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Examiners' report

SOCIOLOGY

H180

For first teaching in 2015

H180/01 Summer 2023 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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Paper 1 series overview

This was the first examination for a number of years following the Covid-19 pandemic that followed the 'usual' format of a standard examination paper with no advance notice of themes for the paper. Overall, the standard was acceptable and satisfactory with only a minority of students accessing the highest marks.

There was a range of responses, suggesting that the paper differentiated adequately. The majority of candidates attempted to answer all questions on the paper and managed to time their responses well, although there seemed more 'No Responses' for higher tariff questions suggesting that some candidates ran out of time towards the end. There were very few rubric errors and candidates seemed well prepared knowing the assessment objectives of each question. Some candidates attempted the higher mark questions first instead of tackling the questions in order. This strategy is perfectly acceptable and for those candidates that may struggle with time keeping, this is a good technique. There is still a persistent number of candidates who are not matching the demands of the question - for example, some candidates did not refer to Source A for both responses to Question 2 and instead only gave one response relating to the source and another from their own knowledge. Similarly, some candidates did not make any reference to Source B which limits them to Level 2 for Application; candidates need to be reminded of the importance of reading the command words of every question and understanding what the question is asking them to do. This can be also seen in Questions 7, 11 and 15 where some candidates still provide a paragraph of evaluation when there are no Evaluation and Analysis marks available thus losing valuable time that could have been spent on another question. Similarly, candidates do not provide enough Evaluation and Analysis for Questions 8, 12 and 16 when this is the highest tariff Assessment Objective at 10 marks and typically needs four fully developed points to gain full marks in this area.

Key point call out: Using the sources

For Question 2 and Question 3, the sources must be explicitly referred to: twice in Question 2 and at least once in Question 3 to gain full marks. It is good practice to explicitly refer in your response to signpost you are using the Source, e.g. 'In Source A we can see a woman wearing religious clothing illustrating how religion can affect identity'.

In Section A, Question 1 was well answered with full marks achieved for this question with regularity. Candidates should be reminded that there are 2 marks available for the core definition and 2 marks available for development – on occasion some candidates only gave a partial core definition or a partial development and therefore dropped marks.

As previously mentioned, there were clear differences between candidates in the use of sources; some candidates made no reference to the source and so lost AO2 marks for application - both Question 2 and Question 3 state in bold that candidates must refer to a specific source. It should be noted that for this paper Source A needed to be referred to twice in Question 2 and Source B referred to at least once in Question 3 to gain full marks. Using the source is a skill that can be practised and candidates should make sure that they are developing and applying their knowledge from the source instead of copying what they see (paying 'lip service' to the source) e.g. Some candidates began their responses describing Source A and then went on to make two separate unrelated points – this is not an effective use of the Source. Question 4 was answered well, with the best responses providing two developed points for AO1 Knowledge and Understanding and two developed points for AO3 Evaluation and Analysis. Candidates should be reminded that this typically looks like two developed paragraphs 'for' the question and two developed paragraphs against the question.

Key point: How much to write?

While there is no one way of writing, some candidates can write very accurately and concisely, others can be more free-flowing and drawn out. There are some loose guidelines as to what would be typical for each question:

- Q1 One short paragraph including a core definition and a development point.
- Q2 Two short paragraphs detailing the two different ways with explanations and references to the Source.
- Q3 Two developed paragraphs of knowledge with at least one reference to the Source.
- Q4 Two developed paragraphs of knowledge and two developed paragraphs of evaluation
- Q5/9/13 One short paragraph of core definition and one/two development points.
- Q6/10/14 Two developed paragraphs showing and explaining the two ways.
- Q7/11/15 Three developed paragraphs of knowledge
- Q8/12/16 Three developed paragraphs of knowledge and four developed paragraphs of evaluation

In Section B, the family still remains the most popular topic and if anything was even more popular this year. There was a smattering of centres that opted for youth culture and only a handful of candidates attempting the media option. 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. A large number of responses, particularly for the 12 and 20mark questions did not 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 on contemporary examples will not score very highly as, on their own, contemporary examples do not evidence good sociology and would only achieve Level 2.

On the whole there was a clear difference between the high and low achieving candidates. At the top end, there was a range of sociological evidence contained in responses 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 responses became very anecdotal suggesting they were relying on common sense.

Key point: Use appropriate sociological evidence

The best form of sociological evidence is using studies, theories or concepts in a developed way. For example, for Question 4, the best candidates may have discussed Back's study of Neighbourhood Nationalism or expanded on Burdsey's study of being 'one of the lads' to gain full knowledge and application marks.

In terms of assessment objectives, Knowledge and Understanding (AO1) remains the strongest area. Candidates who performed well were able to offer a whole range of sociological knowledge, in the form of concepts and studies, but sometimes making relevant use of contemporary examples and theory. AO2 (application) still needs to improve with some candidates only referring to the source once for Question 2 when it should be twice. AO3 skills of Analysis and Evaluation were moderately successful. It is worth noting that only Question 4 and Questions 8, 12 and 16 require evaluation. In particular, evaluation can take the form of direct criticism against a previous point of knowledge or could be in the

form of a counterpoint to the question. It is a good technique to use the words of the question to show how an evaluative paragraph fits into a response otherwise, if the candidate just lists an alternative viewpoint, there is a danger that it will be marked as juxtaposition as it is not fully addressing the question.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
 used the sources appropriately and the right amount for Questions 2 and 3 	wrote the bare minimum and did not back up their points
 used sociological knowledge, studies, theory or concepts to back up their points provided knowledge and evaluation for Question 4 and Questions 8, 12 and 16 answered every question within the time limit. 	 did not refer to the sources when asked did not evaluate on Questions 4 and Questions 8, 12 and 16 only used examples and common sense for sociological knowledge.

Section A overview

This section comprised of four compulsory questions which all candidates needed to answer. Two questions needed the source to be used and referenced.

Question 1

Source A



Muslim woman praying outside a mosque

Source B



A business meeting taking place

1 Define the concept of disability.

[4]

This response required a full core meaning and full development to gain the maximum marks. Most candidates answered this question well, referring to a lack of ability compared with wider society or 'normal' people or an inability to fully take part in certain activities in society. Development often came in the form of listing types of disabilities or was developed using Shakespeare and the medical/social model or ideas of learned helplessness or how disability is represented in the media.

Question 2

2 With reference to Source A, identify and briefly explain two ways religion can affect identity. [6]

Candidates were required to use Source A to identify and explain two ways religion can affect identity. This was often done to an adequate standard with many candidates only referring to Source A once or not at all or did not connect the source to the point they were making. The majority of candidates referred to religious forms of dress and with some highlighting how the women in the source was wearing a hijab. The best candidates also made a second point regarding how religion can affect norms and values and related this to either the aspect of praying or attending a religious building from the source.

Exemplar 1

In source A, we can see a woman
Religion has an assect on an individuals
Religion has an ayect on an individuals norms and values. In source A, we
can observe a muslim woman praying
outside a mosque. This affects her identity as one of her values she holds
apuld be praving five times aday
abuld be praying five times aday
Also in source A, we can observe the
clothing. Clothing choice displays her identity
gact the woman is wearing religious clothing. Clothing choice displays her identity as believing in Islam to others. The
religous clothing can act as a symbolic
marker, Studied by Atexander, Claire Alexander,
to show others her identity holds her religion.

This is an excellent example of an appropriate and concise way of using the source and clearly explaining the answer. In this response, the candidate has identified two ways (praying and wearing religious clothing). They then go on to use Source A twice clearly explaining how the source illustrates these points, gaining full marks (2,4) in the process.

Question 3

3 Using Source B and your wider sociological knowledge, explain how the workplace socialises individuals.
[8]

This question was answered satisfactorily with Level 2 being the most common mark band seen. Many candidates gave common sense responses such as 'learning the rules of work' or 'making friends' but were unable to support their responses with sociological evidence or referred to the source.

The best candidates focused on age identity and gender identity, using sociologists such as Arber and Ginn or concepts such as the 'glass ceiling'. The source was sometimes used to illustrate differences between men and women or to underline issues of social control such as dressing appropriately for work. Some candidates also referred to Waddington's notion of 'canteen culture' and how the workplace can have its own ethos and culture.

Exemplar 2

-	Workplace socialises individuals busseon surpreinage into their
-	age identify. As in source B, all of the individuals
-	are relatively voung. This can be origined by Arber and
-	(cinn who gound mat the wormplace will socialise individuous
_	into their age identifies the to as they may not be will
-	to hire those of an older age due to them naving
-	limited time in the woluplace and can be made redundant
-	due to the fact that mey are older Also they would
_	not be able to do as much work as those that may be
	younger than them. Therefore individuals are more
_	likely to be younger in a woreplace an shown is source
-	a are to the fact that older individuals are percieved
-	as having limited time , may not be
-	employed as much which explains the younger years or
_	people in source B.
_	
-	Another way worupiaces cocialisec individuals is though the into
_	class identifies. As Lockwood found that those from
_	a middle class background will have a bi market citation
-	and a work situation. In which the machet situation
-	sofals to now being able to reap other ponefits such
_	
	as healthlate, company care etc. The work situation
	secen to the the middle class being less livery to
	he under superdicion. As in & source B, the individual
	is holding an electronic device, which may have been
	given through the company as to the boxefix
_	of being part of the middle class.

10

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This example illustrates a very good approach to answering this question: it includes one link to Source B and then two paragraphs using studies and concepts to fully answer the question in a developed way. In this response, the candidate uses Source B to highlight the issue of age and then uses the work of Arber and Ginn to illustrate how the workplace can socialise age identities. The second paragraph then uses the work of Lockwood to make the connection to class identity and the workplace. This response received full marks (4,4).

Question 4

4 Outline and briefly evaluate the view that ethnic identities are now hybrid.

[12]

The majority of candidates answered this question well. Most commonly used were studies by Burdsey, Nayak, Gill and Johal to support the view and referring to concepts such as Brasians, Blasians, white wannabes and code-switching. Weaker responses gave common sense-based points about intermarriage and globalisation. Evaluation was slightly less pronounced with some candidates not evaluating at all or spending less time on this area. The best candidates evaluated with Modood, Sewell and ideas such as cultural comfort zones and cultural resistance.

Exemplar 3

Ethnicity is an cha identity formed when a group of people share cultural charachteristics like dress, language, religion and beliefs. Hybrid identities form when individuals belong to 2 or more cultures in their sense of
a group of people share cultural charachteristic
like dress language, religion and beliefs.
Hybrid identities form when individuals draw
to 2 or more cultures in their sense of
v v
Johal found that 2nd and 3rd generation British Asians described themselves as much
British Asians described themselves as much
more british than their parents, but also
presented a 'hypedup' ethnic identity with
their peers. These British Asian youthe skillfully
combined the culture of their home with culture
they learned from their peers, forming a hybrid
identity.
Another support for the view that ethnie edenlihise identities are now hybridised
edentities are now hybridised
is Nayak's work on white wannabees, Nayak
is Nayak's work on white warnabees, Nayak calls of finds white british youth adopting
Jamako Jamacan, black vap and hip hop
styles and ways of speaking as a hybridisation
Jamako Jamacan, black vap and hip hop styles and ways of speaking as a hybridisation of cultures. White youths emulate these styles to
seen 'cool' to their peer group,
· U
Athird
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Les Back found evidence that youthe on
council estates formed local identities and
disregaded ethnic back ground as a
dividing factor. This shows ethnie identities
hybridising as the youth from different otherie
backgrounds came together to form a new
mixed cultural identity.
However, some may argue that ethnic
However, some may argue that ethnie identities one not really hybrid, but that
However, some may argue that ethnie identities one not really hybrid, but that minorities 'magk' their cult wal charachterstic.
However, some may argue that ethnie identities one not really hybrid, but that minorities 'mask' their cult wal charchterstic by appearing to appealing to white norms
However, some may argue that ethnie identities one not really hybrid, but that minorities 'mask' their cult wal charachteretic by appearing to appealing to white norms in public and with peer groups, instead of
However, some may argue that ethnice identities one not really hybrid, but that minorities 'magk' their cult wal charachteration by appearing to appealing to white norms in public and with peer groups, instead of reaching authentic by

A common issue was candidates being unsure of how much to write and in some cases over or underwriting for certain Assessment Objectives. In Exemplar 3, the candidate has written too much for AO1 knowledge and too little for AO3 Evaluation and Analysis. They begin with two developed paragraphs on Johal and Nayak which would have been enough to get maximum marks for AO1 and AO2. However, they then give a third paragraph with Back (which is not needed) before finishing with an underdeveloped evaluation paragraph – they would have been better adding another paragraph of evaluation to increase their marks. This candidate gained 4,4,2.

Section B overview

Candidates had the option to select whether they did further questions on the Family, Youth or the Media. A significant majority of candidates opted for the family.

Option 1 overview

The family is the most popular option, and it was clear that candidates were well prepared. A number of candidates struggled with Question 6 and were not able to provide specific sociological evidence to back up their response.

Question 5

OPTION 1

Families and relationships

5 Define and briefly explain the concept of same-sex families.

[5]

Most candidates were able to score well on this question. They were able to give a partial core meaning of a homosexual or gay couple living together but many did mention having children and lost a mark. In development, many candidates referred to increasing acceptability or increasing rights and referenced key legislation such as the Same Sex Couples Act of 2013. Some also referenced ONS statistics or Weeks or Calhoun in how lifestyles had changed.

Question 6*

6* Identify and briefly explain **two** ways grandparents contribute to family life.

[8]

Overall this question was answered only satisfactorily with many candidates unable to score higher than Level 2. Often responses were common sense points regarding childcare and financial help. Some focused on negative aspects, such as the sandwich generation and being a burden, which was not creditable for a 'contribution'. Better responses referred to studies such as Statham and Ross et al. to develop their points or Ghuman's idea of how the extended family could pass on knowledge.

Question 7*

7* Explain how childhood has changed in contemporary society.

[12]

Overall there was a mixed response to this question and also a wide range of valid approaches taken. As with other 'change' questions, some candidates wrote at length about what it used to be like and then put a separate point about what it is like now, which was only given as one change. Some responses were very brief and common sense based such as the influence of gaming or social media, but better responses referred to the growth in child-centredness, pester power, toxic childhood etc and referred to Postman, Palmer, Gardner etc. Some focused on other aspects of the family/ less related issues such as the growth in single-parent or reconstituted families, or the increase in women working, to argue that this has changed childhood. This was given, but often this was not very well focused.

Question 8*

8* Evaluate the New Right view that the nuclear family remains the best type of family.

[20]

This question was answered well with most candidates able to state at least one aspect of the New Right view. The best candidates used studies by Murray and Dennis and Erdos to make convincing arguments about the New Right view on the nuclear family. Some also applied views from Melanie Phillips and others.

The minority of candidates did not have a lot to specifically say about the New Right, but were able to present it as a positive view regarding nuclear families, and often linked it to functionalist's views, e.g. Parsons and Murdock, which was creditable.

Most responses contained evaluation, often contrasting with the use of feminist and Marxist views, as well as postmodernism on family diversity.

Option 2 overview

Of the candidates that did answer the Youth section, it was done very well with good use of theory and studies. The most troublesome question seemed to be Question 12 with a minority of candidates struggling to meet its demands.

Question 9

OPTION 2

Youth subcultures

9 Define and briefly explain the concept of a gang.

[5]

Most candidates could define a gang and often linked it to negative stereotypes. Some candidates also gave examples of gangs, although, few mentioned features of gangs such as a leadership, hierarchy or territory. Most candidates made the link of criminality or deviancy with gangs. Typical development points featured the work of Clarke, Venkatesh, Hebdige and Decker and Van Winkle.

Question 10*

10* Identify and briefly explain two ways subcultures are related to gender.

[8]

The majority of candidates answered this question well. Weaker responses did not really address their points to the question, giving examples of male or female subcultures rather than 'ways' in which they were linked to gender. More often than not, candidates also interpreted gender as female, and wrote two similar points about females in subcultures, usually using ideas surrounding social control and bedroom culture, but missed an opportunity to mention masculinity and subcultures. The best responses identified two clear ways and used evidence from studies such as McRobbie and Garber, Smart, Blackman, Willis, Sewell and Miller.

Question 11*

11* Explain how subcultures are changing in contemporary society.

[12]

This question was not done particularly well by a number of candidates. As with the 'change' question on the family option (Question 7), many candidates described the spectacular subcultures of the 20th century at length without really focusing on change, and then wrote something about more current subcultures, which was only creditable as one point. Better candidates applied postmodernist ideas about neo-tribes and changes to subcultures, applying names such as Polhemus, Bennett, Maffesoli, Thornton and Redhead.

Question 12*

12* Evaluate the interactionist view that the media is responsible for youth deviance.

[20]

This question was challenging to a significant number of candidates, with very few engaging with the twin aspects of interactionism and media. Some candidates wrote very generic responses about the influence of the media, without linking these to any interactionist ideas, and others wrote more generally about interactionism and labelling, without direct link to the media. Better responses used ideas about deviance amplification and moral panics, linked to labelling and the deviance amplification spiral, using studies such as Becker, S. Cohen, Fawbert and Young. Evaluation was often more successful, with most candidates using other sociological explanations to challenge the view in the question, such as neo-Marxist ideas of resistance and functionalist ideas relating to status.

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Option 3 overview

A minority of candidates answered questions on the media but of those, there was a wide range of knowledge on display. Typically, candidates struggled with Question 16, finding it difficult to apply appropriate concepts and studies to the question.

Question 13

OPTION 3 Media

13 Define and briefly explain the uses and gratifications model.

[5]

[8]

This question demonstrated a mixed response. Those candidates that were familiar with the model were able to give a correct definition revolving around how people's needs influence how they use and respond to media, developing this with studies by Zillman or Mcquail. Weaker responses were unable to pinpoint the precise definition and instead had attempts at trying to identify the extent to which the audience were passive or active with this model.

Question 14*

14* Identify and briefly explain **two** ways media representations of femininity have changed.

Similar to the other 'change' questions, too many candidates spent time outlining how representations of femininity had not changed or spent overly long outlining how what femininity was before getting to the point about what the change was. The best responses used studies by Gauntlett and Glascock to illustrate changes in representations and illustrated their points well using examples and key concepts.

Question 15*

15* Explain how minority ethnic groups are stereotyped in the media.

[12]

The majority of candidates responded quite well, although, the supporting evidence varied. The best responses used sociological evidence by Barker, Malik, Van Dijk or Hall. Other candidates just used contemporary examples, such as TV shows or representations in films and discussed the greater prevalence or minority ethnic actors.

Question 16*

16* Evaluate the pluralist view of the media.

[20]

This question proved quite difficult and problematic for some candidates. The best responses drew on ideas such as diversity and choice, supply and demand, professional values and the media as the fourth estate of democracy. However, others simply related vague notions of pluralism and the audience being in control with no real concepts. Evaluation was a lot stronger, with many candidates highlighting the neo-Marxist and Marxist positions in opposition.

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Question 2, Source A: Photo - Muslim woman praying outside a mosque, © AegeanBlue/Getty Images Question 3, Source B: Photo A - A business meeting taking place, © FatCamera/Getty Images

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