candidates offered narrow, quite superficial responses that needed to be clearer in their understanding of the Weberian view. Most candidates needed to discuss a wider range of views and in a more sociological way using related concepts and studies in support.

4 (a) The best answers identified two distinct ways and used supporting evidence that showed a clear understanding of the question. Some responses offered more generalised answers and needed to be more focused on mental illness. Others referred to mental illness and needed to explain the context of social class more explicitly.

4 (b) The best answers were able to maintain focus on both cultural explanations and gender. This was then evaluated and counter arguments were examined to produce a wide ranging and detailed analysis. Many candidates needed to have a more distinct section on cultural explanations and some needed to be clearer in demonstrating their understanding of this view. Some listed a range of explanations without reference to whether they were cultural or not.

5 (a) Most candidates attempted to link religiosity to social class, typically through reference to Marxist views and the appeal of particular types of religious organisations. Some answers were inaccurate or confused eg asserting that working class are more religious than middle class. Most needed to explain the influence of social class more clearly and support their answer with evidence.

5 (b) Better answers to this question included a balanced discussion and made some reference to theories eg functionalism and Marxism and concepts such as secularisation and 'believing without belonging'. More basic answers were often lacking in sociological concepts and studies and discussed a narrow range of ways in which religion was important. Most answers were either narrow with some supporting evidence or broader but largely anecdotal and unsubstantiated. The best answers tended to tie the question into debates about secularisation but were also able to apply evidence about a range of ways in which religion was important eg the Monarchy, religion and schools, social solidarity, NRMs and among ethnic minorities groups. Some responses needed to be more focused on the contemporary UK.

6 (a) The best answers typically referred to organisations over/under-recording membership, 'believing without belonging' and problems of knowing whether members really believed. Some also referred to problems of measuring membership of NRMs/NAM. Weaker answers were often rather confused and referred to more than two factors or presented overlapping factors.

6 (b) Most candidates had some understanding of the question but this was often underdeveloped in relation to Marxism eg few candidates were able to apply empirical evidence or examples to support the view in the question. Some candidates achieved only basic marks for evaluation or failed to evaluate at all but better answers made reference to other theories eg functionalism, Weberianism, neo-Marxism. Candidates seemed to demonstrate a stronger understanding of functionalism than Marxism. Few very good answers were seen.

7 (a) There were some excellent answers that showed range and depth of knowledge and understanding. Most candidates were able to describe two subcultures though some referred to broader youth subcultures rather than specific subcultures in schools. More basic answers referred in general terms to pro/anti school subcultures without developing this with evidence. Some candidates also looked at two studies and discussed two or more subcultures with each study eg Shain's 4 types of Asian girls with limited development of any 2. Most candidates were aware of relevant research eg Shain, Willis, Sewell, Archer and Yamashti.

7 (b) This question was generally well answered with most candidates showing understanding of at least two or three theories about youth subcultures, typically including Marxism, feminism, functionalism and postmodernism. Candidates were differentiated in terms of their understanding of key concepts eg some were rather confused about concepts such as magical solution and resistance. They were also differentiated by the extent to which they applied evidence about subcultures to the question rather than merely describing different styles. Some very good answers in terms of knowledge and understanding were less developed in terms of evaluation, merely juxtaposing a range of theories and evidence.

8 (a) There was a broad range of responses to this question. More basic responses tended to offer common sense explanations eg about how young people were influenced in fashion tastes by media. However, many candidates were able to draw on concepts such as globalisation, moral panics, consumerism and hybrid identities. The best responses illustrated these well with examples eg the growth of post-war youth culture influenced by American media or examples of stereotyping of youth and moral panics. Some answers looked at a particular dimension of youth such as gender and explained the influence of the media in this respect.

8 (b) The best answers drew on relevant studies and concepts eg status frustration, opportunity structures, labelling and relative deprivation. Some responses presented material in a rather list-like manner that needed clearer analysis. Evaluation typically drew attention to the association between gender and/or ethnicity and youth deviance. Some candidates also referred to material on white collar/corporate crime to argue that higher social classes/older people also commit crime. Limited and basic responses were often based on common sense eg working class youth steal because of lack of money or upbringing.

G673 Power and Control

General Comments

Most candidates displayed a wide ranging knowledge and understanding of concepts and studies. Skills of Interpretation and Application were of a higher standard with material utilised being more directly related to the question. However, sometimes studies were described at length but not applied to the question set.

On occasions, knowledge and understanding was generalised. This was particularly noticeable in responses to questions on education, for example, question 6 on vocationalism.

Theories were better understood in this series and more explicitly applied to the question with a clearer understanding of differences within broad perspectives, for example the distinction between traditional Marxism and neo-Marxism in responses to the media questions. However, this was not always the case as feminism was often explained with no differentiation between different strands within feminism. In terms of functionalism the arguments and ideas associated with Parsons, Durkheim and Davis and Moore were often not attributed to the right person.

Sometimes candidates displayed an impressive knowledge of background and historical trends but failed to relate this clearly to the question set and therefore wasted precious time. This was particularly evident in the question on gender differences in educational achievement where many candidates focussed on female underachievement in the past, for example highlighting elements of the curriculum pre-1988, the Tripartite system and so on but not relating this to the current situation.

Some candidates were able to describe a very wide range of studies and writers but often this detracted from their application of this material given the time constraints of the exam. This meant that they did not achieve as highly as their knowledge deserved as they were not able to explain the significance of the material selected in sufficient depth. Candidates should be encouraged to consider exactly <u>why</u> they are including a particular study in relation to the actual question.

A common tendency was to respond to questions in an unbalanced way with greater emphasis being placed on alternative theories/explanations rather than on the theory or explanation highlighted in the question. This was particularly evident in Question 9 on Postmodernism when, often, this approach was ignored or only described briefly. This was also a feature of responses which overlooked key words or phrases in the question.

Interpretation and Application was a weaker skill area than Knowledge and Understanding for most candidates although stronger responses continually related theories, concepts and studies to the question. Candidates should be encouraged to consider the material they have included in terms of how it relates to the question. Reflection in terms of asking themselves 'so?', 'therefore?' 'how does this answer the question?' should be encouraged.

Many candidates demonstrated an awareness of recent events and changes not covered in textbooks, which they applied imaginatively to the question. The awareness of the 2011 riots was strongly evident in questions on Crime and Deviance and the Mass Media. However, on occasions there was an over-reliance on contemporary examples, often described at length, which strayed into anecdote rather than being contextualised in terms of theory or concepts.

Often candidates demonstrated an impressive knowledge of statistical evidence in their responses, but sometimes these statistics were not sourced. Sometimes phrases such as 'statistics prove that ….' were utilised by candidates but without knowing the source. This 'proof' can be problematic. This is particularly the case with crime questions, where, of course, different sources of statistics (OCS, BCS, etc) produce different data.

Evaluation and analysis were stronger in this series with key words more frequently utilised, for example, 'however', 'on the other hand', 'a criticism of this is'. Sometimes this then resulted in lengthy descriptions of alternative theories without relating back to the question and therefore becoming tangential to the theory or explanation or view highlighted in the question set. This was particularly the case with Question 5 where there were often lengthy descriptions of inside school factors unrelated to the question.

Methodological evaluation was sometimes confused with a tendency to state that particular studies lacked validity and/or reliability without explaining why this was the case and, also, confusing the two concepts.

Sometimes evaluation became a rote response to every study or theory described, for example that the study was dated (which, of course, all studies are, to some extent). Candidates should be encouraged to explain <u>why</u> the dated nature of a study is a problem, for example evidence to demonstrate how a particular aspect of society has changed to therefore make the study less relevant.

Sometimes candidates failed to evaluate throughout their responses and left evaluation to the conclusion, which resulted often in underdeveloped and sometimes assertive evaluation. Also, some candidates simply repeated points they had already made and this added little to the main body of their response.

Stronger responses used their conclusions to suggest further areas for research and to demonstrate possible gaps in sociological knowledge.

Introductions were generally well focused in this series with candidates clearly identifying the nature of the debate/issue raised by the question set. There was less of a tendency to define obvious terms or to write at length about the historical context to the question.

However, this varied according to the question. For example the questions on crime and deviance sometimes produced very long introductions relating to differences between the concepts of crime and deviance which created time-management problems in the main body of the essay.

The balance between responses was still a problem for some candidates with, commonly, lengthy first responses and then insufficient time to fully develop their second answer.

Teaching Tip: Encourage candidates to practice writing essays in time-constrained situations to ensure that they can achieve a more equal balance between their responses.

There were very few rubric errors this session.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

Most candidates were able to demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the nature of the OCS and identify strengths and weaknesses. Many candidates also wrote about the British Crime Survey arguing successfully that as this data is now collated under the auspices of the Home Office it is another type of official statistics. On the other hand, some candidates simply wrote generally about methods of measuring crime with no differentiation between official and non-official statistics, for example lengthy accounts of self-report studies not related to the question but merely juxtaposition.

Many candidates examined methodological issues, such as types of data, reliability and validity etc but sometimes concepts were confused or treated as meaning the same.

Some candidates placed a strong emphasis on theory, particularly Marxism, Left and Right Realism and Feminism. The social construction of the OCS was often highlighted particularly through references to Interactionism.

Most responses were conceptually strong with references to the criminal 'ice-berg', the 'dark figure of crime', 'coughing', 'cuffing', negotiated justice being common.

Apart from the data collection methods themselves (OCS,BCS and SR studies), the most frequent references were to Durkheim, Merton, Cicourel, Becker, Lea and Young, Hall, Croall, Reiner, Sutherland.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to describe accurately and to interpret a number of explanations, the most common relating to Merton, Cohen, Cloward and Ohlin and Miller. The New Right also featured strongly with the notion of the 'underclass' being a subculture in the contemporary UK.

Sometimes the explanations were confused with each other but this was only true for a minority of candidates.

Most candidates discussed studies and concepts as well as explanations and generally related these well to the question. Typical studies and concepts were drawn from Lea and Young, CCCS, Hebdige, Katz, Lyng, Phil Cohen and Downes and these were often used as an evaluation of the explanations of the earlier subcultural approaches.

By way of further evaluation, (which was strong in most cases) the most popular reference was to Matza and the most popular argument was that subcultural theorists are over-reliant on the official statistics. Theories generally used to critique subcultural explanations were Interactionism, Marxism and Feminism.

The most popular writers referred to were those cited above, but, in addition, Smart, Bourgeois, Nightingale, Parker.

Question 3

Most candidates had a good understanding of the concept of social construction and there was far less of a tendency to confuse social causation and social construction than in previous sessions.

Many candidates successfully utilised models of the media to explain effects on crime and deviance, for example the hypodermic syringe model and copycat violence.

Another common approach was to focus on moral panics and folk devils. The studies of Cohen, Fawbert and Hall featured strongly in this respect. Contemporary examples were successfully used to support these studies, for example the riots in 2011.

Most candidates were very conceptual in their responses and demonstrated a good understanding of concepts such as scapegoats, stereotypes, demonisation, deviancy amplification, self-fulfilling prophecy, ideological state apparatus, moral entrepreneurs as well as folk devils and moral panics, which they applied directly to the question.

Most candidates assessed the role of the mass media by contrasting it with other ways in which crime and deviance could be socially constructed, typically the role of the police. Unfortunately this sometimes was not applied to the question and became tangential with over-long accounts of the police with no reference back to the mass media.

Theoretically, in support of the significance of the role of the mass media the common theories were Marxism and Interactionism with Realism being the most commonly cited approaches claiming that it's influence is small or irrelevant.

Apart from the writers already mentioned the most common used were Becker, Lemert, Gilroy and Thornton.

Question 4

Most candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the debates around the role of the education system. Typically, the focus was on Functionalism and Marxism.

However, some candidates were less sure about the reproduction and transmission of culture and so wrote very generally around the issue, for example examining reasons for educational achievement in relation to culture but not relating this to the education system itself.

Most candidates discussed the nature of cultural reproduction in terms of both the formal and hidden curriculum and the different forms of culture relating to class, ethnicity and gender. Concepts such as ethnocentrism, patriarchy, high culture, dominant culture, consensus, social solidarity, cultural capital, ideological state apparatus were frequently utilised.

In terms of theoretical approaches apart from Functionalism and Marxism, the most common references were to Social Democratic, Liberal, Interactionism, Feminism and the New Right. Evaluation mainly came from neo-Marxism, particularly Willis, and Postmodernism in relation to the irrelevance of meta-narratives.

The most commonly cited writers were Parsons, Davis and Moore, Durkheim, Hargreaves, Bowles and Gintis, Althusser, Bourdieu, Bernstein.

Question 5

This was often well answered with a clear focus on a range of factors outside of schools. Typical responses focussed on female achievement with references to Feminism and explanations based on socialisation, leisure activities, particularly 'bedroom culture', changes in the labour market, changed expectations, and peer groups.

Most candidates also examined male achievement in terms of the labour market, peer groups, role models and the 'crisis of masculinity'. The significance of anti-school subcultures were frequently discussed and many candidates successfully linked these to factors outside school such as the influence of peer groups or socialisation in the home. Some candidates, however, wrote about these subcultures as inside school explanations and strayed away from the question.

This was also true about inside school explanations in general where often the material on labelling, stereotyping, classroom interaction etc became tangential to the question when the same material could have been applied but as evaluation. Some material was effectively used as either knowledge or evaluation, eg policies such as GIST.

Typical issues raised as evaluation were the over determinism of some explanations, the continued significance of class and gender, the lack of empirical evidence for some explanations, the extent to which boys 'underachievement' is a moral panic.

The most common theories discussed were Feminism, Interactionism, New Right and Marxism.

The most cited writers were Mitsos and Browne, Sharpe, Mac an Ghaill, Willis, Francis, Jackson, McRobbie, and Wragg.

Question 6

Many candidates were able to discuss some policies, typically NVQ, GNVQ, Youth Training, Apprenticeships and New Deal but often confused these or contextualised these wrongly in terms of dates and which governments introduced them.

Also, a common feature of responses was a lack of focus on the issue of opportunities even where the knowledge and understanding was strong.

Some candidates wrote at great length about other policies eg 1988 Act without relating these policies to vocationalism.

Stronger responses were able to contextualise policies in terms of governments and theoretical perspectives with a clear understanding of the role of the New Right and Social Democratic thinking.

As well as the policies mentioned above the Tomlinson report was frequently discussed in the stronger responses, to good effect.

Evaluation was generally quite wide ranging with Marxism featuring in most responses referring to the correspondence principle and the hidden curriculum as well as the notion of 'exploitation'' rather than 'opportunity'. Feminism also featured as a critique of vocational education and the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.

The most common references to writers were to Parsons, Davis and Moore, Evans, Finn, Chubb and Moe, Green, Willis, De Waal.

Question 7

This was generally well answered. Reference was often made to theories and models outlining the role of the mass media in creating moral panics. The most common models/theories were the two step flow model, cultural effects model, 'drip-drip' model, uses and gratifications model, hypodermic syringe model.

Some candidates approached the question by focussing on these models and applying them to the creation of moral panics whereas other responses focussed on a more empirical approach by examining studies, typically, Hall, Cohen and Fawbert. Both these approaches were successful in stronger responses, but weaker answers tended to describe all the models they knew without relating them to moral panics.

The theories utilised were mainly neo-Marxism and Interactionism and concepts commonly used were folk devils, labelling, deviancy amplification, stereotypes, ideology.
Evaluation focussed on the difficulties in defining and measuring a moral panic, the deterministic nature of explanations, whether moral panics exist in a postmodern society, whether the media creates moral panics given the diversity of the media today.

The most often used writers were Cohen, Hall, Fawbert, Young, Thornton, Ben-Yehuda.

Question 8

Responses were quite diverse as the stronger responses were related to theories such as Feminism and Pluralism, with a distinction being drawn between different Feminist approaches, such as Liberal and Radical Feminism. Weaker responses, however tended to over-rely on examples with little reference to studies or theory.

Sometimes candidates spent too long examining traditional stereotypes without allowing themselves enough time to consider if these stereotypes still apply.
Stronger responses considered how representations vary across media products, the changing nature of gender identities, contemporary examples of stronger roles for women in drama and film, improvements in the visibility of women in prime-time TV programmes.

Alternative forms of masculinity and the changing representation of males eg the 'new man' were also frequently discussed.

Evaluation tended to concentrate on Radical Feminism and Marxist Feminism with the emphasis on the continued objectification of women, the re-cycling of traditional stereotypes on satellite and cable TV networks, the 'male gaze', the issue of 'tokenism' etc.

The most used writers were Gauntlett, Tuchman, CCCs, Mulvey, Wolf, McRobbie, Connell.

Question 9

Many candidates focused on postmodern views about the media in general rather than an explicit focus on the news. Many candidates were unsure about postmodern views and wrote generally about the social construction of the news.

Stronger responses, however referred to a number of postmodern concepts and theorists, in particular there were references and descriptions of the postmodern perspective that we live in a media saturated society characterised by diversity and choice, but where audiences receive a distorted representation of the news. The role of the audience and issues of choice, interests and influence were also discussed by many candidates.

Most candidates discussed Baudrillard notions of hyperreality and the end of meaning as well as the idea of the news becoming a matter of storytelling, as well as the concept of infotainment.

Most candidates utilised Marxist theory to evaluate postmodernism. In particular this related to concepts such as false consciousness, hegemony and gatekeeping.

The most popular writers cited were GUMG, Philo, Galtung and Ruge, Hall, Trowler, Baudrillard, Chomsky, Marcuse, Curran and Gurevitch, Williams.

Question 10

Stronger responses were able to define power and most referred to Luke's three faces of power. There were references to the constant-sum approach to power, polyarchy, and the distinction between classical and elite pluralism.

Many candidates linked Pluralism to Weberian ideas, with some success, demonstrating how parties, status etc are sources of power

Weaker responses were less focussed on Pluralism and wrote generally about power in society which often became anecdotal. Some candidates failed to focus on the question and wrote generally about NSMs.

Evaluation was usually based on critiques from Marxism and Radical Elite theory or related to the lack of empirical support for Pluralism. The difficulties associated with measuring power, particularly in relation to Lukes and Dahl were raised.

The most common writers cited were Dahl, Marsh, Lukes, Pareto, Mosca, C.W.Mills, Miliband, Poulantzas

Question 11

The concept of NSMs was generally understood and the distinction between old social movements and new social movements was frequently drawn out well. This was often linked to the idea of 'old politics' and 'new politics'

Stronger responses demonstrated a good understanding of the decline in support for traditional party politics in terms of voting behaviour and membership of traditional parties.

Candidates were able to describe examples of NSMs often in considerable depth. Sometimes, however this was not related to the question in terms of the decline in support for traditional party politics.

In relation to evaluation most responses focussed on alternative reasons for the growth of NSMs eg the search for identity. Other issues raised were the exaggeration of the degree of support for NSMs and the continued influence of traditional party politics.

Concepts frequently discussed were marginalisation, globalisation, identity, post-materialism, anti-capitalism, social exclusion.

The most often cited writers were Hallsworth, Habermas, Marcuse, Melluci, Callinicos, Klein

Question 12

Strong responses were able to describe the 'waves' of Feminism usually concentrating on political rights in the first wave and broader social issues in the second wave. These responses also tended to focus on different strands of Feminism and associated political action eg the direct action of Radical Feminists compared with the approaches of Liberal Feminists. The weaker responses tended to write generally about Feminism without addressing the notion of political action. Often the distinction between different strands of Feminism was not well understood.

Examples of political action were often described to good effect eg the Greenham Common peace camp.
By way of evaluation different Feminist explanations were critiqued eg by examining Hakim's analysis, Marxist explanations of political action, the irrelevancy of Feminism today etc.

The most cited writers were Walby, Habermas, Klein, Hakim, Pankhurst, Callinicos, Melucci.

G674 Exploring Social Inequality and Difference

General Comments

As last year, it is pleasing to report that the standards attained were generally very good; candidates and centres are to be congratulated on their achievements.

From the evidence of candidate responses, the source material and questions were easily understood and accessible to candidates of all abilities. Most candidates were able to respond to the questions appropriately and demonstrate positive achievement.

In Section A candidates are expected to show knowledge and understanding of different sociological perspectives or theories of research, as well as research design and methods. This is achieved through the analysis and evaluation of a research strategy within a case study outlined in the source material. The study used in this series essentially employed a 'mixed methods' approach and used both quantitative and qualitative methods, including observation, interviews and questionnaires.

In Section A, in order to evaluate the research strategy, candidates are expected to use a range of methodological concepts and approaches. It is therefore essential that candidates are familiar with and able to apply some of the key sociological methodological concepts, including validity, reliability, representative, generalisable and replicable. Centres should try to ensure that candidates know these key concepts and have had opportunity to apply them in the evaluation of research case studies during their courses. Understanding positivist, interpretive, realist and feminist approaches to methodology is also vital. It is important for candidates to encounter a range of research studies and have the opportunity to critically evaluate their methodology and findings during the course.

In Section B candidates are expected to show knowledge and understanding of substantive topics in Social Inequality and Difference and evaluate different theoretical perspectives.

In general, the compulsory questions on sociological research were answered very well and there were some excellent responses that demonstrated a deep knowledge and understanding of different methods and types of evidence. Many candidates were aware of the uses of different methods and could evaluate different forms of evidence, based on the method of collection, the source and different theoretical perspectives. Application to the specific case study was often sensitive and thoughtful, especially in relation to the school setting and the ethical dimensions of the research.

The questions on both social class and ethnicity were answered very well. Candidates demonstrated very good levels of knowledge and understanding of Marxist approaches to social class inequality. Many candidates had a good grasp of different Marxist writers; other approaches to social class inequality were used perceptively to evaluate Marxist theories. The questions on ethnicity were also answered well, with many candidates demonstrating a good knowledge and understanding of evidence of social advantage for some ethnic groups, as well as Weberian theoretical explanations of ethnic inequality.

Candidates seemed to benefit from careful preparation for this examination by centres. They had clearly undertaken stimulating, well designed courses that were effective in developing the skills to be tested. In addition, examination technique was generally excellent. As in previous years, to improve performance further candidates should be encouraged to:

- answer the question set and refer back to the question regularly; this especially helps candidates to demonstrate the skill of interpretation and application

- use a variety of different forms of sociological evidence, which may be empirical studies, data, concepts, theory and contemporary examples
- refer to sociological concepts, studies and theory wherever relevant
- evaluate theories and research strategies by referring to both strengths and weaknesses
- avoid simple assertion, opinion and anecdotal evidence.

Candidates seemed to have sufficient time for the tasks. The vast majority completed all of the questions within the time allocated. There were very few rubric errors.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

Most candidates answered this question well, revealing a very good knowledge and understanding of mixed methods in sociological research, drawing upon the information in the source material and their own background knowledge from across the specification to illustrate their responses.

Most candidates were able to explain the meaning of mixed methods.

There were many different examples of studies that used mixed methods taken from general background knowledge to illustrate responses, which is creditable.

The best responses related their responses clearly and systematically to the source material, using the research by Francis to illustrate their answers. Candidates should be encouraged to use both the source and their own knowledge and understanding.

A few candidates did not focus on the use of mixed methods but discussed the uses, or strengths and weaknesses, of the specific methods in the case study, rather than the mixed methods research design or strategy. Similarly, whilst the question asked candidates to outline and explain why mixed methods are used, some evaluated mixed methods and/or individual methods like questionnaires and interviews.

Question 2

Most candidates answered this question very well, revealing a very good knowledge and understanding of overt observation in sociological research, and related methodological issues, drawing upon the information in the source material and their own background knowledge from across the specification to illustrate their responses.

Candidates were expected to discuss the use of *overt observation* for this research problem – that of pupil cultures and gender differences in educational achievement. Most candidates were aware that observation, though more often associated with interpretive approaches, can be used to generate both quantitative and qualitative data and evidence, and so can be used within a positive approach to research design.

Most candidates also demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the key methodological concepts of validity, reliability, generalisability and representativeness through their discussion of the view that overt observation is the best way to study *gender differences in school settings*

Most candidates clearly discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the view that overt observation is the best way to study gender differences in schools in a balanced way.

Ethical issues were often raised, for example of confidentiality and the potential impact on the lives of those studied, including raising sensitive issues and ensuring absence of harm. Many demonstrated a deep understanding of the issues facing sociologists gaining access to schools and children and the use of gatekeepers.

Many candidates also contrasted positivism to interpretive, critical, feminist or post-modern approaches to social research, showing skills of evaluation and analysis through this discussion.

The best responses related their responses clearly and systematically to the source material, using the research by Francis to illustrate their answers. Candidates should be encouraged to use both the source and their own knowledge and understanding.

A few candidates discussed all of the methods within the case study in the Source Material or contrasted overt observation with many other research methods in their answers. The question was focussed specifically on overt observation and so much of the material presented in this type of response, unless clearly related back to the central issue of the 'fitness for purpose' of overt observation for research into gender differences in educational achievement in schools, tended not to be relevant and could not be credited.

Question 3

(a) Candidates generally used their knowledge and understanding of working class disadvantage from different units within the specification, as well as the G674 unit itself. Most candidates correctly focused upon the relative disadvantages of different classes, especially the working class. Some, however, tended simply to describe social class differences rather than focus on the disadvantage of the working class.

Theoretical explanations for social class inequality were often identified and discussed, mainly including Marxist, neo-Marxist, Functionalist and Weberian.

Candidates were most likely to outline some theoretical evidence and make reference to empirical studies. Some introduced relevant data and contemporary examples to good effect. The most effective responses made appropriate use of all these types of sociological evidence. Candidates gaining marks at the highest levels of response tended to describe how the working class experienced different forms of disadvantage, often in comparison to other classes, supported by several different types of evidence, including empirical studies, data, concepts, theory and contemporary examples.

Candidates at the higher levels of response revealed an excellent ability to interpret sociological knowledge and understanding and apply it to the issue of working class disadvantage. The material was clearly, explicitly and consistently related back to the question.

Some candidates made very good use of contemporary examples.

Some candidates did not address the issue of disadvantage and simply described different forms of class inequality, which did not demonstrate an appropriate interpretation of the question.

(b) Social class inequalities in different aspects of social life were often used to illustrate answers, such as education, employment, income and wealth, health and welfare, housing, political power, and patterns of crime and deviance. Alternative theoretical explanations of social class inequality and difference were usually explored and/or juxtaposed, for example functionalist, neo-Marxist, Weberian, feminist and post modern. The impact on social class inequality of ethnicity, gender and age were sometimes compared or contrasted with class, as well as the intersection/interrelationship of these dimensions.

Candidates evaluated Marxist explanations of social class inequality well in many cases, presenting a range of strengths and/or weaknesses of these approaches to understanding social class inequality.

Comparison of alternative theoretical explanations was usually undertaken in evaluation. Some candidates simply described and juxtaposed different theoretical approaches. More effective responses used alternative approaches to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of Marxism and each other, and also evaluated in a sustained and explicit manner throughout. The best responses also tended to conclude with a specific and clear assessment of Marxism and/or other explanations.

Candidates at the higher levels of response revealed an excellent ability to interpret sociological knowledge and understanding and apply it to the concept of age inequality. The material was clearly, explicitly and consistently related to the question.

Question 4

(a) Most candidates answered this question well. Candidates generally used their knowledge and understanding of patterns of ethnic inequality from different units within the specification, as well as the G674 unit itself. Most candidates correctly presented evidence that some ethnic groups are advantaged. However, some simply described disadvantage, particularly for minorities, rather than addressing the key issue of advantage for different ethnic groups, irrespective of relative proportion/size within the wider population. The best responses tended to present a range of recent evidence about advantage with some contemporary examples and focus.

Aspects of social life for which changes in patterns of gender inequality were most often identified and discussed included:

Theoretical explanations for changing gender inequality most often identified and discussed included Marxist, functionalist, post modern, Weberian and feminist. The impact on ethnic inequality of ethnicity, age and class was sometimes compared or contrasted with ethnicity, as well as the intersection/interrelationship of these dimensions.

Candidates were most likely to outline theoretical evidence and make some reference to empirical studies. Some introduced relevant data and contemporary examples to good effect. The most effective responses made appropriate use of all these types of sociological evidence.

Candidates gaining marks at the highest levels of response tended to describe ethnic advantage in a range of different areas of social life supported by several different types of evidence, including empirical studies, data, concepts, theory and contemporary examples.

Candidates at the higher levels of response revealed an excellent ability to interpret sociological knowledge and understanding and apply it to the issue of advantage. The material was clearly, explicitly and consistently related to the question.

Some candidates did not address the issue of advantage and simply described different forms of ethnic inequality, which did not demonstrate an appropriate interpretation of the question.

(b) Most candidates answered this question well. Candidates were expected to outline and assess Weberian explanations of ethnic inequalities.

Responses tended to describe and evaluate Weberian explanations and then compare and contrast alternative sociological theories, usually functionalist, Marxist, neo-Marxist, feminist and postmodern.

Most candidates were able to describe Weberian and other approaches at least simply with a few relevant concepts and studies. The best responses did so comprehensively in a wide ranging and detailed manner. Some weaker responses tended to describe Weberian approaches to ethnic inequality, and possibly others, but neglected evaluation and assessment.

The impact on ethnic inequality of gender, age and class was occasionally compared or contrasted with ethnicity, as well as the intersection/interrelationship of these dimensions.

Ethnic inequalities in different aspects of social life were often used to illustrate answers, such as education, employment, income and wealth, health and welfare, housing, political power, and patterns of crime and deviance.

Candidates evaluated Weberian explanations of ethnic inequality, and by implication other theoretical perspectives. Comparison of alternative theoretical explanations was usually undertaken in evaluation of Weberian explanations of ethnic inequalities. Some candidates simply described and juxtaposed different theoretical approaches. More effective responses used alternative approaches to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of Weberian explanations and each other, and evaluated in a sustained and explicit manner throughout. The best responses also tended to conclude the answer with a specific, clear assessment of Weberian and/or other different explanations.

Candidates at the higher levels of response revealed an excellent ability to interpret sociological knowledge and understanding and apply it to the concept of patriarchy. The material was clearly, explicitly and consistently related to the question.

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