

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/11
Socialisation, Identity and Methods of
Research

Key messages

- High scoring answers included good use of applied empirical support.
- There was sound knowledge of sociological methods especially in **Question 5**.
- There was a deficit in knowledge in relation to understanding how education contributes to the process of socialising class identity in **Question 3(a)**.
- Improving observance of the examination's rubric in **Section A** but some candidates need to adhere more closely to the requirements of **2(a)**.
- To achieve full marks in **Question 3(a)**, candidates need to provide two clear and developed points. A number of candidates only provided one point.
- In **Section B Question 5** there was a notable lack of balance between supporting and evaluating arguments.

General comments

The standard of responses overall was variable. In **Section A** most candidates were able to give two features of laboratory experiments for **Question 1**. **Question 2** required methodological knowledge. In **2(a)** most candidates were aware that questionnaires are a reliable research method, although 'reliability' and 'validity' were often mixed up, suggesting a lack of understanding. In **Question 2(b)** there was evidence of a reasonably good knowledge base, although overt and covert participant observations were often confused. Centres should note that the marks for **Question 2** are accumulated on a points-based approach and it is important to follow the rubric as shown in the mark scheme to achieve high marks for these questions. In **Question 3(a)**, many candidates were aware of the role of education as a socialising agent but not clear about how it affected class identity. Many responses made only one point in explaining the view. In **Question 3(b)** very few candidates directly evaluated the proposition, instead simply asserting an alternative point of view.

Question 4 was the less popular question in **Section B**. The strongest responses were balanced essays supported by sociological evidence. Most candidates were able to produce evaluation points but they were much less certain with arguments supporting the view. This left many responses unbalanced which affected the marks awarded. **Question 5** provoked many good responses and most candidates were able to show sound knowledge and understanding of the impact of theoretical factors on the choice of research method.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates were able to identify two features of a laboratory experiment. Many referred to the idea that laboratory experiments take place in artificial or closed environments, also popular was the ability of researchers to manipulate variables. Many candidates were able to develop at least one of these points successfully. Less effective answers were often somewhat generic and developed in a way that could have been applicable to other quantitative methods. Candidates are only required to describe in this question, there is no need to explain or define.

Question 2

- (a) Many candidates produced fairly good answers to this question. Popular reasons included: questionnaires can be completed without a researcher present and respondents are asked the same questions in the same order. The most successful responses clearly identified a reason, explained it, selected relevant sociological material, and then showed how the material supported the point. Less effective answers took a scattergun approach and did not explicitly identify and explain two reasons as required by the question, instead making a range of separate points. A number of candidates repeated their identified point when showing how their selected material supported the reason, hence losing the last available mark. 'Reliability' and 'validity' were often mixed up or used together, suggesting limited understanding of the terms.
- (b) This question was reasonably well answered by candidates. Most were able to provide two strengths of overt participant observation. A fairly narrow range of answers were given with most centring around ethical issues such as consent, or practical ones such as taking notes as well as the option to ask questions. Most of the responses that correctly identified strengths were able to gain at least two marks per point made. Less successful responses highlighted the strengths of participant observation in general without addressing the overt dimension directly. Others confused 'overt' with 'covert'. A recurring feature of responses that achieved 3 or 4 marks was that points were not developed to show why their identified point was a limitation. Candidates might benefit from concluding their answer with a statement such as 'this is a strength/limitation because...' taking care to avoid repetition of their original point.

Question 3

- (a) Few candidates produced strong answers to this question. Many responses outlined the role of education as an agent of socialisation but did not link this knowledge to how the processes within education shape class identity. Many candidates focused their attention on the role played by family factors rather than on education while others drew attention to class and achievement. Both of these approaches had limited relevance to the question. A number of responses looked at relevant concepts such as the hidden curriculum but did not apply this to the issue of class identity. Many candidates only made one point in their response and very few candidates reached the higher levels. To achieve full marks, candidates need to provide two clear and developed points. If these points clearly address the question and are supported by reference to relevant concepts, theories and evidence, a response can achieve 10 marks.
- (b) Responses to this question were better than for **3(a)**. The most common approach was to pose an alternative agent of socialisation as a more important influence, typically this was the family. A number of candidates argued that education is not an influence on class identity, as lower-class students do not flourish in education. Very few directly evaluated the proposition that education is the most important influence, instead simply asserting an alternative point of view. A number of responses gave more than one argument in their answer. In these cases, only one was rewarded.

Section B

Question 4

The strongest responses referred to arguments outlining the persistence of ethnic identities in traditional societies, often making links to religion as a driver for maintaining identity. Ideas and evidence of cultural resistance/defence were also outlined. Typically, candidates were more comfortable when considering arguments against the view. Good answers linked globalisation, immigration and increased consumerism to the question, but many did not apply these concepts very well. Cultural hybridity featured in most responses, although it was often conflated with mixed race relationships. A number of candidates evaluated in terms of changing gender identities but this was often not relevant to the question. These types of arguments received little credit. As such, centres may wish to work on the use of more focused evaluation.

Question 5

Responses to this question were stronger than those for **Question 4**. Most candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge of theoretical factors and their impact on choice of research method. Those candidates who understood the difference between theoretical, ethical, and practical factors were able to use this knowledge to produce good accounts with some relevant examples given. These responses typically outlined positivist and interpretivist accounts, although feminism and realism also featured.

Some less successful responses were unclear about what constituted a theoretical factor, and the most common error was to outline methodological concepts such as ‘validity’, ‘reliability’ and ‘representativeness’ without making direct links to theoretical perspectives. Some unfocused answers moved into long descriptions of the suitability of different methods, rather than a comparison of theoretical factors to other influences. Most were able to list some different factors in juxtaposition, with fully developed evaluation absent in many cases.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/12
Socialisation, Identity and Methods of
Research

Key messages

- There was sound knowledge of sociological methods especially in **Questions 2(a)** and **2(b)**.
- High scoring responses used sociological material (concepts/theories/research evidence) to support the points made.
- There was a deficit in knowledge in relation to some elements of how sociologists explain deviance and non-conformity in **Question 3(a)**.
- Improving observance of the examination's rubric in **Section A** but some candidates need to adhere more closely to the requirements of **2(a)**.
- To achieve full marks in **Question 3(a)**, candidates need to provide two clear and developed points. A number of candidates only provided one point.
- More focused evaluation needed in the essays in **Section B**.

General comments

The standard of responses overall was variable. In **Section A**, most candidates gave at least one characteristic of working class identity for **Question 1**, although many candidates did not seem to clearly understand the idea of identity. **Questions 2(a)** and **2(b)** required methodological knowledge. In **2(a)**, most candidates were familiar with the positivist approach to sociological research, although a number repeated their identified point when showing how their selected material supported a given reason. In **2(b)**, there was evidence of a reasonably good knowledge of structured interviews, although it was commonplace for responses to not fully develop their points to show why a point was a limitation. Centres should note that the marks for **Question 2** are accumulated on a points-based approach and it is important to follow the rubric as shown in the mark scheme to achieve full marks for these questions. In **Question 3(a)**, many responses outlined examples of deviant behaviour but were unclear as to how they related to social resistance. Many responses made only one point in explaining the view.

Question 4 was the more popular question in **Section B**. The strongest responses used detailed examples or concepts relating to different age groups but there was a notable lack of sociological evidence. Most candidates struggled with explicit evaluation which rarely went beyond juxtaposition with other types of identities. **Question 5** produced some good responses but many candidates were not able to show detailed knowledge and understanding of group interviews, instead writing rather general essays on different types of interview. 'Reliability' and 'validity' were also often mixed up or used together, suggesting limited understanding of the terms.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates were able to identify at least one feature of working class identity and often two, but few seemed to clearly understand the idea of identity. Instead, many wrote about the working class in terms of economic position. More successful responses referred to ideas such as fatalism, immediate gratification, collectivism and social solidarity as examples of working class values. Candidates are only required to describe in this question, there is no need to explain or define.

Question 2

- (a) Many candidates produced fairly good answers to this question. Popular features included using quantitative methods, the value placed on objectivity and the use of scientific method. The most successful responses clearly identified a feature, explained it, selected relevant sociological material and then showed how the material supported the point. Less effective responses took a scattergun approach and did not explicitly identify and explain two features as required by the question, instead making a range of disconnected points. Some candidates explained in terms of how positivism differs from an interpretivist approach but these types of answer were typically not explicit enough. A number of candidates repeated their identified point when showing how their selected material supported the feature, hence losing the last available mark.
- (b) This question was well answered by candidates. Most were able to provide two limitations of structured interviews. A wide range of answers were given with the strongest responses focusing on the interviewer effect, lack of flexibility and lack of depth. A number of candidates showed confusion about the concept of the Hawthorne effect, mixing it up with the interviewer effect. The Hawthorne effect should only be applied to experiments/observations, since it is not focused on researcher characteristics but the awareness of being studied. Less successful responses wrote general points that could easily have applied to any type of interview. A recurring feature of those responses that achieved 3 or 4 marks was not developing their answer to show why their identified point was a limitation. Candidates might benefit from ensuring they conclude their answer with a statement such as: 'this is a strength/limitation because...' taking care to avoid repetition of their original point.

Question 3

- (a) Few candidates produced strong answers to this question. Many responses outlined examples of deviant behaviour but were unclear as to how they related to social resistance. When social resistance was referred to it was often used to articulate the idea of resisting the social norm, as opposed to resistance in the form of protest or collective action. More effective responses focused on deviant subcultures but did not always clearly link this to resistance against mainstream norms and values. Many candidates only made one point in their response and very few candidates reached the higher levels. To achieve full marks, candidates need to provide two clear and developed points. If these points clearly address the question and are supported by reference to relevant concepts, theories and evidence, a response can achieve 10 marks.
- (b) Most candidates were able to identify an alternative cause of deviant behaviour, such as inadequate socialisation, labelling and marginalisation, but few were able to fully develop these as a challenge to the view on social resistance in their response. This meant that most candidates did not achieve Level 3 because they did not make clear why a different explanation of deviant behaviour was a challenge to the view. In other words, very few directly evaluated ideas about social resistance. Many responses gave more than one argument in their answer. In these cases, only one was rewarded.

Section B

Question 4

Effective answers used a range of arguments to shape their essay. Focus was often on the characteristics of youth and older age groups. Many candidates cited cross-cultural variations in role expectations throughout the life course, as well as the actions of the state in social policy and legislation. Many candidates focused on features of each life course stage without showing the relevance to identity and there was often a lack of sociological evidence.

The use of concepts was limited and evaluation was not well developed. Stronger responses were able to consider postmodern views of individualism or views linked to changes to childhood but typically these arguments were delivered through juxtaposition. Many responses outlined alternative identities such as gender, class and ethnicity and simply asserted their greater importance without making any reference to age. These types of arguments received little credit. As such, centres may wish to work on the use of more focused evaluation. The very best responses showed how, for example, age and gender or age and class intersect.

Question 5

Most candidates understood the idea of several interviewees, but often this point was only mentioned briefly and the responses were general discussions of the strengths and limitations of interviews, with little reference to the group element. Some candidates mistakenly argued that group interviews could be structured or unstructured, though most understood that they were likely to be unstructured or semi-structured and produce qualitative data. Those who did focus on the group element mentioned issues such as 'group-think' and referred to strengths and limitations of having other participants present, but many points made lacked sociological content. 'Reliability' and 'validity' were often mixed up or used together, suggesting limited understanding of the terms.

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Paper 9699/13
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Research

Key messages

- High scoring answers included good use of applied empirical support.
- There was sound knowledge of sociological methods especially in **Question 5**.
- There was a deficit in knowledge in relation to understanding how education contributes to the process of socialising class identity in **Question 3(a)**.
- Improving observance of the examination's rubric in **Section A** but some candidates need to adhere more closely to the requirements of **2(a)**.
- To achieve full marks in **Question 3(a)**, candidates need to provide two clear and developed points. A number of candidates only provided one point.
- In **Section B Question 5** there was a notable lack of balance between supporting and evaluating arguments.

General comments

The standard of responses overall was variable. In **Section A** most candidates were able to give two features of laboratory experiments for **Question 1**. **Question 2** required methodological knowledge. In **2(a)** most candidates were aware that questionnaires are a reliable research method, although 'reliability' and 'validity' were often mixed up, suggesting a lack of understanding. In **Question 2(b)** there was evidence of a reasonably good knowledge base, although overt and covert participant observations were often confused. Centres should note that the marks for **Question 2** are accumulated on a points-based approach and it is important to follow the rubric as shown in the mark scheme to achieve high marks for these questions. In **Question 3(a)**, many candidates were aware of the role of education as a socialising agent but not clear about how it affected class identity. Many responses made only one point in explaining the view. In **Question 3(b)** very few candidates directly evaluated the proposition, instead simply asserting an alternative point of view.

Question 4 was the less popular question in **Section B**. The strongest responses were balanced essays supported by sociological evidence. Most candidates were able to produce evaluation points but they were much less certain with arguments supporting the view. This left many responses unbalanced which affected the marks awarded. **Question 5** provoked many good responses and most candidates were able to show sound knowledge and understanding of the impact of theoretical factors on the choice of research method.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates were able to identify two features of a laboratory experiment. Many referred to the idea that laboratory experiments take place in artificial or closed environments, also popular was the ability of researchers to manipulate variables. Many candidates were able to develop at least one of these points successfully. Less effective answers were often somewhat generic and developed in a way that could have been applicable to other quantitative methods. Candidates are only required to describe in this question, there is no need to explain or define.

Question 2

- (a) Many candidates produced fairly good answers to this question. Popular reasons included: questionnaires can be completed without a researcher present and respondents are asked the same questions in the same order. The most successful responses clearly identified a reason, explained it, selected relevant sociological material, and then showed how the material supported the point. Less effective answers took a scattergun approach and did not explicitly identify and explain two reasons as required by the question, instead making a range of separate points. A number of candidates repeated their identified point when showing how their selected material supported the reason, hence losing the last available mark. 'Reliability' and 'validity' were often mixed up or used together, suggesting limited understanding of the terms.
- (b) This question was reasonably well answered by candidates. Most were able to provide two strengths of overt participant observation. A fairly narrow range of answers were given with most centring around ethical issues such as consent, or practical ones such as taking notes as well as the option to ask questions. Most of the responses that correctly identified strengths were able to gain at least two marks per point made. Less successful responses highlighted the strengths of participant observation in general without addressing the overt dimension directly. Others confused 'overt' with 'covert'. A recurring feature of responses that achieved 3 or 4 marks was that points were not developed to show why their identified point was a limitation. Candidates might benefit from concluding their answer with a statement such as 'this is a strength/limitation because...' taking care to avoid repetition of their original point.

Question 3

- (a) Few candidates produced strong answers to this question. Many responses outlined the role of education as an agent of socialisation but did not link this knowledge to how the processes within education shape class identity. Many candidates focused their attention on the role played by family factors rather than on education while others drew attention to class and achievement. Both of these approaches had limited relevance to the question. A number of responses looked at relevant concepts such as the hidden curriculum but did not apply this to the issue of class identity. Many candidates only made one point in their response and very few candidates reached the higher levels. To achieve full marks, candidates need to provide two clear and developed points. If these points clearly address the question and are supported by reference to relevant concepts, theories and evidence, a response can achieve 10 marks.
- (b) Responses to this question were better than for **3(a)**. The most common approach was to pose an alternative agent of socialisation as a more important influence, typically this was the family. A number of candidates argued that education is not an influence on class identity, as lower-class students do not flourish in education. Very few directly evaluated the proposition that education is the most important influence, instead simply asserting an alternative point of view. A number of responses gave more than one argument in their answer. In these cases, only one was rewarded.

Section B

Question 4

The strongest responses referred to arguments outlining the persistence of ethnic identities in traditional societies, often making links to religion as a driver for maintaining identity. Ideas and evidence of cultural resistance/defence were also outlined. Typically, candidates were more comfortable when considering arguments against the view. Good answers linked globalisation, immigration and increased consumerism to the question, but many did not apply these concepts very well. Cultural hybridity featured in most responses, although it was often conflated with mixed race relationships. A number of candidates evaluated in terms of changing gender identities but this was often not relevant to the question. These types of arguments received little credit. As such, centres may wish to work on the use of more focused evaluation.

Question 5

Responses to this question were stronger than those for **Question 4**. Most candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge of theoretical factors and their impact on choice of research method. Those candidates who understood the difference between theoretical, ethical, and practical factors were able to use this knowledge to produce good accounts with some relevant examples given. These responses typically outlined positivist and interpretivist accounts, although feminism and realism also featured.

Some less successful responses were unclear about what constituted a theoretical factor, and the most common error was to outline methodological concepts such as ‘validity’, ‘reliability’ and ‘representativeness’ without making direct links to theoretical perspectives. Some unfocused answers moved into long descriptions of the suitability of different methods, rather than a comparison of theoretical factors to other influences. Most were able to list some different factors in juxtaposition, with fully developed evaluation absent in many cases.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/21
The Family

Key messages

- Where handwriting is a concern, schools, where possible, should support candidates with access to laptops/computers to type exam responses.
- Candidates should ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination – familiarisation through use of past exam papers/mark schemes would be beneficial.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read through the questions and highlight/underline key words.
- Candidates need to focus responses on the context of **the family**, as this is the unit focus.
- More successful responses applied relevant sociological theories, concepts, and research to demonstrate sociological knowledge and understanding.
- Candidates should ensure essay responses **Question 4, Question 5** engage with competing views, looking at different sides of the issue in the question and apply relevant sociological material.
- Candidates need to ensure responses reflect marks available (*see comments below*)
- Teachers/candidates should use the mark schemes as teaching and learning tools, particularly for **2(b)**.
- Teachers should provide learners with activities encouraging point development and explicit evaluation.

General comments

Overall, very few candidates achieved in the higher marks, with the majority demonstrating limited sociological knowledge and understanding and limited skills of application and analysis. A significant number of candidates relied on common sense/anecdotal evidence. Many candidates appeared unprepared for the demands of particular questions.

The more successful candidates produced responses that reflected the requirements of the question and applied relevant sociological material to support their responses. Candidate responses that achieved lower marks tended not to answer the question set, and/or tended to be descriptive, lacking an application of relevant sociological material in providing evidence of analysis and assessment. These often relied more on common sense/general knowledge. The extended writing questions were excellent discriminators for candidates to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding (AO1), interpretation and application (AO2), and analysis and evaluation (AO3). However, few candidates explicitly evaluated the question, often relying on juxtaposition of opposing points. Some candidates did not provide a response that addressed contrasting sides of the debate, providing one-sided responses.

The majority of candidates were able to name relevant sociological concepts/studies; less successful candidates did not **apply** these to develop their response, often relying on simply stating them or defining/describing them rather than applying them in a way that engages with the question. This was particularly noticeable within essay responses **Question 4, Question 5** and **3(a), 3(b)**. Any rubric errors tended to occur within **Questions 2(a)** and **3(b)**, whereby candidates provided more points than were required.

In general, candidates need to be more aware of their use of time reflecting the marks available. For example, in **Question 1** lengthy introductions and conclusions are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions. The majority of candidates answered the questions in order; some perhaps could have benefitted from answering the essay first.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

There were a small number of candidates who did not provide an answer to this question. However, most candidates were able to identify two features. The most common responses included *performs domestic chores/such as cooking and cleaning... performs nurturing role/emotional support for children/cares for the children/feeds them...* Other common responses included primary socialisation and caregiver.

Less successful candidates did not provide relevant descriptions of the identified feature (either too vague, repetition of the feature e.g. *a feature is taking care of the children/making sure the children are taken care of*, or simply did not provide one), or gave just one feature rather than two.

The concept of *expressive role* is core to the functionalist view of the family (alongside instrumental role). A significant number of candidates demonstrated no understanding of this, providing incorrect responses such as, *expressing themselves against their exploitation... that one is expected to take care of themselves... people who know what they want...* There were also instances of candidates describing the instrumental role, such as *the breadwinner*, which was incorrect.

There were a few examples of candidate responses containing introductions and conclusions, as well as definitions of the nuclear family. These are not required.

Note: Candidates should be encouraged to structure their **Question 1** responses as two bullet points or numbered 1/2, avoiding introductions and unnecessarily lengthy answers. Provide just the two responses required.

Question 2

(a) The majority of candidates were able to provide at least one relevant reason with appropriate explanation. Many candidates provided two ways. Candidates should be encouraged to construct their responses in a clear and structured way:

- *Identified point*
- *Point then explained*
- *Relevant supporting sociological material (e.g. concept, study, social policy, theoretical approach)*
- *Application of this material to demonstrate the original point.*

It would be beneficial for candidates to adopt this approach as it would help focus their response.

Common valid responses included...*decline of religious influence...change in social attitudes towards marriage...improved financial independence of women...fear of divorce...higher expectations of marriage/use as a trial.*

The more successful responses clearly demonstrated two reasons, supported by the application of appropriate sociological material. Where sociological material was used in support, it tended to rely on *secularisation* and/or *Equal Pay Act*. However, few responses included this as most candidates relied on common sense rather than a demonstration of sociological awareness. This subsequently limited the marks awardable.

Some points made were not clearly expressed, but demonstrated a hint of relevance, so were awarded marks through benefit of doubt, for example, *less pressures...* (suggesting changes in social/family attitudes to get married). However, some responses were too vague to award, such as *cohabitation is easier*. Some incorrect responses included, for example, discussing women living alone. A small number of candidates discussed reasons for divorce.

To improve, candidates need to support points using appropriate sociological material e.g. concepts, studies, relevant sociologists etc. and apply these in demonstrating the original point made. Candidates wasted valuable time providing lengthy introductions, conclusions, and

definitions of cohabitation – these are not required. Candidates occasionally provided more than the two reasons required.

Note: *Candidates should be encouraged to structure responses as two separate paragraphs identified as 'The first.... The second....' for clarity and only provide the two points required.*

- (b) Candidates in general appeared unprepared for the demands of this question, showing little understanding of postmodernist views of the family. Those candidates who did gain marks here, tended to rely on the more obvious *they acknowledge family diversity*.

Common errors candidates made included: discussing/confusing with functionalism, New Right or liberal feminism; discussing within the context of society rather than within the family; making statements that are inaccurate, such as...*children are no longer forced to do what they don't want... recognises that education socialises children*; reflecting a consequence of family diversity or post-modern times rather than demonstrating a strength of postmodernist views of the family. For example, saying *it gives people choice* is not a strength of postmodernism, rather it reflects changing laws and social attitudes, and *postmodern families do not have to suffer criticism* – this is not a strength of postmodern views of the family, rather a positive consequence of changing social attitudes towards family diversity.

Note: *Candidates would benefit from using the mark schemes to create a table of strengths and limitations of the key theoretical stances in relation to the family during their studies, to aid their learning and revision.*

Centres should encourage candidates to adopt a clear and structured approach to answering **2(b)**: *A strength / limitation is.... / X have this as a strength / limitation because they... / This is a strength / limitation because...*

Question 3

- (a) The common approach to this question was to use concepts of *symmetrical family* and *New Man*, as well as *the increase in women entering the workforce*. The more successful responses applied these, discussing their impact to create a developed point. However, there was a tendency for candidates to not elaborate, for example, discussing what has changed/led to the 'New Man' to subsequently then lead to domestic labour being shared. Rather, they relied on simple statements such as *the new man is prepared to do more tasks considered the woman's job such as cooking... or women are now allowed to have a career...*

Given that there are **10 marks** available and to get into the top band, candidates need to have at least one developed point (plus other points), candidates must move beyond making simple statements/points and look to develop the point they are making.

Less successful points made included, for example, *men and women share domestic labour to save their marriage...* whilst points considered too vague to award included, for example, *due to globalisation men can now change diapers*. Examples of irrelevant points made included *single parents take on both roles*. There were also some responses which focused too much on how things traditionally used to be, with little attention paid to equality in domestic labour now being achieved.

Note: *a small number of candidates wasted time providing an unnecessary evaluation of the claim. Evaluation/counter argument is not a requirement of the question (they do this in 3(b)). Furthermore, lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of the nuclear family are unnecessary, and candidates should be discouraged from doing this on this question.*

- (b) There were a small number of candidates who provided no response to this question. Common responses tended to discuss the impact of *patriarchy, dual burden/triple shift*. Weaker responses included those stating that functionalists believe men *should* be the instrumental and women the expressive role – this is not the same as providing evidence to show this still exists/is the dominant dynamic. Other weaker responses discussed oppression of women with no reference to the context of domestic labour.

Irrelevant responses included those that discussed inequality in the workplace, single parents can't share roles, and those that made incorrect statements such as, radical feminists believe women should do all the housework and only men should go to work.

Note: *a small number of candidates wasted time by providing more than one argument against the claim, using up time that could be useful elsewhere.*

Section B

Question 4

More candidates opted to answer this question over **Question 5**, though a small number of candidates attempted to answer both **Question 4** and **Question 5**. Responses very much relied on common sense/anecdotal evidence, with little sociological material used to support claims made, therefore affecting AO2 marks. Where sociological material was applied/attempted, this tended to be *new man/dad, super dad, socialisation* and the occasional social policy, whilst a very small number of responses referenced *Arfini*. These tended to be the strongest responses made.

Note: *there was an over reliance on 'new man' – this concept can apply to men in a relationship without children, so new dad/super dad would have been more relevant.*

Common answers were *loss of functions*, especially socialisation to other agencies, e.g. school, media, peers, with the common counter argument being that actually most *primary socialisation* is still performed by the parents. Other common responses included *mothers are now in paid work and dads are more involved in childcare*.

Weaker responses included those discussing women/men rather than mothers/fathers, what parents do for their children with no context of change/not changed, and those discussing lives/roles of children rather than roles of parents. Occasionally, responses included the dominance/popularity/decline of the nuclear family. Other less successful arguments against included fulfilling stabilisation of adult personalities – this does not necessarily apply to parents, rather adults in a relationship, and simply discussing the role of parents / what parents should do, without addressing the specifics of the question.

Many candidates only examined one side of the debate, whilst those who did examine both sides tended to rely on juxtaposition of points rather than explicit evaluation.

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

Question 5

Fewer candidates answered this question than **Question 4**, but this was generally the stronger answered of the two essay questions. Stronger responses applied and discussed specific examples of policies, e.g. Divorce Reform Act, Equal Pay Act, or the New Right with regards to welfare. Less successful responses did not use specific policies/sociological supporting evidence, relying on common-sense/general knowledge.

Most candidates examined alternative reasons for the decline in the nuclear family, commonly *secularisation, changing social attitudes*, whilst a minority of others took an alternative approach in discussing how social policies have not led to a decline of the nuclear family, which is valid. In their counter argument, very few candidates looked at how social policies encouraged the nuclear family rather than led to its decline.

Weaker answers included those that discussed the role/functions of the nuclear family, rather than the context of the decline of it. Some responses turned this into a discussion of whether the nuclear family was the most common or not, with no context of social policies. Other examples include discussing why family diversity is not desirable/the consequences of it.

Some candidates demonstrated a lack of understanding of what the term 'social policies' means, referring to, for example, social norms, social problems or that feminism/the New Right is a social policy. A small number of candidates only examined one side of the debate.

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

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/22
The Family

Key messages

- Where handwriting is a concern, schools, where possible, should support candidates with access to laptops/computers to type exam responses.
- Candidates should ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination – familiarisation through use of past exam papers/mark schemes would be beneficial.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read through the questions and highlight/underline key words.
- Candidates need to focus responses on the context of **the family**, as this is the unit focus.
- More successful responses applied relevant sociological theories, concepts, and research to demonstrate sociological knowledge and understanding.
- Candidates should ensure essay responses **Question 4, Question 5** engage in competing views, looking at different sides of the issue in the question and apply relevant sociological material.
- Candidates need to ensure responses reflect marks available (*see comments below*)
- Teachers need to do more to prepare candidates for the demands of **Question 2(b)**.
- Teachers should provide learners with activities encouraging point development and explicit evaluation.

General comments

Overall, there was a range of candidate performance with some demonstrating very good comprehension of both the requirements of the questions and the sociological knowledge and understanding to answer them effectively. The **more successful** candidates responded to question prompts appropriately, and produced responses that reflected the requirements of the question and applied relevant sociological material to support and develop their responses. Candidate responses that achieved lower marks tended not to answer the question set, and/or tended to be descriptive, lacking an application of relevant sociological material in providing evidence of analysis and assessment. These responses often relied more on common sense/general knowledge.

The extended writing questions were excellent discriminators for candidates to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding (AO1), interpretation and application (AO2), and analysis and evaluation (AO3). However, few candidates explicitly evaluated the question, often relying on juxtaposition of opposing points. Unfortunately, some candidates failed to provide a response that addressed contrasting sides of the debate, providing one-sided responses.

The majority of candidates were able to name relevant sociological concepts/studies; less successful candidates did not **apply** these to develop their response, often relying on simply stating them or defining/describing them rather than applying them in a way that engages with the question. This was particularly noticeable within essay responses **Question 4, Question 5**. Any rubric errors tended to occur within **Questions 2(a)** and **3(b)**, whereby candidates provided more points than were required.

In general, candidates need to be more aware of their use of time reflecting the marks available. For example, in **Question 1** lengthy introductions and conclusions are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions. The majority of candidates answered the questions in order; some perhaps could have benefitted from answering the essay first.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The majority of candidates adopted a functionalist approach in answering this question, commonly *primary socialisation* and *stabilisation of adult personalities*. A small number took a more Marxist approach e.g. *socialise children into ruling class ideology/to be docile workers*, along with occasional generic/common sense answers such as, *to care for children* or *teach right from wrong*.

Whilst most candidates were able to successfully identify two functions and describe them, there were some who only identified the function, failing to give the description and thus limiting the number of marks that could be awarded. Additionally, there were examples of repetition/not providing a relevant description, for example, *primary socialisation... a function of the family is primary socialisation*. There were a very small number of candidates who gave irrelevant responses, such as *the family has the instrumental and expressive roles* (these are not functions), or who simply listed different family types.

Note: Candidates should be encouraged to structure their **Question 1** responses as two bullet points or numbered 1/2. Avoid introductions and unnecessarily lengthy answers. Provide just the two responses required.

Question 2

(a) The majority of candidates were able to provide at least one relevant reason with appropriate explanation. Many candidates were able to provide two reasons. Candidates should be encouraged to construct their responses in a clear and structured way:

- *Identified point*
- *Point then explained*
- *Relevant supporting sociological material (e.g. concept, study, social policy, theoretical approach)*
- *Application of this material to demonstrate the original point.*

It would be beneficial for candidates to adopt this approach as it would help focus their response.

Common valid responses included...*decline of religious influence...decline in stigma towards divorce...improved financial independence of women...changes in laws*. More successful responses clearly demonstrated two reasons, supported by the application of appropriate sociological material, commonly *secularisation, Equal Pay Act, Divorce Reform Act*.

Less successful responses did not support points with sociological material, thus limiting the marks available to them. Some candidates discussed reasons for not marrying, as well as simply providing reasons for why people divorce. This is not the same as recognising something has changed to cause an increase in divorce. Occasionally, there were answers such as *it is easier to get one now*, or *it is cheaper*, which is too vague to award – why/how is it easier/cheaper?

To improve, candidates need to support points using appropriate sociological material e.g. concepts, studies, policies, relevant sociologists, etc. and apply these in demonstrating the original point made. Too often, candidates wasted valuable time providing lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of divorce and even negative consequences of divorce – **these are not required**. Candidates occasionally provided more than the two reasons required which wasted valuable time.

Note: Candidates should be encouraged to structure responses as two separate paragraphs identified as 'The first... The second....' for clarity and only provide the two points required.

(b) There were a relatively small number of candidates who did not provide an answer to this question. Generally speaking, performance here was mixed. Very few candidates achieved the full marks available to them. Where candidates did identify relevant limitations, these commonly were *they fail to acknowledge the dark side of the family...too ethnocentric/focuses on the experiences of white middle-class women*. It appears that knowledge of liberal feminism amongst some candidates is

very limited. Common errors made included discussing strengths of liberal feminism; confusing with/discussing strengths of Marxist/radical feminism; discussing within the context of society/ workplace rather than family or stating what liberal feminists believe in/think, without actually addressing the limitations. Another common error candidates made was in providing responses such as: *a limitation is there is an increase in divorce... or has led to the breaking up of the family* – these are not limitations of liberal feminism, rather they are a possible consequence of liberal feminist views being increasingly taken up by women.

A fairly common response to this question provided a valid limitation and explained why it is a limitation, but failed to address what it is *about* liberal feminism that leads them to have the limitation. Also, at times, limitations/points made relied on being awarded through benefit of doubt, as they were unclear or hinted at a valid response. There were examples of candidates only making one attempt to provide a limitation rather than the two required.

Note: *Candidates would benefit from using the mark schemes to create a table of strengths and limitations of the key theoretical stances in relation to the family during their studies, to aid their learning and revision.*

Centres should encourage candidates to adopt a clear and structured approach to answering **2(b)**:
A strength / limitation is.... / X have this as a strength / limitation because they... / This is a strength / limitation because...

Question 3

- (a) This was generally well answered, with the common approach to this question being to discuss *increased family diversity* and how *other social institutions are taking over roles of the family*. *Changes in lives of women/women focusing on careers and therefore not wanting to start a nuclear family* was another fairly popular approach. Most candidates provided at least two points, however there were those who only provided one (mainly increased family diversity), thus limiting the marks available to them. Very simple responses included, *there are more family types today...there is an increase in divorce*, with little/no development of discussion.

Given that there are **10 marks** available and to get into the top band, the candidate needs to have at least one developed point (plus other points), candidates must move beyond making simple statements/points and look to develop the point being made.

There were examples of candidates who gave descriptions/definitions of or what functionalists think about the nuclear family. These are unnecessary. Common errors in candidate responses included: Criticising the nuclear family – this is not the same as evidencing that it has lost its social importance; providing historical descriptions of how the nuclear family replaced the extended family without actually addressing the question; discussing why the nuclear family is the best family type or why it is important; explaining why single parents are dysfunctional/considered wrong by the New Right or considering the role of the family according to Marxism.

Other incorrect responses included discussing the transition from extended family to nuclear, resulting in a loss of functions. This is not answering the question; this type of response is showing *the extended family has lost its social importance*. A few candidates demonstrated a lack of knowledge and understanding of what the nuclear family is e.g. confusing it with 3 generational extended family.

Note: *a small number of candidates wasted time providing an unnecessary evaluation of the claim. Evaluation/counter argument is not a requirement of this question (they do this in 3(b)). Furthermore, lengthy introductions and conclusions are unnecessary, and candidates should be discouraged from doing this on this question.*

- (b) There were a small number of candidates who provided no response to this question, or who continued to discuss how the nuclear family had lost its social importance, which was more relevant to **Question 3(a)**. Common responses to this question tended to focus on how the nuclear family is important for carrying out important functions for society (Murdock/Parsons/Fletcher). Occasionally, candidates would take a more Marxist/ serving capitalism approach.

Given that **6 marks** are available here, some of the candidates' responses were very brief, often lacking explanation/development. For example, simply stating *the nuclear family is the most common...* or stated functions the nuclear family performs e.g., *primary socialisation*, without actually demonstrating how this shows social importance. Other, weaker responses focused more on the individual's importance rather than social, or critiqued family diversity, again without actually addressing the social importance of the nuclear family.

Note: *a small number of candidates wasted time by providing more than one argument against the claim, using up time that could be useful elsewhere.*

Section B

Question 4

This question was considerably more popular than **Question 5**, however, generally speaking, very few candidates were successful in answering this question appropriately. The large majority of those who answered **Question 4** did not recognise/understand the context of **power**, rather, they simply discussed the division of labour/different roles undertaken by men, women, children and grandparents in the family, in creating inequality, without connecting to power dynamics – inequality in roles is not necessarily the same as inequality in power.

Of the more successful responses, these tended to provide stronger counter arguments than supporting arguments, such as the existence of *domestic abuse* and *men continue to dominate the decision making*. Occasionally, a candidate would discuss the power inequality between parents and children (*age patriarchy*), but this was rare.

A common approach by candidates was to make vague, unexplained points, making assumptions about how men undertaking more housework/child caring means power is equally shared. For example, *the development of the new man/new dad has led to a sharing of power...How?* The sharing of childcare or men doing more cooking/cleaning does not intrinsically mean power is shared, rather it simply means domestic tasks are becoming more shared – there is a difference. Other assumptions included: *in same sex families, power is shared equally...women now also work therefore power is shared equally...* without any attempt to provide an explanation or supporting evidence to back up the claim. Simply stating that power is shared equally, is just repeating the question. The candidate needed to actually *demonstrate* that power is equally shared.

Less relevant responses tended to be those that discussed within the context of school or the workplace, rather than the family, or discussed why there *should* be equality of power in the family. There were a few examples of candidates just writing everything they knew about different branches of feminism, or the functions of the family, without any attempt to connect this to answering the question of power sharing.

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

Question 5

Fewer candidates answered this question than **Question 4**, and commonly applied *influence of media (Postman)*, *child-centredness and examples of social policies (Hecht)*. However, a large number of candidates relied on common sense/anecdotal evidence. Examples of weaker responses included those that focused too heavily on descriptive, historic accounts of how childhood was in the past, with little discussion/assessment of there being a change or not. Less relevant responses included those that discussed how childhood *should* be.

There was some tendency for candidates to use Malinowski's Trobriand study to illustrate a contemporary context. However, as this work is over 100 years old, it is of no relevance in this context. There were also a number of candidates using the concept of *helicopter parenting* to illustrate that parents are not involved with their children/not paying any attention to them. This is incorrect, as helicopter parents *are over-involved in their child's life* (links with increased child-centredness). A small number of candidates only examined one side of the debate.

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

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/23
The Family

Key messages

- Where handwriting is a concern, schools, where possible, should support candidates with access to laptops/computers to type exam responses.
- Candidates should ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination – familiarisation through use of past exam papers/mark schemes would be beneficial.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read through the questions and highlight/underline key words.
- Candidates need to focus responses on the context of **the family**, as this is the unit focus.
- More successful responses applied relevant sociological theories, concepts, and research to demonstrate sociological knowledge and understanding.
- Candidates should ensure essay responses **Question 4, Question 5** engage with competing views, looking at different sides of the issue in the question and apply relevant sociological material.
- Candidates need to ensure responses reflect marks available (*see comments below*)
- Teachers/candidates should use the mark schemes as teaching and learning tools, particularly for **2(b)**.
- Teachers should provide learners with activities encouraging point development and explicit evaluation.

General comments

Overall, very few candidates achieved in the higher marks, with the majority demonstrating limited sociological knowledge and understanding and limited skills of application and analysis. A significant number of candidates relied on common sense/anecdotal evidence. Many candidates appeared unprepared for the demands of particular questions.

The more successful candidates produced responses that reflected the requirements of the question and applied relevant sociological material to support their responses. Candidate responses that achieved lower marks tended not to answer the question set, and/or tended to be descriptive, lacking an application of relevant sociological material in providing evidence of analysis and assessment. These often relied more on common sense/general knowledge. The extended writing questions were excellent discriminators for candidates to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding (AO1), interpretation and application (AO2), and analysis and evaluation (AO3). However, few candidates explicitly evaluated the question, often relying on juxtaposition of opposing points. Some candidates did not provide a response that addressed contrasting sides of the debate, providing one-sided responses.

The majority of candidates were able to name relevant sociological concepts/studies; less successful candidates did not **apply** these to develop their response, often relying on simply stating them or defining/describing them rather than applying them in a way that engages with the question. This was particularly noticeable within essay responses **Question 4, Question 5** and **3(a), 3(b)**. Any rubric errors tended to occur within **Questions 2(a)** and **3(b)**, whereby candidates provided more points than were required.

In general, candidates need to be more aware of their use of time reflecting the marks available. For example, in **Question 1** lengthy introductions and conclusions are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions. The majority of candidates answered the questions in order; some perhaps could have benefitted from answering the essay first.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

There were a small number of candidates who did not provide an answer to this question. However, most candidates were able to identify two features. The most common responses included *performs domestic chores/such as cooking and cleaning... performs nurturing role/emotional support for children/cares for the children/feeds them...* Other common responses included primary socialisation and caregiver.

Less successful candidates did not provide relevant descriptions of the identified feature (either too vague, repetition of the feature e.g. *a feature is taking care of the children/making sure the children are taken care of*, or simply did not provide one), or gave just one feature rather than two.

The concept of *expressive role* is core to the functionalist view of the family (alongside instrumental role). A significant number of candidates demonstrated no understanding of this, providing incorrect responses such as, *expressing themselves against their exploitation... that one is expected to take care of themselves... people who know what they want...* There were also instances of candidates describing the instrumental role, such as *the breadwinner*, which was incorrect.

There were a few examples of candidate responses containing introductions and conclusions, as well as definitions of the nuclear family. These are not required.

Note: Candidates should be encouraged to structure their **Question 1** responses as two bullet points or numbered 1/2, avoiding introductions and unnecessarily lengthy answers. Provide just the two responses required.

Question 2

(a) The majority of candidates were able to provide at least one relevant reason with appropriate explanation. Many candidates provided two ways. Candidates should be encouraged to construct their responses in a clear and structured way:

- *Identified point*
- *Point then explained*
- *Relevant supporting sociological material (e.g. concept, study, social policy, theoretical approach)*
- *Application of this material to demonstrate the original point.*

It would be beneficial for candidates to adopt this approach as it would help focus their response.

Common valid responses included...*decline of religious influence...change in social attitudes towards marriage...improved financial independence of women...fear of divorce...higher expectations of marriage/use as a trial.*

The more successful responses clearly demonstrated two reasons, supported by the application of appropriate sociological material. Where sociological material was used in support, it tended to rely on *secularisation* and/or *Equal Pay Act*. However, few responses included this as most candidates relied on common sense rather than a demonstration of sociological awareness. This subsequently limited the marks awardable.

Some points made were not clearly expressed, but demonstrated a hint of relevance, so were awarded marks through benefit of doubt, for example, *less pressures...* (suggesting changes in social/family attitudes to get married). However, some responses were too vague to award, such as *cohabitation is easier*. Some incorrect responses included, for example, discussing women living alone. A small number of candidates discussed reasons for divorce.

To improve, candidates need to support points using appropriate sociological material e.g. concepts, studies, relevant sociologists etc. and apply these in demonstrating the original point made. Candidates wasted valuable time providing lengthy introductions, conclusions, and

definitions of cohabitation – these are not required. Candidates occasionally provided more than the two reasons required.

Note: *Candidates should be encouraged to structure responses as two separate paragraphs identified as 'The first.... The second....' for clarity and only provide the two points required.*

- (b) Candidates in general appeared unprepared for the demands of this question, showing little understanding of postmodernist views of the family. Those candidates who did gain marks here, tended to rely on the more obvious *they acknowledge family diversity*.

Common errors candidates made included: discussing/confusing with functionalism, New Right or liberal feminism; discussing within the context of society rather than within the family; making statements that are inaccurate, such as...*children are no longer forced to do what they don't want... recognises that education socialises children*; reflecting a consequence of family diversity or post-modern times rather than demonstrating a strength of postmodernist views of the family. For example, saying *it gives people choice* is not a strength of postmodernism, rather it reflects changing laws and social attitudes, and *postmodern families do not have to suffer criticism* – this is not a strength of postmodern views of the family, rather a positive consequence of changing social attitudes towards family diversity.

Note: *Candidates would benefit from using the mark schemes to create a table of strengths and limitations of the key theoretical stances in relation to the family during their studies, to aid their learning and revision.*

Centres should encourage candidates to adopt a clear and structured approach to answering **2(b)**: *A strength / limitation is.... / X have this as a strength / limitation because they... / This is a strength / limitation because...*

Question 3

- (a) The common approach to this question was to use concepts of *symmetrical family* and *New Man*, as well as *the increase in women entering the workforce*. The more successful responses applied these, discussing their impact to create a developed point. However, there was a tendency for candidates to not elaborate, for example, discussing what has changed/led to the 'New Man' to subsequently then lead to domestic labour being shared. Rather, they relied on simple statements such as *the new man is prepared to do more tasks considered the woman's job such as cooking... or women are now allowed to have a career...*

Given that there are **10 marks** available and to get into the top band, candidates need to have at least one developed point (plus other points), candidates must move beyond making simple statements/points and look to develop the point they are making.

Less successful points made included, for example, *men and women share domestic labour to save their marriage...* whilst points considered too vague to award included, for example, *due to globalisation men can now change diapers*. Examples of irrelevant points made included *single parents take on both roles*. There were also some responses which focused too much on how things traditionally used to be, with little attention paid to equality in domestic labour now being achieved.

Note: *a small number of candidates wasted time providing an unnecessary evaluation of the claim. Evaluation/counter argument is not a requirement of the question (they do this in 3(b)). Furthermore, lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of the nuclear family are unnecessary, and candidates should be discouraged from doing this on this question.*

- (b) There were a small number of candidates who provided no response to this question. Common responses tended to discuss the impact of *patriarchy, dual burden/triple shift*. Weaker responses included those stating that functionalists believe men *should* be the instrumental and women the expressive role – this is not the same as providing evidence to show this still exists/is the dominant dynamic. Other weaker responses discussed oppression of women with no reference to the context of domestic labour.

Irrelevant responses included those that discussed inequality in the workplace, single parents can't share roles, and those that made incorrect statements such as, radical feminists believe women should do all the housework and only men should go to work.

Note: *a small number of candidates wasted time by providing more than one argument against the claim, using up time that could be useful elsewhere.*

Section B

Question 4

More candidates opted to answer this question over **Question 5**, though a small number of candidates attempted to answer both **Question 4** and **Question 5**. Responses very much relied on common sense/anecdotal evidence, with little sociological material used to support claims made, therefore affecting AO2 marks. Where sociological material was applied/attempted, this tended to be *new man/dad, super dad, socialisation* and the occasional social policy, whilst a very small number of responses referenced *Arfini*. These tended to be the strongest responses made.

Note: *there was an over reliance on 'new man' – this concept can apply to men in a relationship without children, so new dad/super dad would have been more relevant.*

Common answers were *loss of functions*, especially socialisation to other agencies, e.g. school, media, peers, with the common counter argument being that actually most *primary socialisation* is still performed by the parents. Other common responses included *mothers are now in paid work and dads are more involved in childcare*.

Weaker responses included those discussing women/men rather than mothers/fathers, what parents do for their children with no context of change/not changed, and those discussing lives/roles of children rather than roles of parents. Occasionally, responses included the dominance/popularity/decline of the nuclear family. Other less successful arguments against included fulfilling stabilisation of adult personalities – this does not necessarily apply to parents, rather adults in a relationship, and simply discussing the role of parents / what parents should do, without addressing the specifics of the question.

Many candidates only examined one side of the debate, whilst those who did examine both sides tended to rely on juxtaposition of points rather than explicit evaluation.

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

Question 5

Fewer candidates answered this question than **Question 4**, but this was generally the stronger answered of the two essay questions. Stronger responses applied and discussed specific examples of policies, e.g. Divorce Reform Act, Equal Pay Act, or the New Right with regards to welfare. Less successful responses did not use specific policies/sociological supporting evidence, relying on common-sense/general knowledge.

Most candidates examined alternative reasons for the decline in the nuclear family, commonly *secularisation, changing social attitudes*, whilst a minority of others took an alternative approach in discussing how social policies have not led to a decline of the nuclear family, which is valid. In their counter argument, very few candidates looked at how social policies encouraged the nuclear family rather than led to its decline.

Weaker answers included those that discussed the role/functions of the nuclear family, rather than the context of the decline of it. Some responses turned this into a discussion of whether the nuclear family was the most common or not, with no context of social policies. Other examples include discussing why family diversity is not desirable/the consequences of it.

Some candidates demonstrated a lack of understanding of what the term 'social policies' means, referring to, for example, social norms, social problems or that feminism/the New Right is a social policy. A small number of candidates only examined one side of the debate.

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

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/31
Education

Key messages

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

General comments

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

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

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

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

Question 3 requires an argument against the given statement. There is no requirement to give points that support the statement.

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

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Good answers were able to identify how schools may be ethnocentric. Popular answers linked to curriculum, teacher labelling and racism. Others discussed language used in schools and some linked to admissions policies. The best answers were then able to describe how this was ethnocentric such as by subjects lacking reference to certain groups and so marginalising them.

Although most candidates were able to use relevant material some did not fully describe points which limited marks. In some cases candidates misunderstood the term and gave answers linked to social class or gender. Some answers gave a definition of the term ethnocentric, rather than an example. Whilst accurate these did not gain marks without a relevant example.

Question 2

Good answers were able to give two relevant ways in which speech codes can affect educational achievement. The best answers linked to restricted and elaborated code and referenced Bernstein. Popular

answers included links to positive or negative labelling by teachers or the problems of understanding class work both spoken or written. Bourdieu was also cited in many answers with links made to habitus or cultural capital.

Some candidates were able to give relevant points and explanations but did not support these with relevant material. This limited their mark to 4. In some cases, candidates misunderstood speech codes and discussed language in general, such as not speaking the correct language.

Question 3

Some candidates found this question challenging.

Good answers were able to give two detailed points showing understanding of how schools may fail to be an effective agency of social control. Popular answers included reference to the existence of anti-school subculture and opportunities for mobility. Material used to support these points included Willis, Hargreaves and Breen. The best answers were able to clearly develop points to show how the evidence illustrated the inability of schools to maintain social control. Other answers used examples of ethnic groups or gender resistance giving material such as Fuller to support their points.

Many candidates did not apply the correct material to this question. Many saw the statement in the question as a Marxist view and gave detailed accounts of functionalists' views in relation to social solidarity or socialisation. These showed some misunderstanding of the requirement of the question as they illustrated education as control rather than an argument against this.

Some candidates did not give arguments against the view but gave lengthy accounts of how education can be an effective agent of social control.

Question 4

Generally, candidates were able to show some understanding of the view in the question. Good answers were able to use a range of points that showed how in-school factors impact on gender differences in achievement. Popular content included subcultures, gendered curriculum and labelling. Good answers used a range of evidence including Francis and Skelton, Loban and Reay. Key concepts such as gendered curriculum, gender stereotyping and feminisation were used appropriately and explained well. The best answers showed depth of understanding of how these views related to the question. Evaluation was given from a range of external factors. Many candidates used examples of home factors and gender socialisation. Wider social changes including employment and occupational opportunities were also used as evaluation.

Although most candidates were able to show some knowledge of in-school factors affecting gender differences in attainment, weaker candidates gave limited depth. Some answers showed a range of brief points on labelling and stereotypes without full development. Weaker answers also lacked explicit evaluation. Other explanations of differences were used and in some cases with some development but without showing how they compared to in-school factors. Centres should encourage candidates to explain how points against a view are different to the view stated in the question.

Mostly material used in answers was relevant, but some candidates drifted from the question to discuss class or ethnicity and achievement. In some cases, this involved material that had limited relevance to the question such as material deprivation.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/32
Education

Key messages

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

General comments

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

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

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

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

Question 3 requires an argument against the given statement. There is no requirement to give points that support the statement.

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

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Good answers were able to identify ways in which education can be a commodity including private schooling and private tuition. The best answers then linked these points to how this might generate private profit, such as by school fees enabling schools to make a profit or private tuition enabling individuals to make a profit by charging for services. Some were not able to fully describe how points linked to private profit but were able to gain marks for identification of relevant points.

Many candidates were confused in relation to this question and discussed marketisation and competition between schools. Other candidates described Marxist or functionalist views of education by linking to education being able to provide skilled workers to make money, showing a lack of understanding of the question. Centres should be clear to differentiate between marketisation and privatisation.

Question 2

Good answers were able to give two relevant reasons why boys may be disadvantaged at school compared to girls. Popular answers included boys' laddish subcultures, teachers' expectations and labelling of boys and feminisation of schools including reference to female role models or methods of study and assessment. The best answers explained these points and gave relevant sociological material to support them. Examples used included studies by Ward or Willis to illustrate boys anti-school subcultures.

Some candidates were able to give relevant points and explanations but did not support these with relevant material. This limits their mark to 4. In some cases, candidates focused on girls' achievement rather than boys' disadvantage. In other cases, answers lacked focus on disadvantage in schools and points related to factors external to schools.

Question 3

Good answers were able to give two detailed points showing knowledge of in-school factors that affect the lower attainment of ethnic groups. Answers included reference to ethnocentric curriculum, teacher labelling and to racism in schools. Material used to support these points included Sewell and Gillborn and Youdell. The best answers were able to clearly develop points to show how in-school factors have a greater influence on lower attainment showing a good understanding of the requirements of the question.

Many candidates did not apply material that specifically related to ethnicity. Becker and Rosenthal and Jacobsen were used in relation to labelling, showing general understanding but without being specific to ethnicity. Many candidates chose to discuss material deprivation. Whilst a relevant point this was often weakly linked to ethnic groups, rather candidates wrote a lengthy account of how social class caused lower educational achievement.

Some candidates did not give arguments against the view but gave long accounts of cultural factors that whilst correct in content did not gain credit. In some cases, candidates misunderstood the reference to culture and discussed external cultural factors such as language as a factor that was not linked to culture.

Question 4

Generally, candidates were able to show some understanding of Marxist views of education. Good answers were able to discuss a range of Marxist views including Althusser, Bowles and Gintis and Bourdieu. The best answers linked these explicitly to how education supports the capitalist economic system. Key concepts such as hidden curriculum, ideological state apparatus and cultural reproduction were used appropriately and explained well. The best answers showed depth of understanding of how these views related to the question. Evaluation was given from a range of perspectives. The best answers used a range of perspectives including functionalism as a contrast to Marxism. Good evaluative points demonstrated clear differences between such perspectives. For example, feminism suggesting Marxism ignores education supporting patriarchy or functionalism suggesting that meritocracy does exist in education in contrast to Marxist views of the myth of meritocracy.

Although most candidates were able to show some knowledge of Marxist views, weaker candidates gave limited depth. Some answers showed a range of brief points on Marxist views without full development and without specific links to the question. Weaker answers also lacked explicit evaluation. Other perspectives were used and in some cases with some development but without showing how they compared to Marxist views. Centres should encourage candidates to explain how points against a view are different to the view stated in the question.

Mostly material used in answers was relevant, but some candidates drifted from the question to discuss class and achievement. In some cases, this involved material that had limited relevance to the question such as Bernstein's language codes or evidence of material deprivation.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/33
Education 33

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

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/41
Globalisation, Media, Religion

Key messages

- High quality answers included a sustained evaluation.
- Most candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the issues raised by the questions.
- References to relevant sociological material was absent in some responses.
- Further marks could be gained by referring to relevant sociological theories.
- More use could be made of research evidence to support key points.
- Low scoring answers often relied on assertion and general knowledge rather than relevant sociological material.

General comments

The standard of the scripts overall continues to be high. Good answers combined detailed sociological understanding with sustained evaluation of the issues raised by the question. Use of sociological evidence and theories to support the evaluation was also a feature of high quality responses.

While most candidates demonstrated reasonable knowledge of relevant sociological material, many were less successful in deploying the higher order skills of analysis and evaluation. There were also some responses that included material that was tangential to the question. Many of the answers made good references to sociological theories and concepts, but knowledge of relevant studies and sociological research evidence was often lacking. There continue to be a few candidates who rely on assertion and general knowledge as a basis for their answers. The marks awarded for responses that lack references to appropriate sociological material are inevitably low. It is important therefore that candidates are encouraged to use references to sociological sources in their answers.

Most candidates answered two questions in the time available. Some candidates answered more than two questions, though they appeared to derive no advantage from this strategy in terms of marks achieved. The questions on Religion proved most popular, with those on Globalisation less frequently attempted.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

High scoring responses to this question demonstrated a good understanding of the processes of globalisation and their cultural impact. Theories about cultural convergence were used to support the view expressed in the question and some candidates made good use of examples to illustrate how cultural differences may be disappearing today. Good answers also provided a sustained evaluation of the view expressed in the question.

Debate about whether globalisation has led to greater cultural diversity as opposed to cultural convergence often featured as part of the evaluation. Low scoring answers were limited to a few points about globalisation with little or no reference to cultural effects.

Question 2

There were relatively few answers to this question. Good responses demonstrated a clear understanding of what is meant by global crime and the part that Western exploitation of developing societies might play in the

spread of this type of crime. Support for the view expressed in the question was often provided through discussing examples of global crime that have clear links to exploitation and the growth of global capitalism, such as the drugs trade, people trafficking, sex tourism, and international financial fraud. Some candidates also made good use of examples of environmental crimes and corporate crimes in developing societies to support their analysis. High scoring answers included an evaluation that challenged the view expressed in the question by considering other possible reasons, apart from Western exploitation, for the rise of global crime.

These reasons included the impact of wars and regional conflicts, weakness and corruption in some governments, improvements in global communications and transport networks, and the impact of increasing levels of international migration. Lower scoring answers described some examples of global crime but provided little or no analysis of causal factors.

Section B

Question 3

This was a popular question that was answered well by many of the candidates. Good responses provided a detailed account of evidence and theories supporting the view that the media can shape the way people think and behave. Some candidates made good use of the distinction between direct and indirect models of media effects to structure the discussion. There were some good responses that questioned the validity of the studies that suggest a direct link between media content and influences on social behaviour. Contrasts between the new media and the traditional media also featured in some well-focused responses. Weaker responses often offered an uncritical acceptance of the view expressed in the question, omitting to consider alternative arguments questioning the evidence about media influence on behaviour.

Question 4

There were relatively few responses to this question. Good responses demonstrated a detailed understanding of the view, associated with conflict theories, that the new media is controlled by the rich and powerful. This was complemented by a sustained evaluation, often focusing on the competing claims of different theories of where power lies in relation to the new media. Some candidates made good use of examples to argue that audiences have a lot of control over new media content, linking this insight to the ideas of the digital optimists.

The alternative perspective of the digital pessimists was also reviewed in the best analytical responses. Lower scoring answers were limited to a few basic points about how the new media may reflect the interests of the rich and powerful, with no critical analysis. A few candidates discussed control of the media generally rather than linking the discussion to the new media specifically.

Section C

Question 5

Good responses to this question demonstrated a detailed understanding of the feminist theory that religion supports patriarchal values. High scoring responses included references to a range of feminist theorists and perspectives, along with evidence supporting the view expressed in the question. This was complemented by a sustained evaluation of the strengths and limitations of the feminist view that religion supports patriarchal values. Some candidates made good use of examples to show that the position of women within religious organisations varies between religions and may also have changed over time. Lower scoring responses were limited to a few basic points about how women may be oppressed by religion, with little use of relevant sociological material and analysis. There were a few answers that discussed gender inequality in general rather than focusing on the part that religion may play in female oppression.

Question 6

This was a popular question that was answered well by many of the candidates. Good responses discussed several reasons why religion may have lost social significance today. Links to the secularisation thesis were made in many of the higher scoring answers and evidence from appropriate research studies was used to support the analysis. Strong evaluative responses considered a range of arguments and evidence used to refute the claim that religion has lost social significance today. Lower scoring responses lacked references to relevant sociological material and relied mainly on personal opinion and assertion in answering the question.

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Key messages

- Good knowledge of relevant sociological material demonstrated in many of the scripts.
- Good answers made sustained use of relevant concepts and theories.
- Higher marks could be achieved by including more references to sociological studies.
- Low-scoring responses mostly lacked references to sociological explanations and evidence.
- Some answers lacked understanding of the issues raised by the question.

General comments

The overall standard of the scripts remains high and many candidates succeeded in demonstrating the higher order skills of analysis and evaluation. High scoring responses often included detailed references to relevant sociological theories and studies. Some candidates also made good use of relevant examples to support their answers.

Some responses were too descriptive, relying on a summary of relevant knowledge without providing any related evaluation. Answers in the middle of the mark range often made reasonable points in support of the view stated in the question but omitted to consider possible counter arguments and contrary evidence. To gain high marks for AO3, it is essential to challenge and test the view expressed in the question as part of the process of reaching an overall conclusion about the merits of the stated view. Lower scoring responses lacked references to appropriate sociological material, relying instead on assertion and general knowledge. Some answers addressed the general topic of the question, but neglected the issues raised by the specific wording. Candidates are recommended to make a note of the key terms in the question before starting to answer and then refer back to these terms at regular intervals in the course of the answer.

Examples of rubric error were rare. Failure to reference answers with the appropriate question number occurred in the case of a few scripts. Candidates may disadvantage themselves by omitting the question number or writing the number illegibly, as it can make it difficult for the examiner to identify which question is being attempted.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

High quality responses to this question demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of different explanations of global inequality, with particular reference to the impact of colonialism. Marxist theories of development often featured in support of the view expressed in the question and some candidates made good use of examples of colonial rule to illustrate key points in their argument. The concept of neo-colonialism was also used to extend the analysis in good answers. Evaluation was provided by considering alternative explanations of global inequality, particularly the arguments associated with modernisation theory. Some candidates also questioned the reductionism and over-generalisation in the view that global inequality is best explained in terms of the impact of colonialism. Lower scoring answers were often characterised by a few simple points about global inequality, with no clear reference to colonialism or other concepts that have been used to explain disparities in wealth between countries.

Question 2

There were a few high scoring responses to this question that showed a good understanding of the consequences of global migration for migrant groups specifically. Good answers considered a range of cultural, economic, social, and psychological consequences of migration. Contrasts between the impacts for different migrant groups often featured in the analysis in higher scoring answers. Some candidates included references to studies of migrant workers to illustrate both negative and positive consequences of relocating to another country for employment or other reasons. Weaker responses considered the impact of migration at the societal level rather than focusing on how it affects the migrants specifically. A few candidates discussed only negative consequences of migration and so these answers lacked an evaluation of the view expressed in the question.

Section B

Question 3

Good responses to this question demonstrated a good understanding of the mechanisms through which owners of the media may be able to control media content. The mechanisms cited included the power to hire and fire media employees, agenda setting and gatekeeping, the global scale of media assets today, shared interests and values with editors and journalists, and the power of owners to make policy decisions and set broad editorial guidelines. Marxist theory often featured in the points made in support of the view expressed in the question, but some candidates also made useful references to research studies highlighting the power dynamics within the media that may result in owners exercising considerable control over content. Evaluation often took the form of identifying sources of media influence other than media owners, such as editors and journalists, government agencies, media pressure groups, and audiences. Useful contrasts were often made between the traditional media and the new media in terms of how content is produced and transmitted. Weaker responses often lacked references to sociological material and offered only personal opinion about who is able to control media content.

Question 4

Good answers to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of how the new media can be used to challenge government authority and how this differs from the situation previously where there existed only the traditional media. High scoring responses often mentioned a range of means through which political influence can be exerted using the new media, including online petitions, citizen journalism, celebrity influencers, uncensored communications, discussion groups, and rapid mobilisation of opinion and support. Some candidates made good use of examples of where the new media has been used to challenge government authority to support their answers. Evaluation took the form of questioning the extent to which the new media is a liberating force that enhances the power of the individual citizen to exercise democratic influence. The digital pessimist viewpoint was often used to argue against the view expressed in the question. The scope for governments to control the new media (through banning and censorship, for example) was another line of analysis evident in high scoring responses. Some weaker answers lacked focus on the new media, discussing instead the power of the media in general to challenge government authority.

Section C

Question 5

This question was answered well by candidates who were able to distinguish between theories that emphasise the integrating role of religion in society and those that use a conflict perspective for analysing the impact of religion. Marxist and feminist contributions were often used to support the view expressed in the question. Some candidates also referred to examples of conflicts where religion has been heavily involved as a way of extending their analysis. Evaluation was provided by contrasting the Marxist and feminist perspectives with the functionalist theory of religion. Durkheim's ideas often featured in arguments suggesting that religion helps to unite people in society. The contributions of Parsons, Radcliffe-Browne and Malinowski were also mentioned in some of the responses. There were some lower scoring answers that outlined different theories of religion without linking the material well to debates about how far religion is a source of conflict.

Question 6

This question provided an opportunity for candidates to discuss the view that religious organisations have lost their social significance today. Good answers considered examples of where religious organisations may have exercised social influence in the past, but no longer do so. This included involvement of religious organisations in civic ceremonies, government activities, moral leadership, and social functions such as education and welfare provision. Evaluation was provided by challenging the idea of declining influence and citing examples of where religious organisations still perform important social roles in particular societies. Some candidates also mentioned religious revival and the emergence of new religious movements that may be taking over some or all of the social roles previously performed by established religions. There were quite a few lower scoring answers that sought to make the question into one about the validity of the secularisation thesis. While some of the material covered in these answers had a relevance to the set question, the focus veered towards being a discussion of declining religious belief and practice generally rather than concentrating on the social influence of religious organisations specifically.

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