

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/11

Essay

Key Features

- Good answers included analysis and assessment.
- More candidates are making good use of references to relevant research findings.
- Low-scoring answers often lacked references to theoretical issues.
- Answers based solely on personal opinion gain low marks only.

General Comments

All of the relevant assessment skills were demonstrated in answers that merited high marks. Answers that gained marks lower in the range often lacked evidence of analysis and assessment. These responses were primarily descriptive. The knowledge demonstrated was good, but the lack of analysis and assessment meant that marks no higher than the middle of the range could be awarded. With lower scoring answers, the absence of references to theoretical issues and perspectives was a common limitation. Some candidates also used too much time in the examination writing about their own experiences and opinions rather than concentrating on recognised sociological accounts of the issues under discussion.

Section A: The Sociological Perspective

Question 1

Good answers to this question provided a sound account of a range of evidence that may be used to support the claim that socialisation is the main factor shaping human behaviour. There was also a sustained and well-informed assessment of the arguments and evidence about the determinants of human behaviour. Answers in the middle of the range were often confined to an account of different sociological perspectives on socialisation, with little or no assessment offered. There were some low-scoring answers that explained the concept of socialisation, but lacked any references to appropriate evidence and arguments.

Question 2

This was the less popular of the **Section A** questions. High-scoring answers provided a good account of the post-modernist contribution to understanding society. References to different strands of post-modernist theory were often included. Good answers also included a sustained and well-informed assessment of the extent to which post-modernist ideas help us understand society better. Answers in the middle of the range lacked breadth of coverage and were descriptive rather than analytical. A few candidates demonstrated only limited understanding of the nature of post-modernist theory.

Section B: Sociological Methods

Question 3

Higher in the mark range, candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the strengths and limitations of qualitative research methods, covering both practical and theoretical issues in reasonable detail. Many answers at this level included references to different qualitative research methods. There were some answers that discussed the strengths and limitations of qualitative research in general. These answers would have gained higher marks had they also included appropriate references to specific qualitative methods. Lower in the mark range, answers were often confined to a few observations about the practical strengths and limitations of qualitative research methods. A few candidates were confused about the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Question 4

Good answers to this question provided an accurate and detailed account of the role that funding may play in the choice of research methods. Other factors affecting choice of research methods were also considered in some detail. In addition, high quality responses included a sustained and well-developed assessment of the relative importance of funding as an influence on choice of research methods. In the middle of the mark range, there were a lot of answers that focused on practical factors influencing choice of research methods, with little or no consideration of theoretical factors. There were some low-scoring answers that approached the question indirectly by outlining some features of different research methods.

Section C: Social Differentiation and Stratification

Question 5

There were some good answers to this question that demonstrated a sound understanding of cultural explanations of poverty. The 'culture of poverty' thesis advanced by Oscar Lewis was often the centrepiece in this type of response. High-quality answers also included an assessment of the strengths and limitations of cultural explanations of poverty. Answers in the middle of the mark range usually showed some understanding of cultural theories of poverty, but lacked references to relevant contrasts with structural theories. There were some low-scoring answers that focused more on discussing features of poverty rather than explanations.

Question 6

Good answers to this question demonstrated a sound understanding of the different links between social class and life chances. The relative importance of social class and gender as factors affecting life chances was also assessed in some detail. Some answers included well-chosen references to different theoretical accounts of social class, including the functionalist and Marxist perspectives. Findings from appropriate research studies also featured in some of the answers. There were some low-scoring answers that merely listed a few simple ways in which social class may be linked to inequality, with no references to appropriate theories or empirical evidence.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/12

Essay

Key Features

- Good knowledge of theoretical perspectives evident in high-scoring answers.
- More candidates making good use of references to sociological studies.
- Some answers are too descriptive and lack evidence of assessment skills.
- Answers based solely on personal opinion gain only low marks.

General Comments

There were some good answers that included an appropriate mix of explanation and assessment. High-scoring answers were also characterised by a good understanding of theoretical issues and perspectives. There continue to be many answers where the candidates display a lot of knowledge, but the material could be better applied to the question. At the lower end of the mark range, it is unfortunate that some candidates continue to produce answers that are based entirely on assertion and personal opinion. To achieve higher marks, it is essential to include references to appropriate sociological concepts, evidence, theories and studies in answers. The recommended course textbook is the appropriate source for acquiring the relevant sociological knowledge.

Question 1

Good answers to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of the interpretivist perspective on socialisation and social interaction. The idea that people are free to negotiate their social roles was explained in appropriate detail. High-scoring answers also included a sustained and well-informed assessment of the claim on which the question is based. There were a lot of answers that gained marks in the middle of the range. These responses demonstrated some understanding of the interpretivist perspective, but were often confined to discussing a narrow range of ideas and thinkers. Assessment was generally lacking in answers at this level. There were some short answers that offered a basic account of the importance of socialisation in human development, with no reference to the interpretivist perspective as such.

Question 2

There were a lot of answers to this question. Good answers covered a range of arguments and evidence supporting the view that childhood is a social construction. Many of these answers included references to the work of Philippe Ariès. High-scoring responses also provided a sustained and well informed assessment of the view on which the question was based. Evidence of ethnic, class or gender based differences in childhood identities was often used alongside material from appropriate historical studies to advance the discussion of the issues raised by the question. A lot of candidates wrongly interpreted the question as an invitation to discuss the importance of socialisation in general in the construction of human identities. References to so-called feral children often figured in answers of this kind. Because these answers lacked focus on the social construction of childhood specifically, they gained low marks.

Question 3

Good answers to this question offered a full and well-constructed account of why the data collected using questionnaires might be considered inferior to the insights provided by participant observation studies. This was complemented by an assessment which covered a range of strengths and limitations of each research method. A good understanding of relevant theoretical issues was another characteristic of high-scoring answers. Answers in the middle of the mark range often covered a range of strengths and limitations of questionnaires, but lacked an overall assessment and good understanding of theoretical issues. There were a few low-scoring answers that were confined to discussing research methods in general rather than focusing on questionnaires.

Question 4

Answers that merited the top mark band provided a good account of the practical and theoretical strengths and limitations of non-participant observation. There was also a detailed assessment of the value of non-participant observation relative to participant observation. Answers that gained marks in the middle of the range considered a range of strengths and limitations of non-participant observation, but knowledge of theoretical issues was limited. Lower in the mark range, there were quite a few answers that discussed observation methods in general, rather than focusing, as the question required, on non-participant observation.

Question 5

Good answers discussed a range of relevant theoretical and empirical material on the subject of social mobility and social closure. The sociological thinking behind the idea that barriers to social mobility have largely been removed was explained accurately. There was also a sustained and well-informed attempt to assess the view on which the question was based. Answers in the middle of the range often featured a sound account of the meritocracy thesis and its limitations. Assessment was frequently lacking in answers at this level. There were some low-scoring answers that consisted mainly of personal reflections on the nature of the class system.

Question 6

There were relatively few answers to this question. Good answers demonstrated knowledge of a range of explanations of racial discrimination. There was also a thorough assessment of the importance of economic factors specifically in explaining racial discrimination. Answers lower in the range often lacked focus on economic explanations of racial discrimination. Assessment was also limited or non-existent at this level.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/13

Essay

Key Features

- Good answers included analysis and assessment.
- Some answers were too descriptive.
- Low-scoring answers often lacked references to theoretical issues.
- Post-modernist theory was used well in many of the answers.

General Comments

The standard of response to the questions was high overall. The candidates interpreted the questions accurately and demonstrated good sociological knowledge in constructing their answers. High-scoring answers included a sustained assessment of the issues raised by the question. Some answers were too descriptive to merit high marks. In these cases, the candidates would benefit from adopting a more analytical approach. Knowledge of theory was good overall and more candidates are making effective references to post-modernist ideas. There were no rubric errors and all of the candidates answered the required two questions in the allocated time.

Section A: The Sociological Perspective

Question 1

Good answers to this question demonstrated a sound understanding of different theories of socialisation. They also recognised the significance for the question of the distinction between structural and interpretivist accounts of human behaviour. High-quality responses provided a sustained and well-informed assessment of the view that some theories of socialisation are too deterministic to be useful in understanding how people learn to be effective members of society. Lower in the mark range, answers were often confined to a basic account of one theory of socialisation, usually the functionalist theory.

Question 2

There were no answers to this question.

Section B: Sociological Methods

Question 3

Good answers provided a sustained discussion of the role of values in sociology. The idea that a value-free sociology is impossible was assessed. The assessment often took the form of contrasting different sociological perspectives and ideas on the role of values. Answers that merited marks in the middle of the range were often confined to a basic account of what is meant by value-freedom in the context of sociological research. There were some weak answers that offered only a few general points about sociological research, with no direct links to the question.

Question 4

There were some high-quality answers to this question that demonstrated a sound understanding of the strengths and limitations of structured interviews. Good answers addressed both practical and theoretical issues in appropriate detail. High-scoring answers also included a sustained assessment of the value of structured interviews relative to other types of interview. Some responses lacked an assessment and demonstrated only a basic understanding of the differences between structured and unstructured interviews.

Section C: Social Differentiation and Stratification

Question 5

High-scoring answers demonstrated a clear and accurate understanding of the concept of patriarchy and the way that it has been used by some feminist theorists to understand the factors affecting the life chances of females. Good answers also used references to other strands of feminist theory to provide an assessment of the concept of patriarchy. There were a few low-scoring answers that discussed feminist theory in general, with little or no direct reference to patriarchy.

Question 6

There were very few answers to this question. Good answers discussed the strengths and limitations of the Marxist view of ethnic inequality, making effective use of references to theorists and studies. There were some lower-scoring answers that discussed ethnic inequality in general, with no clear understanding of the Marxist perspective on the subject.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/21
Principles and Methods 2

Key Features

- Good answers included analysis and assessment.
- More candidates made good use of references to sociological studies.
- Some answers were too descriptive and lacked evidence of assessment skills.
- Low-scoring answers often lacked references to theoretical issues.

General Comments

The standard of response was similar to the corresponding exam session last year. All of the relevant assessment skills were demonstrated in answers that merited high marks. Answers that gained marks lower in the range often lacked evidence of analysis and assessment. These responses were primarily descriptive. The knowledge demonstrated was good, but the lack of analysis and assessment meant that marks no higher than the middle of the range could be awarded. With lower-scoring answers, the absence of references to theoretical issues and studies was a common limitation. Some candidates also used too much time in the examination writing about their own experiences and opinions rather than concentrating on recognised sociological accounts of the issues under discussion.

There were no rubric errors and the candidates appeared to have no problem answering two questions in the time available.

Question 1

- (a) Some answers confused role-reversal with role strain. Good answers noted that role-reversal refers to the performance of a role in a way that defies the appropriate social expectations for that role.
- (b) Some answers gave examples of roles rather than focusing on role strain as such. Good answers provided two clear examples of conflicts that might arise between two or more roles that a person performs.
- (c) Good answers to this question considered a range of sanctions and rewards that might be used to encourage social conformity. Some candidates also made good use of the concept of socialisation in their answers. There were some low-scoring answers that lacked references to appropriate concepts and sociological theories.
- (d) There were some rather general answers that discussed functionalist theory as a whole rather than focusing on social roles specifically. Better answers explained the functionalist theory of social roles and offered some well-chosen observations about the strengths and limitations of the functionalist viewpoint.

Question 2

- (a) There were a lot of answers to this question that gained one mark for linking interviewer bias with the notion of researcher effect. Better answers explained more directly what is meant by 'bias' in the context of an interview.
- (b) Some candidates wrongly saw this question as an opportunity to list two research methods, such as questionnaires and interviews. Good answers described two examples of secondary data.
- (c) Good answers discussed methods such as participant observation and unstructured interviews, showing how the researcher might influence the responses of those under study. There were some low-scoring answers that discussed the research method rather than focusing on how the presence of the researcher might influence the study group.
- (d) Good answers to this question demonstrated a sound understanding of the concept of validity and its relevance in assessing qualitative research methods. Appropriate contrasts were often made with the strengths and limitations of quantitative research methods. There were some high-quality answers in which the candidates rightly questioned the assumption that qualitative research methods do produce data that is high in validity.

Question 3

- (a) A few candidates confused social mobility with social stratification. Most of the answers to the question were accurate and gained full marks.
- (b) There were some misconceived answers that discussed the reasons why men may discriminate against women in the workplace. Good answers gave two clear reasons why anti-discrimination laws may be disobeyed by some employers.
- (c) Some answers discussed sexual discrimination in general rather than focusing on issues of social mobility. Good answers often included references to appropriate studies and/or feminist theories.
- (d) Good answers to this question demonstrated a sound understanding of a range of feminist theories, and included a sustained assessment of the idea that the role of men may be exaggerated in these theories. There were some low-scoring answers that demonstrated little understanding of feminist theory and included a lot of assertion and personal opinion about discrimination in employment.

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Paper 9699/22
Data Response

Key Features

- Good use of concepts and theories in the answers to **Question 1** and **2**
- **Question 3** answered less well
- References to relevant studies featured in many of the best answers
- Some answers to the **(c)** and **(d)** questions were too short

General Comments

The standard of response to **Questions 1** and **2** was high overall. These questions were interpreted accurately and the candidates used a good range of appropriate sociological knowledge in constructing their answers. Concepts and theories were used well in the **Question 1** and **2** answers. **Question 3** was answered less well. Many of the answers to this question relied on personal opinion and general observation rather than drawing on appropriate sociological concepts and evidence. There was also often a lack of reference to sociological theory in the **Question 3** answers. Most of the answers were of an appropriate length. However, some of the answers to the **(c)** and **(d)** questions were rather too short to gain high marks.

There were no rubric errors and the candidates appeared to have no difficulty answering two questions in the time allocated.

Question 1

- (a)** Most of the candidates were able to offer a definition that was at least partially correct. A few candidates confused social stability with socialisation.
- (b)** Good answers referred explicitly to two of Parsons' four functional prerequisites. Some candidates gained half marks by describing functional prerequisites without naming them accurately.
- (c)** Good answers used the concept of anomie to contextualise the discussion about the functionalist view of social change. Useful contrasts were made between gradual, evolutionary social change and revolutionary change. Some candidates used the Marxist perspective as a way of highlighting differences with the functionalist view of social change.
- (d)** There were a lot of answers that described conflict theory without assessing the extent to which that theory underestimates the amount of consensus in society. Descriptive answers of this kind merited only around half marks. There were some good answers that used references to functionalist theory to illustrate how conflict theory may underestimate the amount of consensus in society.

Question 2

- (a)** A lot of candidates confused sampling frame with the idea of a sample. Good answers noted that a sampling frame is the list of names from which a sample is selected.
- (b)** A few candidates wrongly wrote about research methods rather than sampling techniques. However, most candidates were able to identify and accurately describe two sampling techniques. Some candidates had difficulty describing what is meant by 'random' in the context of random sampling.

- (c) Good answers to this question made use of relevant concepts such as representativeness and generalisability. Some low-scoring answers discussed research methods in general rather than focusing on the importance of the sampling process.
- (d) Good answers to this question included references to appropriate theoretical perspectives, including the debates between positivists and interpretivists. Good use was also made of concepts such as validity, reliability and representativeness. There were some low-scoring answers that relied too much on references to practical strengths and limitations of social surveys.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates recognised that alienation involves some form of estrangement. Good answers specified the ideas of estrangement from society, self and/or labour.
- (b) Many of the candidates struggled to identify two influences on the prestige of a job. Good answers referred to factors such as level of education required, skills and training involved, the power of the position, and the extent to which the job is linked to ideas of public service.
- (c) This question was not answered well overall. There were a lot of low-scoring answers that were limited to a few general observations about the determinants of pay. Better answers demonstrated a good understanding of the Weberian notion of market situation.
- (d) There were some answers in the middle of the mark range that provided a sound descriptive account of the functionalist theory of social inequality. Better answers assessed the strengths and limitations of the functionalist theory, often by drawing contrasts with the Marxist and Weberian theories. There were a few low-scoring answers that discussed inequality without making direct links to the main theoretical perspectives and studies.

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Paper 9699/23
Principles and Methods 2

Key Features

- More candidates made good use of references to sociological studies.
- Some answers were too descriptive and lacked evidence of assessment skills.
- Good knowledge of theoretical perspectives was evident in high-scoring answers.
- Some answers gained only low marks as they were based solely on personal opinion.

General Comments

The standard of response was similar to the corresponding exam session last year. There were some good answers that included an appropriate mix of explanation and assessment. High-scoring answers were also characterised by good application of a range of relevant sociological evidence and theory. There continue to be some answers that are based entirely on assertion and personal opinion. To achieve higher marks, it is essential to include in answers references to appropriate sociological concepts, evidence, theories and studies. The recommended course textbook is the appropriate source for acquiring the relevant sociological knowledge.

There were no rubric errors and the candidates appeared to have no problem answering two questions in the time available.

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates correctly noted that customs are traditional norms and practices.
- (b) A few candidates confused formal and informal sanctions. Most of the answers identified and described accurately two examples of informal sanctions.
- (c) Good answers to this question discussed interactionist accounts of how people decide what is socially expected behaviour in particular situations. Answers that concentrated on describing the process of socialisation in general were less impressive and generally gained marks no higher than the middle of the range.
- (d) Good answers to this question often distinguished between conflict and consensus theories of social order. There were some high-quality responses that demonstrated a good understanding of the strengths and limitations of the Marxist account of social control. Lower-scoring answers often lacked references to appropriate theory and concepts.

Question 2

- (a) This question was answered correctly by all of the candidates.
- (b) Most of the candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of the concept of a pilot study. Some confused pilot studies with sampling techniques.
- (c) Good answers demonstrated a sound understanding of the role of values in sociological research. To gain high marks it was necessary to show how values may influence the research process at different stages. Some answers made good use of references to appropriate sociological studies.
- (d) Some answers described how theoretical factors may influence choice of research method, but offered no assessment of the relative importance of those factors. Better answers considered a range of factors that might influence choice of research method, including practical and ethical factors. There were some low-scoring answers that were limited to a consideration of some of the strengths and limitations of particular research methods.

Question 3

- (a) Some candidates defined the idea of poverty without linking it to the idea of a 'cycle'. Good answers explained the idea that the conditions of poverty may be self-perpetuating.
- (b) Most candidates were able to describe two difficulties that a person might face in trying to escape poverty.
- (c) Good answers to this question used references to appropriate studies and feminist theories to explain why women may be more likely to experience poverty than men. There were some lower-scoring answers that offered only a few general observations about the nature of poverty, with only limited links to issues of gender.
- (d) There were some answers that merited the middle of the mark range which discussed the causes of poverty in general rather than consider the idea of a culture of dependency specifically. Better answers focused on the issue of dependency and explained the theoretical perspectives behind this view of poverty. Good answers included a sustained assessment of the culture of dependency view of poverty.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/31

Essay 2

Key Messages

- Questions in part **(a)** that require straightforward application and understanding of knowledge showed sociological knowledge but some candidates' work would benefit by the accurate use of sociological terms and concepts.
- Candidates should be aware that societies such as the Nayer have become extinct and should not refer to them as evidence of family life in modern industrial societies.
- Questions in part **(b)** require more reference to sociological theory and method from many candidates who make little reference beyond basic theory or dated studies.

General comments

The majority of candidates answered questions on both the family and education, knowledge of these topics was generally good. A number also answered questions on religion and crime and deviance, with less on the mass media. Most of those who answered questions on the mass media answered **Question 11**. There were very few answers to questions on work and leisure, the majority of which were weak.

There were very few rubric errors. The best candidates answered three questions to a similar standard but some struggled to offer a sociological response to their third question.

Many candidates were able to gain marks in part **(a)** by showing clear understanding of concepts. Some candidates struggled to find two examples for their answers to question **(a)(ii)** in all parts of the examination.

The most successful answers to part **(b)** provided sound evaluation and supported this with sociological evidence such as theory and empirical studies. Other answers provided list-like accounts of information on the topic rather than answering the question as set. These would have benefitted by including basic sociological theory and concepts.

Candidates need to be aware that status in society is not fixed on just one aspect of social life. In the essay answers of many candidates they described gender, class and ethnicity as if each is exclusive so that it is not possible to be middle class, white and female, or black, working class and male at the same time.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) (i)** Many answers defined dysfunctional family accurately but some answers gave examples of families that are dysfunctional rather than defining the term.
- (ii)** Most candidates gave two accurate examples of the ways in which family life may contribute to social solidarity. Answers which focused on socialisation were full but some which named stabilisation of the adult personality could have gained more marks by outlining how this contributes to social solidarity. Common errors were to name who is in control in families or give examples of deviant behaviour.

- (b) The process of loss of function was well understood with some considered essays which outlined how this may, or may not, be happening and supported answers with up to date theory and studies. Common errors were to give over lengthy descriptions of the functions of the family as outlined by Murdock, types of families to be found in the past and today, to outline the supposed problems of modern families or to just consider socialisation overlooking other family functions.

Question 2

- (a) (i) Most candidates had a clear understanding of the meaning of the expressive role. A common error was to associate it with women rather than the domestic sphere and a number of candidates overlooked the caring aspect of the role.
- (ii) Candidates with more secure knowledge of influences on fertility rates described two reasons why women are choosing to have fewer children such as the availability of contraception and opportunities available to females to have paid employment. A common error was to offer two very similar examples rather than making two clearly different points.
- (b) More sophisticated answers considered the existence of nuclear family structures both in the past and in contemporary societies and supported their answers with a range of cross cultural examples. However, common errors were to offer over lengthy descriptions of different types of pre-industrial families with little reference to the question. Other answers interpreted the question as one of family diversity being a threat to society rather than to the continuance of nuclear family structures or offered assertive answers outlining the supposed problems with families today.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) Some answers clearly defined positive discrimination and related this process to education. Common errors were to describe discrimination but overlook *positive* or confuse the process with negative stereotyping. A less common error was to describe the advantages available to middle class children.
- (ii) Candidates with a clear understanding of the benefits to be had by middle class children clearly outlined two different advantages, typically material and cultural ones. Common errors were to repeat similar advantages to be gained by having wealth, outline the barriers faced by working class candidates, to relate the question to gender or to show confusion between upper, middle and working class.
- (b) Candidates who understood what is meant by an educational policy were able to offer a clear answer to this question that typically looked at the impact of policies on meritocracy. Some candidates who had failed to define positive discrimination in the first part of the question referred to it with accuracy in this part. A common error was to either overlook *meritocracy* in the answer or to show misunderstanding of the concept.

Question 4

- (a) (i) Most candidates had some understanding of the meaning of cultural reproduction and the most successful answers linked it to the passing on of values to the next generation. Many answers showed a weak understanding of the concept.
- (ii) This question was answered well by those candidates who had given an accurate definition to the first part of (a), many of whom made reference to the hidden curriculum. A common error was to link it to gender which overlooked the fact that both genders are to be found in all classes.
- (b) Many answers to this question listed different factors which influence educational attainment with little reference to the question. Candidates who showed more understanding identified the key features and argued effectively and offered a balanced conclusion. A common error was to confuse material and cultural circumstances. Some answers gave the impression that girls and ethnic minorities do not have a social class.

Section C

Question 5

- (a) (i) Few candidates were able to define this term accurately.
- (ii) The majority of candidates answering this question were able to both identify and describe two different world rejecting sects of which the most popular was the People's Temple.
- (b) The majority of candidates had a clear understanding of the meaning of secularisation and outlined several ways in which it may, or may not, be occurring. A common error was to overlook the existence of new religious movements in this process.

Question 6

- (a) (i) There was much misunderstanding as to the meaning of marginalisation and many candidates defined it without reference to religion.
- (ii) A limited number of candidates were able to identify marginalised religious groups. A common error was to link it to groups such as women in general with no development of why this may apply to women in general or specific groups of women.
- (b) A number of answers analysed the view of Weber in relation to social change and then evaluated that against other theories of religion to explain how social change occurs. Common errors were to make no reference to Weber at all or to describe his work in the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism with little or no reference to the question.

Section D

Question 7

- (a) (i) The majority of candidates defined labelling well but a few responses gave examples of labels rather than defining the process.
- (ii) Many candidates struggled to find two sociological studies of the process of labelling. Common errors were to take examples from education and to show confusion between crime and deviance.
- (b) There were a number of strong debates from candidates who clearly understood the interactionist theories and could compare them to other theories of crime. Some candidates who had failed to define labelling in the first part of the question talked about the process accurately in this part of the question. Common errors were to list different interactionist studies with little or no reference to the question or to describe the importance of gender, age or ethnicity as if they cannot be linked to labelling as well.

Question 8

- (a) (i) Few candidates had a secure understanding of the meaning of underclass.
- (ii) This question was well answered by the majority of candidates who clearly outlined two ways in which poverty could cause crime. The best types of answer gave two clearly different types of criminal behaviour such as theft and prostitution.
- (b) Many candidates outlined clearly the evidence that links ethnicity to recorded crime and then were able to explore the value of such evidence against other theories and explanations. A number of common errors were made in this question such as seeing ethnicity and race as different features, not knowing what ethnicity is or failing to refer to ethnicity in their answer.

Section E

Question 9

This question was answered by too few candidates to be able to comment. Of the very few answers seen most were poor.

Question 10

- (a) (i) The term *the division of labour* was well understood by candidates.
- (ii) Most candidates identified two occupations that are more highly rewarded than others but a common error was not to identify why this is so. A less common error was to identify lottery wins as a reason for higher pay.
- (b) Many candidates made good reference to economic reasons for the experience of leisure being different for different genders but few candidates gave examples of leisure activities being the same. Another common error was to interpret the question as one of female leisure and to omit males from the discussion completely.

Section F

Question 11

- (a) (i) Candidates either had a firm grasp of cultural hegemony or just defined culture.
- (ii) Most candidates identified one trend but struggled to identify a second one. A common error was to not understand what a trend is.
- (b) There were some detailed arguments offered by a few able candidates which analysed the meaning of control from the view of several theories. Common errors were to confuse the meaning of the mass media with the new media and just list the ways in which the media can affect audiences. A less common error was to produce an unsupported assertive answer.

Question 12

- (a) (i) *Agenda setting* was a well understood term by most candidates.
- (ii) Many candidates understood the way in which censorship can influence the political agenda as well as the effect of being able to choose what to publish. A few candidates struggled to make any appropriate example.
- (b) Of the few candidates who answered this question most talked about the way in which the media does or does not influence the behaviour of audiences. Some reference was made to reach into the links between the media and violent behaviour but a common error was to make no direct reference to the difficulties that have to be overcome when researching the media.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/32

Essay 2

Key Messages

- Candidates need secure knowledge of basic sociological terms and concepts.
- Candidates need to support their essays with accurate use of sociological evidence, both theoretical and empirical.
- Candidates need to see the connections between factors and not regard factors like gender in isolation of other social features.
- Candidates should answer the question as set.

General comments

Most candidates answered questions on the family, education and crime and deviance; knowledge of these topics was generally sound. A number also answered questions on religion and the media, notably **Question 11**. There were very few answers to questions on work and leisure.

Most candidates answered the required number of questions and there were few rubric errors. The best candidates answered three questions to a similar standard but some struggled to offer a sociological response to their third question.

Many candidates were able to gain marks in part **(a)** by showing clear understanding of the meaning of the concepts but a number of answers showed lack of understanding of basic sociological terms.

In part **(b)** answers candidates are better advised to give clearly different examples if they wish to gain maximum marks. To help to ensure this they could start their answer with 'the first example is...' etc.

The best answers to part **(b)** provided sound evaluative responses supported by a good range of sociological evidence and directed their answer to the question as it was set, making specific reference to the key terms in the question. In many of these answers it was noted that candidates are referring to postmodernism more frequently and with greater accuracy than in the past. A common weakness was to produce list-like accounts of information which showed knowledge of the topic but not the understanding to apply it to the question as set. These would have benefitted by including sociological theory and concepts as well as direct reference to key ideas and concepts in the question. Part **(b)** answers are improved by the inclusion of a relevant conclusion.

Many candidates begin their essay with an outline of what they intend to write. For examination purposes this is not necessary as candidates do not get marks for saying the same thing twice and they would be better advised to spend their time outlining a plan for their essay which will help them focus on the question as set.

Candidates need to be aware that status in society is not limited to one feature such as age; the members of all age groups also have ethnicity, gender and class.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) (i) There were many detailed and accurate definitions of modified extended families. A common error was to define *extended* with no reference to *modified*. An uncommon error was to state that it was extending the family due to increased life expectancy.
- (ii) A range of different family structures was referred to, including nuclear, beanpole, reconstituted and same sex. A common error was to include two types of nuclear family such as reconstituted and same sex; an improvement would be to include examples that are clearly different. Less common errors were to offer other sorts of modified family structure, such as dispersed extended family, or to describe relationships within families rather than structures such as the symmetrical family.
- (b) Many candidates clearly outlined the effects of industrialisation on family structures, as well as other influences on the development of families. There was excellent reference to feminism and more recent trends in demography which have influenced family structures in some societies. Some answers questioned whether industrialisation had had any impact on family structures at all whilst others considered postmodern theories. Common errors were to consider changing relationships within marriage, the changing nature of the functions of the family or changing family roles, none of which were demanded by the question. A less common error was to refer to the Nayer, as they pre-existed industrialisation they could not be influenced by that process.

Question 2

- (a) (i) Kinship networks were well defined by most candidates but a common error was to overlook the rights and obligations that accompany them. A less common error was to understand the meaning of *kin* but not of *networks*. An unusual error was to define it as friends.
- (ii) A very well answered question with the majority of candidates giving answers based on financial and emotional support. A common error was to identify a means of support but not to describe it.
- (b) The key to this question was having a sound understanding of Murdock's definition and then candidates were able to assess how realistic this is in the present age. Some answers made excellent use of a range of material relating to family diversity and the work of such key thinkers as the Rapoport. Many candidates did not display this knowledge and a less common error from others was to misinterpret his views by declaring that polygamous families do not fit into his definition. Another common error was to state that beanpole and same sex families do not fit into his definition when the former do but the latter do not.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) (i) This concept was well understood by candidates who related it to schools. Although education was not mentioned in the question the process had to be placed within an educational context as curriculum was. Those that did that produced some excellent answers. Some candidates had difficulty defining it. An uncommon error was to describe gender socialisation.
- (ii) Many candidates outlined two policies which have been aimed at producing gender equality by reference to such trends as National Curricula and compulsory education. A common error was to confuse an educational policy with the behaviour of teachers and a less common error was to outline positive discrimination aimed at girls. A small number of candidates who answered this question failed to produce anything of credit.
- (b) The most successful answers to this question clearly outlined the way in which feminist explanations of the processes within schools explain different candidate achievements. They then compared these to other theories of education pointing out what difference the feminists had made. Less successful answers just listed different factors influencing educational attainment or described

the education of girls with little or no reference to the question. A common error was to make no reference to feminist explanations at all.

Question 4

- (a) (i) Most candidates had a sound understanding of the meaning of self-fulfilling prophecy but some limited their answers by failing to point out that the completion of the prophecy is when it comes true. Another common error was to fail to relate the answer to education as was required by the question.
- (ii) Candidates who identified groups gave sound answers to this question explaining what advantages they have. The most successful answers identified two clearly different groups and not those which share similar advantages. An uncommon error was to outline the disadvantages suffered by some social groups.
- (b) Material circumstances and their influence on educational achievement were well understood by most candidates and some of the most successful answers on the paper were given to this question. A full exploration of the effects of material circumstances was outlined and compared to many other factors that impact on educational achievement. Some answers would have been improved by seeing the links between social factors; class, ethnicity and gender were described as different factors and the effects of being black, working class and male, as opposed to white, middle class and female were not considered. Some candidates did not differentiate between material and cultural factors and another common error was to show confusion about the meaning of *material circumstances*. There were some very knowledgeable answers which would have benefitted from some evaluation.

Section C

Question 5

- (a) (i) The few candidates who answered this question had a poor understanding of the term *cult*.
- (ii) The best responses to this question focused on social groups and not individuals. A common error was to describe the influence of religious groups rather than to identify social groups who are drawn to sect membership.
- (b) Candidates who related social change to levels of sect membership and then evaluated that in the light of other influences on social change presented thoughtful and well developed answers. A common error was to describe the different sociological theories on the nature of social change with little or no reference to sects. Another common error was to make no reference to sects throughout the essay.

Question 6

- (a) (i) Candidates' responses to this question varied; some gave a clear definition referring to the loss of belief in the sacred but a common error was to confuse the term with disengagement. A number of candidates who answered the rest of the question left this part blank.
- (ii) The concept of *disenchantment* was well understood, with the majority of candidates offering two valid reasons; the most popular were to do with the development of science and rationality. Candidates should note that examples that were clearly different were more successful than those which covered similar themes such as the growth of science and medicine.
- (b) Candidates who understood the meaning of both disengagement and secularisation produced some thoughtful and well-argued responses. There was excellent use of concepts such as sovietisation. A common error was to ignore the disengagement in the title and just describe or evaluate secularisation. A less common error was to show no understanding or make no reference to disengagement. It was noted that some candidates who had omitted to define *desacrilisation* in part (a) used the term correctly in their essays.

Section D

Question 7

- (a) (i) Some candidates gave accurate definitions of crime rate. A common error was to define crime rather than crime rate.
- (ii) Many candidates struggled to come up with two appropriate reasons for why crime rates change. Those that did focused on such issues as changing laws or policing policies. Common errors were to identify a reason for change but not explain it or to give examples of the inaccuracy of statistics such as issues of recording and reporting which do not account for change.
- (b) Many candidates answered this question with sophistication focusing on age in relation to criminal behaviour, crime statistics and other theories about the causes of crime. Common errors were to see age as pertaining just to the young and in other cases to ignore age throughout the essay. A number of answers were generalised and assertive.

Question 8

- (a) (i) Most candidates who answered this question understood the concept of anomie and defined it well.
- (ii) Candidates who understood what was meant by a social policy answered this question well. There were some interesting examples such as 'tough on crime tough on the causes of crime' and sure start. A common error was to describe socialisation and how it should teach young people to obey the law. A number of candidates interpreted the question solely as one of harsher punishments.
- (b) Candidates who understood the nature of anomie answered this question well. A common error was to respond with no mention of the concept and many of those that did not relate anomie to crime. A less common error was to relate the answer to deviance and not crime. Some very good answers referred to both Durkheim and Merton in detail and supported this with the use of Cohen and a range of other evidence which included theory.

Section E

There were too few answers to this section to comment.

Section F

Question 11

- (a) (i) Most candidates defined the term *mass media representation* well. A common error was to see it as the way in which the media is represented.
- (ii) There were some very reasonable responses to this question and stronger candidates were able to identify two good examples, giving clear descriptions of the way in which governments may choose to use censorship. A few candidates only gave one example. A common error was to assert that governments need to control.
- (b) There were some good and thoughtful debates and arguments offered by candidates, sometimes making use of their own comprehensive knowledge and experience in respect of their own societies. Some very detailed answers used Pluralism and Marxism to good effect. Common errors were to offer only assertive comments demonstrating limited knowledge and understanding of relevant theory and texts or to limit the answer to government control.

Question 12

- (a) (i)** Few candidates offered an accurate definition of the hypodermic syringe model.
- (ii)** Most answers identified the study by Bandura but few managed to identify a second sociological study.
- (b)** When candidates fully understood the meaning of the cultural effects model it was outlined accurately and contrasted to pluralist and Marxist approaches. A common error was to make assertive statements agreeing that the model has limitations with little or no supporting evidence.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/33

Essay 2

Key Messages

- Questions in part **(a)** that require straightforward application and understanding of knowledge showed sociological knowledge but some candidates' work would benefit by the accurate use of sociological terms and concepts.
- Candidates should be aware that societies such as the Nayer have become extinct and should not refer to them as evidence of family life in modern industrial societies.
- Questions in part **(b)** require more reference to sociological theory and method from many candidates who make little reference beyond basic theory or dated studies.

General comments

The majority of candidates answered questions on both the family and education, knowledge of these topics was generally good. A number also answered questions on religion and crime and deviance, with less on the mass media. Most of those who answered questions on the mass media answered **Question 11**. There were very few answers to questions on work and leisure, the majority of which were weak.

There were very few rubric errors. The best candidates answered three questions to a similar standard but some struggled to offer a sociological response to their third question.

Many candidates were able to gain marks in part **(a)** by showing clear understanding of concepts. Some candidates struggled to find two examples for their answers to question **(a)(ii)** in all parts of the examination.

The most successful answers to part **(b)** provided sound evaluation and supported this with sociological evidence such as theory and empirical studies. Other answers provided list-like accounts of information on the topic rather than answering the question as set. These would have benefitted by including basic sociological theory and concepts.

Candidates need to be aware that status in society is not fixed on just one aspect of social life. In the essay answers of many candidates they described gender, class and ethnicity as if each is exclusive so that it is not possible to be middle class, white and female, or black, working class and male at the same time.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) (i)** Many answers defined dysfunctional family accurately but some answers gave examples of families that are dysfunctional rather than defining the term.
- (ii)** Most candidates gave two accurate examples of the ways in which family life may contribute to social solidarity. Answers which focused on socialisation were full but some which named stabilisation of the adult personality could have gained more marks by outlining how this contributes to social solidarity. Common errors were to name who is in control in families or give examples of deviant behaviour.

- (b) The process of loss of function was well understood with some considered essays which outlined how this may, or may not, be happening and supported answers with up to date theory and studies. Common errors were to give over lengthy descriptions of the functions of the family as outlined by Murdock, types of families to be found in the past and today, to outline the supposed problems of modern families or to just consider socialisation overlooking other family functions.

Question 2

- (a) (i) Most candidates had a clear understanding of the meaning of the expressive role. A common error was to associate it with women rather than the domestic sphere and a number of candidates overlooked the caring aspect of the role.
- (ii) Candidates with more secure knowledge of influences on fertility rates described two reasons why women are choosing to have fewer children such as the availability of contraception and opportunities available to females to have paid employment. A common error was to offer two very similar examples rather than making two clearly different points.
- (b) More sophisticated answers considered the existence of nuclear family structures both in the past and in contemporary societies and supported their answers with a range of cross cultural examples. However, common errors were to offer over lengthy descriptions of different types of pre-industrial families with little reference to the question. Other answers interpreted the question as one of family diversity being a threat to society rather than to the continuance of nuclear family structures or offered assertive answers outlining the supposed problems with families today.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) Some answers clearly defined positive discrimination and related this process to education. Common errors were to describe discrimination but overlook *positive* or confuse the process with negative stereotyping. A less common error was to describe the advantages available to middle class children.
- (ii) Candidates with a clear understanding of the benefits to be had by middle class children clearly outlined two different advantages, typically material and cultural ones. Common errors were to repeat similar advantages to be gained by having wealth, outline the barriers faced by working class candidates, to relate the question to gender or to show confusion between upper, middle and working class.
- (b) Candidates who understood what is meant by an educational policy were able to offer a clear answer to this question that typically looked at the impact of policies on meritocracy. Some candidates who had failed to define positive discrimination in the first part of the question referred to it with accuracy in this part. A common error was to either overlook *meritocracy* in the answer or to show misunderstanding of the concept.

Question 4

- (a) (i) Most candidates had some understanding of the meaning of cultural reproduction and the most successful answers linked it to the passing on of values to the next generation. Many answers showed a weak understanding of the concept.
- (ii) This question was answered well by those candidates who had given an accurate definition to the first part of (a), many of whom made reference to the hidden curriculum. A common error was to link it to gender which overlooked the fact that both genders are to be found in all classes.
- (b) Many answers to this question listed different factors which influence educational attainment with little reference to the question. Candidates who showed more understanding identified the key features and argued effectively and offered a balanced conclusion. A common error was to confuse material and cultural circumstances. Some answers gave the impression that girls and ethnic minorities do not have a social class.

Section C

Question 5

- (a) (i) Few candidates were able to define this term accurately.
- (ii) The majority of candidates answering this question were able to both identify and describe two different world rejecting sects of which the most popular was the People's Temple.
- (b) The majority of candidates had a clear understanding of the meaning of secularisation and outlined several ways in which it may, or may not, be occurring. A common error was to overlook the existence of new religious movements in this process.

Question 6

- (a) (i) There was much misunderstanding as to the meaning of marginalisation and many candidates defined it without reference to religion.
- (ii) A limited number of candidates were able to identify marginalised religious groups. A common error was to link it to groups such as women in general with no development of why this may apply to women in general or specific groups of women.
- (b) A number of answers analysed the view of Weber in relation to social change and then evaluated that against other theories of religion to explain how social change occurs. Common errors were to make no reference to Weber at all or to describe his work in the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism with little or no reference to the question.

Section D

Question 7

- (a) (i) The majority of candidates defined labelling well but a few responses gave examples of labels rather than defining the process.
- (ii) Many candidates struggled to find two sociological studies of the process of labelling. Common errors were to take examples from education and to show confusion between crime and deviance.
- (b) There were a number of strong debates from candidates who clearly understood the interactionist theories and could compare them to other theories of crime. Some candidates who had failed to define labelling in the first part of the question talked about the process accurately in this part of the question. Common errors were to list different interactionist studies with little or no reference to the question or to describe the importance of gender, age or ethnicity as if they cannot be linked to labelling as well.

Question 8

- (a) (i) Few candidates had a secure understanding of the meaning of underclass.
- (ii) This question was well answered by the majority of candidates who clearly outlined two ways in which poverty could cause crime. The best types of answer gave two clearly different types of criminal behaviour such as theft and prostitution.
- (b) Many candidates outlined clearly the evidence that links ethnicity to recorded crime and then were able to explore the value of such evidence against other theories and explanations. A number of common errors were made in this question such as seeing ethnicity and race as different features, not knowing what ethnicity is or failing to refer to ethnicity in their answer.

Section E

Question 9

This question was answered by too few candidates to be able to comment. Of the very few answers seen most were poor.

Question 10

- (a) (i) The term *the division of labour* was well understood by candidates.
- (ii) Most candidates identified two occupations that are more highly rewarded than others but a common error was not to identify why this is so. A less common error was to identify lottery wins as a reason for higher pay.
- (b) Many candidates made good reference to economic reasons for the experience of leisure being different for different genders but few candidates gave examples of leisure activities being the same. Another common error was to interpret the question as one of female leisure and to omit males from the discussion completely.

Section F

Question 11

- (a) (i) Candidates either had a firm grasp of cultural hegemony or just defined culture.
- (ii) Most candidates identified one trend but struggled to identify a second one. A common error was to not understand what a trend is.
- (b) There were some detailed arguments offered by a few able candidates which analysed the meaning of control from the view of several theories. Common errors were to confuse the meaning of the mass media with the new media and just list the ways in which the media can affect audiences. A less common error was to produce an unsupported assertive answer.

Question 12

- (a) (i) *Agenda setting* was a well understood term by most candidates.
- (ii) Many candidates understood the way in which censorship can influence the political agenda as well as the effect of being able to choose what to publish. A few candidates struggled to make any appropriate example.
- (b) Of the few candidates who answered this question most talked about the way in which the media does or does not influence the behaviour of audiences. Some reference was made to reach into the links between the media and violent behaviour but a common error was to make no direct reference to the difficulties that have to be overcome when researching the media.