SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/11
Paper 11

Key messages

- **Question 1(a)** asks candidates to 'identify' information from the source. Advise candidates to select their points directly from the words in the text.
- A good technique for answering **Question 1(c)** is to firstly, identify the point by paraphrasing or using a quotation from the source. For example, 'One reason is that the research was only conducted on 40 people'. Then develop the point briefly. For example, 'This sample is too small to reflect the experiences the billions of internet users around the world'.
- Candidates need to be aware of all primary research methods in the syllabus. For example, candidates should know the strengths and limitations of content analysis as a primary research method.
- Candidates should practice their exam technique for **Question 1(f)**. A minimum of three well developed and conceptual points are required for top band. Moreover, no evaluation is required in this question.
- Topical and up to date examples are always good to see – a minority of candidates mentioned the global pandemic for example. It would be useful to practice linking and applying sociological ideas to news items and current/real life examples.
- Be aware that candidates who use a 'two for and two against' formula for **Questions 1(g)**, **2(e)** and **3(e)** cannot achieve top band where a minimum of six developed points are required in a balanced argument.

General comments

In general, most candidates found the questions accessible and there were very few rubric errors. The different topics covered in the questions offered an opportunity for candidates to display a good knowledge and understanding of core sociological ideas, concepts and theory. In section one many candidates were well placed to answer questions linked to the key strengths and limitations of sociological approaches, methods and data. In both option sections, many candidates demonstrated a generally sound knowledge of the topics and key sociological ideas. Some candidates were able to marshal evidence and develop points in a structured and sometimes insightful way. Knowledge of theory and studies was impressive. Candidates scoring in the lower grade ranges tended to write brief responses that either did not make enough points, or did not develop points sufficiently. Question two was more popular than question three in this session. It was also encouraging to see fewer cases of 'no response'.

Section A

Question 1

(a)   There was a mixed response to this question. Many were able to identify experiments and questionnaires directly from the source, candidates who did not score full marks often cited observation, case study or interview, which were not creditworthy.

(b)   Many candidates identified two correct examples of secondary data that can be used to research the ways that young people use the internet. There were some good examples such as search histories, statistics from media companies as well as previous sociological research on the issue or news articles etc. References which simply stated 'the internet' or primary methods such as case studies or questionnaires were not creditworthy.

(c)   This question about the representativeness of the sampling used in the source drew a good response. Answers demonstrated that most candidates had no difficulty in comprehending source A. Candidates who scored well indicated that they understood the term 'representativeness' and were able to apply it appropriately to the source. Candidates who scored well focused on the small sample size, the disproportionate number of females to males or the fact that these were all

candidates. Only a few answers made generic points rather than relating to the source. A few candidates focused on the findings rather than the sample.

(d) This question asked candidates to describe two strengths of using content analysis as a research method. Very few candidates scored well. Many did not appear to understand what the method involves and hence tried to guess and gave generic answers that were mostly not creditworthy. Better responses referenced the fact that it is a method used to study media content in a quantitative fashion. These candidates were then able to describe the idea that the data can be compared over time and patterns and trends in media use be identified. Others focused on the idea that content analysis has fewer ethical issues than other methods as there are no research participants as such, only media documents, programmes etc.

(e) This question asked candidates to describe two strengths and two weaknesses of semi-structured interviews. The most popular issues for discussion linked to the idea that it is a flexible method allowing for both quantitative and qualitative data, probing and the gaining of rapport leading to depth, detail and increased validity. In terms of limitations, candidates often contrasted with other methods such as the fact that it is more time-consuming than structured interviews or that it offers more reliability than unstructured interviews due to some standardised questions. Other candidates focused on the possibility of an interviewer effect that will decrease validity of data. Some candidates failed to develop points identified. Responses that scored less well focused on issues such as the chance that respondents may lie or that it is a cheap, easy or quick method. These are generic points that are too vague to credit as points specific to semi-structured interviews.

(f) This question asked candidates to explain why sociologists use closed questions in research. Many candidates responded well to the question, and it enabled them to demonstrate good knowledge and understanding. Many candidates were able to make three points here. Frequent responses included the idea that closed questions yield quantitative data that allow for comparisons and thus patterns and trends to be identified. Other good responses explained the link between closed questions and standardised methods such as questionnaires and how these yield data that is high in reliability. Many candidates discussed practical issues such as the fact that closed questions are quicker and more convenient for respondents. Responses that scored less well tended to make fewer accurate points, sometimes conflating closed questions with questionnaires. A small number of responses evaluated the method, which was not creditworthy.

(g) In the essay-style question most candidates showed a sound knowledge of the micro/macro approaches to research and their respective strengths and weaknesses. It was pleasing to see links made to the debate between interpretivist and positivist sociologists. Most candidates were able to give a balanced response. Candidates who scored best identified and developed a range of points both for and against the view, drawing on sociological concepts consistently. Good quality answers used the micro/macro distinction to debate issues such as validity versus reliability, qualitative versus quantitative data and small versus large samples. Some candidates were becoming embroiled in discussions about consensus and conflict approach (including Marxism and feminism) and these were not well linked to the question. Several candidates got the meaning of micro and macro the wrong way round.

Section B

Question 2

(a) This question asked candidates to define the term 'social institutions. Relatively few candidates were unable to give a full sociological definition of the term as parts of society that have their own norms and values; instead, some answers conflated the term with agencies of socialisation. Many responses were able to achieve one mark by giving an example, for example education/schools or the family.

(b) This question asked candidates to describe two ways nature affects human behaviour. The best answers were specific and linked to concepts such as sex/gender or the possibility of a criminal gene or other inherited characteristics. Less successful answers were vague and lacking in sociological focus, but many candidates did score marks for more common-sense answers like reflex actions, hunger etc. affecting behaviour.

(c) This question asked candidates to explain how females are socialised into femininity. Higher scoring responses were able to discuss Oakley's idea of canalisation, manipulation, and verbal

appellation. Other popular answers referred to the hidden curriculum and role modelling. Some candidates did not link back to femininity after describing strategies such as canalisation and hence scored in band 1.

(d) This question required candidates to explain why roles influence an individual's identity. Candidates scored marks for specific familial or job-related roles, and more general gender roles or roles that are influenced by ethnicity. In some cases, candidates did not explain their points well and such answers tended to score in the band 2 due to lack of conceptual engagement or partial development of points made.

(e) In assessing the extent to which age is the most important factor in a person's identity many candidates illustrated sound sociological knowledge and understanding of issues linked to different age groups such as children, youth or the elderly. Good quality responses were able to provide a range of arguments for the view and referenced a variety of points linked to social expectations, stereotypes and labelling, legal responsibilities and rights. In evaluation, many candidates discussed alternative aspects of identity such as social class, gender, religion or ethnicity as being of greater importance. Answers that scored less well usually made two or three arguments that were often only partially developed. Conclusions, where present, often did make a judgement but this was not always well justified using the evidence from candidate answers.

Section C

Question 3

(a) Most candidates were able to define the term 'power' with a fair degree of clarity. Many others achieved partial responses that were somewhat vague in their definition but did manage to give a valid example such as linking it to 'control' or 'authority'.

(b) This question asked candidates to describe two examples of a gendered division of labour. Many achieved full marks by giving direct comparison between jobs that men and women often do. For example, women as housewives and men as breadwinners, vertical segregation with men as 'bosses' and women in subordinate positions, men in manual occupations and women as carers or doing clerical jobs etc. Candidates who score less well often only made one point of comparison. Very few candidates did not know what a gendered division of labour is.

(c) Candidates generally had a good knowledge of how privileged groups maintain their power and status in society. The best responses developed three of more discrete points and including concepts in each point. Some impressive responses referred to Marxist views of exploitation and false consciousness, media brainwashing and the reproduction of class through the old boy network and hidden curriculum in schools. Other candidates discussed gender inequality, or how patriarchy ensures continued male dominance in the workplace. Candidates who scored in band one often identified several points but did not develop them.

(d) Many candidates demonstrated a generally good level of knowledge of poverty and the reasons for it. However, the challenge in the question is the cyclical nature of poverty. Some candidates only partially developed their responses because they neglected this aspect. Popular answers included the dependency culture and its values being instilled into the young, the poverty trap preventing children from escaping the poverty of their parents and the inability to either access education, or good quality education, as a possible route out of poverty.

(e) The essay question asked candidates to discuss the extent to which social classes have changed in modern industrial societies. In higher quality responses, candidates were able to give a full range of developed points, referring to processes such as embourgeoisement, proletarianisation and social mobility. Other candidates discussed the emergence of an underclass with its own distinct culture or the postmodernist idea that consumption patterns are making social class distinctions more blurred. In evaluation many candidates made reference to Marxist arguments and focused on structural barriers such as differential education, the enduring gap between rich and poor and the continuance of distinct class 'cultures' with their own norms and values. As ever with the essay question, the differentiator was number of developed points and the level of conceptuality.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/12
Paper 12

Key messages

- Candidates could improve their exam technique for **Question 1f**. A minimum of three developed and conceptual points are required for top band. Moreover, no evaluation is required in this question.
- Topical and up to date examples are always good to see – a minority of candidates mentioned the global pandemic for example. It would be useful to practice linking and applying sociological ideas to news items and current/real life examples.
- Continue to encourage candidates to avoid lengthy introductions and definitions at the start of their answers.
- Encourage candidates not to conflate the meanings of 'validity' and 'reliability'. The latter concept is particularly difficult for IGCSE candidates. A good strategy is to make it a rule that candidates should not use these two concepts in the same sentence, as they mean quite different things.
- In all extended questions, particularly option **Questions (d)** and **(e)** candidates need to link back to the actual question at the end of their paragraph to ensure that their material is applied correctly to the question as set.

General comments

In general, most candidates found the questions accessible and there were very few rubric errors. The different topics covered in the questions offered an opportunity for candidates to display a good knowledge and understanding of core sociological ideas, concepts and theory. In section one many candidates were well placed to answer questions linked to the key strengths and limitations of sociological approaches, methods and data. In both option sections, many candidates demonstrated a generally sound knowledge of the topics and key sociological ideas. Some candidates were able to marshal evidence and develop points in a structured and sometimes insightful way. Knowledge of theory and studies was impressive. Candidates scoring in the lower grade ranges tended to write brief responses that either did not make enough points, or did not develop points sufficiently. It was also encouraging to see fewer cases of 'no response'.

Section A

Question 1

(a) Almost all candidates achieved both marks on this question and were able to identify two aims of the Islington Crime Survey from the source.

(b) Many candidates were able to identify two correct sampling methods, apart from random sampling. A small number of candidates provided unnecessary extended responses – simply picking out the two aims is sufficient in an 'identify' question.

(c) Answers demonstrated that candidates had no difficulty in comprehending source A. This question drew a mixed response. Candidates who scored well indicated that they understood the term 'validity' and were able to apply it appropriately to the source. Popular responses were that structured interviews lead to less detail and the presence of a researcher affects respondent's answers (e.g. social desirability) or the idea that the source was outdated and hence not valid for understanding victimisation today. Only a few answers made generic points rather than relating to the source. Some candidates focused on the response rate and argued that this made the data invalid, which is incorrect. Others confused validity with representativeness or reliability. A small minority copied out extracts from the source with no attempt to describe a validity issue.

(d)   This question asked candidates to describe two strengths of using historical documents. Although there were some solid responses and candidates structured their responses well, a significant number were generic, focusing on the idea that historical documents 'save time' or are 'cheap'. Better responses referenced appropriate examples of historical data, such as old statistics or photographs, and described their strengths such as being able to investigate past events or to make comparisons over time. A few candidates cited famous examples such as the diary of Anne Frank.

(e)   This question asked candidates to describe two strengths and two weaknesses of random sampling. The most popular issues for discussion linked to issues of fairness, representativeness, bias, and time-efficient in comparison to other sampling types. Some were able to suggest random samples can be generated by computers and so are easy to administer. A few candidates incorrectly focused on the issue of the validity or reliability of findings. However, a number of candidates were unable to go beyond one or two correctly developed points. Some candidates failed to develop points identified.

(f)   This question asked candidates to explain why sociologists might want to use covert participant observation in research. Many candidates responded well to the question and it enabled them to demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of covert participant observation. Many candidates were able to make three points and frequent responses included the idea that the method allows researchers to avoid the Hawthorne Effect, enhance validity, allow access to gangs and observe subjects in their natural surroundings. Some candidates referenced specific examples, such as James Patrick's 'A Glasgow Gang Observed'. A sizeable number of candidates wrote lengthy introductions describing what a covert observation is. Candidates should avoid this as it wastes time when they should be focusing on the 'why' part of the question. In other cases, candidates described aspects of covert observation, rather than explaining why it is used. The result was that such points were underdeveloped. A small number of responses evaluated the method, which was not creditworthy.

(g)   In the essay-style question most candidates showed a sound knowledge of statistics and their strengths and weaknesses. Most candidates were able to give a two sided response. Candidates who scored best identified and developed a range of points both for and against the view, drawing on sociological concepts consistently. A few candidates achieved full marks with a thoughtful and reflective summing up. Most responses showed some knowledge of the debate with many responses showing good sociological knowledge and understanding. Popular strength included the ability to identify patterns and trends, to convert data into graphs and making comparisons. In arguments against the use of statistics candidates focused on the greater utility of other research methods. However, a number of responses also drew out the possible problems inherent in statistics such as political bias or lack of depth and detail. Quite a few candidates tried to make the point that they can be out of date – but this was seldom successfully developed. The best answers here employed examples – some good candidates referred back to the Source A. Candidates who scored less well either failed to make enough points and/or only partially developed their points and, in some cases, candidates confused the concepts of quantitative and qualitative data.

Section B

Question 2

(a)   This question asked candidates to define the term 'adolescence'. Although many candidates were able to give a full definition of the term as the period of transition from child to adult, some responses were partial identifying the term with 'teenagers'.

(b)   This question asked candidates to describe two ways the media socialises individuals. The best answers were specific and used concepts, e.g. role models, imitation or how groups are represented in advertising, film etc. A few candidates made impressive points linked to new media e.g. about on line bullying. Less successful answers were vague and lacking in sociological focus with reference to the fact that the media 'influence' people in different ways.

(c)   This question asked candidates to explain how values ae a social construction. Higher scoring responses were able to discuss how values differ across time, or are relative to culture, social class etc. However, many candidates struggled with this question, often describing what is meant by social construction and/or values, but not engaging with 'how' values are a social construction. A few candidates confused norms with values. As a result, there were several low scoring responses.

(d) In this question candidates were asked to explain why ethnicity is an important influence on social identity. Many candidates spent time on introductions in which they defined ethnicity and/or social identity before launching into explanation of reasons 'why'. Several candidates focused on socialisation, culture, dress and language. Others focused on issues concerning discrimination, showing how this can have a negative effect on social identity, e.g., through labelling. However, points were often not well explained, and many answers tended to be placed in the middle band due to lack of conceptual engagement or inadequate development of points made.

(e) In assessing the extent to which the peer group is the most effective agent of social control many candidates illustrated a very sound conceptual knowledge and understanding. Good quality responses were able to provide a range of arguments for the view and referenced a variety of techniques used by peers such as peer pressure, ostracism, sanctions and rewards. Some sophisticated responses even went beyond the adolescent peer groups and talked about peers within occupations or older peer groups. Many candidates were able to provide more arguments against the view, referencing family, media, religion and law. Notably some candidates tried to use negative peer pressure as evaluation but if peers are pressuring individuals to engage in anti-social behaviours or crime then it is evidence for the effectiveness of such pressure as a form of control. Answers that scored less well usually made two or three arguments that were often only partially developed in terms of addressing the degree of effectiveness of the agents chosen for discussion. Conclusions, where present, often did make a judgement but this was not always well justified using the evidence from answers.

Section C

Question 3

(a) Most candidates were able to define the term 'meritocracy' with a fair degree of clarity. Many others achieved partial responses that were somewhat vague in their definition but did manage to give a valid example such as linking it to 'equal opportunities'. One or two candidates confused the idea with 'matriarchy'.

(b) This question had a mixed response. The question asked candidates to describe two aspects of the dependency culture. Better responses referred to dependence on the welfare state/benefits, fatalism, New Right thinking and the cycle of poverty. Some candidates were unable to give more than one aspect and a few simply talked about people using the welfare state or about children depending on parents, neither of which were creditworthy on their own.

(c) Candidates generally had a good knowledge of how the roles of women have changed in modern industrial societies. The best responses developed three of more discrete points and including concepts in each point. At the beginning of their answer some candidates gave lengthy descriptions of women's (and men's) roles in the past, when a more concise comparison of past and present would have sufficed. Popular responses referred to feminism, changes in the law and women becoming breadwinners. A number looked at how the role of men had impacted women in general which did not answer the question of 'roles' directly.

(d) Many candidates demonstrated a generally good level of knowledge of why racism can affect the life chances of some minority ethnic groups. Popular answers included references to stereotypes and labelling in education, discrimination in housing policies, in the workplace and the law via police targeting. Some candidates could have improved their mark by linking their points more explicitly to life chances.

(e) The essay question asked candidates to discuss the extent to which there is social mobility between social classes. In higher quality responses candidates were able to give a full range of developed points referring to sociological ideas about social class such as functionalism, embourgeoisement, proletarianisation, intragenerational social and intergenerational mobility and structural barriers such as glass ceiling, closed societies and ascribed status. Candidates at this level also often attempted to write evaluative rather than purely summative conclusions. Many candidates, however, did not fully link social mobility back to social class, resulting in partially developed points. Lower scoring responses were due to a lack of range or development of points. In some cases responses were limited in scope and referred to ideas such as winning the lottery or marriage or descriptive of social mobility and social class.

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Key messages

- **Question 1(a)** asks candidates to 'identify' information from the source. Advise candidates to select their points directly from the words in the text.
- A good technique for answering **Question 1(c)** is to firstly, identify the point by paraphrasing or using a quotation from the source. For example, 'One reason is that the research was only conducted on 40 people'. Then develop the point briefly. For example, 'This sample is too small to reflect the experiences the billions of internet users around the world'.
- Candidates need to be aware of all primary research methods in the syllabus. For example, candidates should know the strengths and limitations of content analysis as a primary research method.
- Candidates should practice their exam technique for **Question 1(f)**. A minimum of three well developed and conceptual points are required for top band. Moreover, no evaluation is required in this question.
- Topical and up to date examples are always good to see – a minority of candidates mentioned the global pandemic for example. It would be useful to practice linking and applying sociological ideas to news items and current/real life examples.
- Be aware that candidates who use a 'two for and two against' formula for **Questions 1(g)**, **2(e)** and **3(e)** cannot achieve top band where a minimum of six developed points are required in a balanced argument.

General comments

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Section A

Question 1

(a) There was a mixed response to this question. Many were able to identify experiments and questionnaires directly from the source, candidates who did not score full marks often cited observation, case study or interview, which were not creditworthy.

(b) Many candidates identified two correct examples of secondary data that can be used to research the ways that young people use the internet. There were some good examples such as search histories, statistics from media companies as well as previous sociological research on the issue or news articles etc. References which simply stated 'the internet' or primary methods such as case studies or questionnaires were not creditworthy.

(c) This question about the representativeness of the sampling used in the source drew a good response. Answers demonstrated that most candidates had no difficulty in comprehending source A. Candidates who scored well indicated that they understood the term 'representativeness' and were able to apply it appropriately to the source. Candidates who scored well focused on the small sample size, the disproportionate number of females to males or the fact that these were all

candidates. Only a few answers made generic points rather than relating to the source. A few candidates focused on the findings rather than the sample.

(d)   This question asked candidates to describe two strengths of using content analysis as a research method. Very few candidates scored well. Many did not appear to understand what the method involves and hence tried to guess and gave generic answers that were mostly not creditworthy. Better responses referenced the fact that it is a method used to study media content in a quantitative fashion. These candidates were then able to describe the idea that the data can be compared over time and patterns and trends in media use be identified. Others focused on the idea that content analysis has fewer ethical issues than other methods as there are no research participants as such, only media documents, programmes etc.

(e)   This question asked candidates to describe two strengths and two weaknesses of semi-structured interviews. The most popular issues for discussion linked to the idea that it is a flexible method allowing for both quantitative and qualitative data, probing and the gaining of rapport leading to depth, detail and increased validity. In terms of limitations, candidates often contrasted with other methods such as the fact that it is more time-consuming than structured interviews or that it offers more reliability than unstructured interviews due to some standardised questions. Other candidates focused on the possibility of an interviewer effect that will decrease validity of data. Some candidates failed to develop points identified. Responses that scored less well focused on issues such as the chance that respondents may lie or that it is a cheap, easy or quick method. These are generic points that are too vague to credit as points specific to semi-structured interviews.

(f)   This question asked candidates to explain why sociologists use closed questions in research. Many candidates responded well to the question, and it enabled them to demonstrate good knowledge and understanding. Many candidates were able to make three points here. Frequent responses included the idea that closed questions yield quantitative data that allow for comparisons and thus patterns and trends to be identified. Other good responses explained the link between closed questions and standardised methods such as questionnaires and how these yield data that is high in reliability. Many candidates discussed practical issues such as the fact that closed questions are quicker and more convenient for respondents. Responses that scored less well tended to make fewer accurate points, sometimes conflating closed questions with questionnaires. A small number of responses evaluated the method, which was not creditworthy.

(g)   In the essay-style question most candidates showed a sound knowledge of the micro/macro approaches to research and their respective strengths and weaknesses. It was pleasing to see links made to the debate between interpretivist and positivist sociologists. Most candidates were able to give a balanced response. Candidates who scored best identified and developed a range of points both for and against the view, drawing on sociological concepts consistently. Good quality answers used the micro/macro distinction to debate issues such as validity versus reliability, qualitative versus quantitative data and small versus large samples. Some candidates were becoming embroiled in discussions about consensus and conflict approach (including Marxism and feminism) and these were not well linked to the question. Several candidates got the meaning of micro and macro the wrong way round.

Section B

Question 2

(a)   This question asked candidates to define the term 'social institutions. Relatively few candidates were unable to give a full sociological definition of the term as parts of society that have their own norms and values; instead, some answers conflated the term with agencies of socialisation. Many responses were able to achieve one mark by giving an example, for example education/schools or the family.

(b)   This question asked candidates to describe two ways nature affects human behaviour. The best answers were specific and linked to concepts such as sex/gender or the possibility of a criminal gene or other inherited characteristics. Less successful answers were vague and lacking in sociological focus, but many candidates did score marks for more common-sense answers like reflex actions, hunger etc. affecting behaviour.

(c)   This question asked candidates to explain how females are socialised into femininity. Higher scoring responses were able to discuss Oakley's idea of canalisation, manipulation, and verbal

appellation. Other popular answers referred to the hidden curriculum and role modelling. Some candidates did not link back to femininity after describing strategies such as canalisation and hence scored in band 1.

(d) This question required candidates to explain why roles influence an individual's identity. Candidates scored marks for specific familial or job-related roles, and more general gender roles or roles that are influenced by ethnicity. In some cases, candidates did not explain their points well and such answers tended to score in the band 2 due to lack of conceptual engagement or partial development of points made.

(e) In assessing the extent to which age is the most important factor in a person's identity many candidates illustrated sound sociological knowledge and understanding of issues linked to different age groups such as children, youth or the elderly. Good quality responses were able to provide a range of arguments for the view and referenced a variety of points linked to social expectations, stereotypes and labelling, legal responsibilities and rights. In evaluation, many candidates discussed alternative aspects of identity such as social class, gender, religion or ethnicity as being of greater importance. Answers that scored less well usually made two or three arguments that were often only partially developed. Conclusions, where present, often did make a judgement but this was not always well justified using the evidence from candidate answers.

Section C

Question 3

(a) Most candidates were able to define the term 'power' with a fair degree of clarity. Many others achieved partial responses that were somewhat vague in their definition but did manage to give a valid example such as linking it to 'control' or 'authority'.

(b) This question asked candidates to describe two examples of a gendered division of labour. Many achieved full marks by giving direct comparison between jobs that men and women often do. For example, women as housewives and men as breadwinners, vertical segregation with men as 'bosses' and women in subordinate positions, men in manual occupations and women as carers or doing clerical jobs etc. Candidates who score less well often only made one point of comparison. Very few candidates did not know what a gendered division of labour is.

(c) Candidates generally had a good knowledge of how privileged groups maintain their power and status in society. The best responses developed three of more discrete points and including concepts in each point. Some impressive responses referred to Marxist views of exploitation and false consciousness, media brainwashing and the reproduction of class through the old boy network and hidden curriculum in schools. Other candidates discussed gender inequality, or how patriarchy ensures continued male dominance in the workplace. Candidates who scored in band one often identified several points but did not develop them.

(d) Many candidates demonstrated a generally good level of knowledge of poverty and the reasons for it. However, the challenge in the question is the cyclical nature of poverty. Some candidates only partially developed their responses because they neglected this aspect. Popular answers included the dependency culture and its values being instilled into the young, the poverty trap preventing children from escaping the poverty of their parents and the inability to either access education, or good quality education, as a possible route out of poverty.

(e) The essay question asked candidates to discuss the extent to which social classes have changed in modern industrial societies. In higher quality responses, candidates were able to give a full range of developed points, referring to processes such as embourgeoisement, proletarianisation and social mobility. Other candidates discussed the emergence of an underclass with its own distinct culture or the postmodernist idea that consumption patterns are making social class distinctions more blurred. In evaluation many candidates made reference to Marxist arguments and focused on structural barriers such as differential education, the enduring gap between rich and poor and the continuance of distinct class 'cultures' with their own norms and values. As ever with the essay question, the differentiator was number of developed points and the level of conceptuality.

SOCIOLOGY

| Paper 0495/21 |
| Paper 21 |

Report to CIE

The marking process seemed straightforward with few problems, probably helped by the marking of this paper following closely from paper 24, which all AE's bar one had marked.

The failure of RM Assessor in the final days was by far the greatest problem; fortunately with fairly small allocations it was still, just, possible to finish marking on time.

Changing allocations mid-way through the marking period on RM was frustrating and meant Examiners were unsure of their actual allocations – similarly for myself as PE. This needs to be looked at as to do so with no communication whatsoever really is not ok (happened across the /22 variant predominantly).

Key messages

It is essential that candidates read question wording carefully and realise the significance of terms used. This showed itself particularly with **Questions 1(e)** 'alternatives to the *family*', 2**(c)** 'home factors', 3**(b)** 'corporate crime', 3**(c)** 'informal agencies of social control', 3**(d)** 'official measurements' and 4**(c)** 'new media is interactive'.

Question (e) requires a debate – for and against developed points, with a conclusion. Several one-sided **(e)** answers were seen which hindered the marks awarded. It is also crucial to specifically address the question asked – in some cases a lot had been written by candidates, but it was not answering the particular question set and so could not be credited.

Some candidates still repeat questions in an opening paragraph or spend too long on definitions or historical context before starting to address the question. This may help candidates prepare to answer the longer questions but is unlikely to gain any marks and may mean that they run out of time before the end of the question paper. Best advice is to get straight into the main body of the answer.

Candidates should be encouraged to show their sociological knowledge by using terms, concepts, studies and theories whenever possible. This allowed several candidates to achieve very high marks in this series. There were some excellent papers where the candidates had a high level of sociological knowledge, using key concepts to good effect. The very best used theory correctly. However, some candidates could only score low marks as their answers tended to be based on common sense rather than Sociology.

Candidates should spend time thinking about what the questions are asking and planning answers to those specific questions in their designated 15 minutes of reading time – this is particularly important in the 15-mark essay questions to ensure that candidate's remain focused on the specific demands of the question.

Some candidates are not using paragraphs in the longer responses, making it difficult for Examiners to see where points begin and end. The 'point per paragraph' structure is thus recommended. Candidates would benefit from centres teaching discrete essay writing skills and techniques for the 'part e' questions to try and rectify this as 'range' is one of the key factors considered by the examining team when awarding their mark.

A surprising number of candidates struggled to access questions when they did not understand the key term(s) in the question (e.g. alternatives to the family, corporate crime, official measurements, interactive etc.). As the key terms in the questions will be drawn directly from the specification, it is essential that candidates become familiar with all of these in their examination preparation. Some candidates could not score any marks at all for some questions because of this issue.

Candidates should be encouraged to use the marks per question as guidance for how much is to be written and how long should be spent on a particular question. At times, for example, candidates were writing as much for a **part (c)** question worth 6 marks as for a **part (e)** question worth 15. Time needs to be better managed in order to maximise the marks awarded.

Command words are crucial. In the **part (b)** questions, for example, some answers were insufficiently developed (remember that the command word is to 'describe'), so the candidate was unable to achieve full marks even though it was evident that they possessed some relevant knowledge. Similar issues were seen in questions c-e.

General comments

For the May 2021 marking session entries were fewer than normal due to the Covid-19 pandemic and thus are perhaps not typical of usual trends and performance. *Section A* (Family) was the most popular option answered, followed by *Section B* (Education) and *Section C* (Crime). The least answered option was *Section D* (Media) where the examining team saw fewer responses.

It was encouraging to see that some relevant contemporary, global and localised examples were well used alongside the more traditional 'textbook' examples in order to justify and substantiate several of the points made. These were all duly credited with the 'LNK' annotation.

Very few rubric errors were seen in the examination session, allowing most candidates to maximise their chances of success. Some candidates did not number or incorrectly numbered their answers, though, and centres would be advised to ensure candidates are aware of the importance of doing this diligently.

There was a good range of answers produced, with marks awarded across the full spread of marks. In the **part (a)** question, candidates should look to include **two** separate elements in their definition. Examples can be a really useful way of adding a second element to an answer and are thus to be encouraged. For **(a)** questions, candidates should avoid repeating words from the question; this often led to candidates getting one mark rather than two.

Part (b) needs **two** distinctly different points with some development – candidates should separate these and label them clearly for the Examiner. In **part (c)** questions make sure there are more than two sociological points made, evidenced and developed. For **part (d)** adopt the same approach as for **(c)** but develop ideas further, consider more range and ensure concepts/theory/studies are used appropriately. Concepts and explicit sociological engagement tend to be the key differentiator between a **part (c)** and a **part (d)** question. In terms of the 15-mark **part (e)** question, candidates should be encouraged to organise their answers into paragraphs and to develop each idea fully using theory, studies, examples and/or concepts wherever relevant. Aim for three points for and three against the claim in the question. There also needs to be a well focused conclusion that makes a supported judgement on the claim in the question. Each point made should be directly focused upon what the question is asking about and should engage sociologically and conceptually wherever possible (use reading time to plan this). Scoring well on the 15-mark questions obviously helps to boost the overall marks on the paper for candidates so is thus really important. Some candidates are choosing to answer the 15-mark questions first to make sure that they do not run out of time, this worked well for several candidates this session but ultimately this is the candidates' own decision to make.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Family

(a) Most candidates had some understanding of the term as referring to decline in religious belief, but a few had no knowledge of it. The best answers recognised that the process was not just about individuals but about societies and lifestyles too.

(b) The majority of the responses described at least one example of the dark side of the family. Most candidates were able to gain good marks here; the most common answers were domestic violence

and child neglect. Some candidates repeated the same idea across their two examples and could not be double credited.

(c) There were some excellent answers focusing on the changing position of women. The question was generally well answered by reference to, amongst other factors, women's greater financial independence, legal changes such as divorce law reforms and the impact of feminism. Typical points used examples to illustrate the gaining of power such as shared conjugal roles, decision making, breadwinner role etc. A few candidates wrote generically about females gaining more power but did not link this back to the family meaning that the answer was rather tangential in focus.

(d) Some answers interpreted the question as being about individuals ageing which meant the full range of marks could not be accessed. The best answers often focused on the role of grandparents (positively as carers/financial support and negatively as economic and emotional burdens); some also discussed changing family types, such as the move towards beanpole families. Some candidates did not focus on the 'ageing population' part of the question and talked about declining birth rates instead – it is crucial that answers maintain a full focus on what the question is asking about.

(e) A significant number of responses misinterpreted the question and wrote about how alternative types of family might affect and threaten marriage. These answers usually gained some marks on the 'against' side, arguing that marriage was not threatened or was threatened by other factors. The best answers focused on alternatives to the family such as single person households, communes and living with friends. Candidates who did focus on such points were able to make a range of well-developed points both for and against the debate using conceptual ideas such as feminism, individualism, decline in the importance of the family, friendship networks, changing norms and values etc. Answers covering the full range of marks really were seen within this question, again raising the key message about the importance of focusing on the wording of the question and planning responses during reading time.

Section B

Question 2

Education

(a) This was a well answered question with a significant number of candidates gaining full marks. Examples such as Catholic schools or the naming of a local faith school often secured the second mark for the candidate.

(b) This was another well answered question by many candidates. Reference was commonly made to, for example, truancy, rejection of the school's authority, 'cheeking' the teacher, aversion to schoolwork and negative/mocking attitudes to conforming candidates. Some candidates referred to sociological studies such as Willis' 'The Lads' to evidence their points – these were, of course, duly credited.

(c) This question was generally well answered, with most candidates able to make points about a range of material and cultural factors at home that might influence school life and experiences. Some missed opportunities to integrate sociological concepts, however, which would have improved the marks awarded further still e.g. material deprivation, cultural capital, linguistic barriers, restricted code etc. Some candidates unfortunately did not sufficiently focus on the 'home factors' element of the question and made points relating to schools or teachers which could not be credited.

(d) 'Those in power' was most frequently interpreted to mean the upper or ruling class and men, with answers therefore drawing on Marxist and feminist ideas. Answers often referred to private education, curriculum content, teacher expectations, cultural capital, access to education and discrimination within schools. There were some strong, sociological answers seen here that utilized theory and concepts well – other candidates, however, relied on more of a commonsense approach which could not be highly rewarded.

(e) This question proved accessible to most candidates with both sides of the question often covered well, with good use of theories to support points made by the better candidates. There was good

understanding of the term 'hidden curriculum', with references to ideas such as instilling values, acceptance of hierarchy, gender roles and preparation for the world of work. Most candidates were able to consider both sides of the question in a balanced way, arguing on the 'against' side that the official curriculum was more important in terms of examination results and skills gained or that candidates often rejected aspects of the hidden curriculum, so lessening its importance. Marxist and feminist theories were both well applied with well chosen examples to substantiate points made.

Section C

Question 3

Crime, deviance and social control

(a) This question was typically answered well, usually by referring to behaviour that fitted in with accepted norms and values. Some candidates unfortunately just repeated the term in the question (conformity) and so could only score 1 mark e.g. conforming to norms and values. Repeating terms in the question does not demonstrate full understanding of a sociological term and so is to be avoided.

(b) Most candidates were able to give two examples of corporate crimes, such as fraud and tax crimes. The development of the chosen examples, however, sometimes demonstrated confusion with white-collar crime whereby candidates discussed individuals (rather than corporations) committing crime. These such answers could not score full marks – it is therefore essential that candidates focus closely on the key terms in the question when planning their response.

(c) This was an accessible question for most candidates which produced some answers lacking in concepts but also some strong answers referring to different informal agencies of social control and their processes and methods. Typically, answers referred to the family, schools, the media or peer groups. There was, surprisingly, often only limited use of concepts and this held back the marks awarded for some candidates. In 'explaining how…', candidates should look to consider and develop how these informal agencies control individuals e.g. through canalization, role modelling, the hidden curriculum, peer pressure etc.

(d) This was a well answered question with a number of candidates able to make a range of points about unreported and unrecorded crime, the actions and decisions of the police and other law enforcement agencies and the social construction of official crime statistics. This allowed for good inclusion of concepts such as validity, invisibility, the dark figure, police targeting etc. Unfortunately, some candidates did not seem to be clear what was meant by 'official measurements of crime', and they instead discussed self-report studies survey/interview research and/or victimisation studies. There was little that could be rewarded in such answers.

(e) The question was accessible to most candidates and thus many good answers were seen. A significant number of answers were strong on both sides of the question, making a range of balanced points about both male and female criminality (or lack of it), and on the 'against' side discussing other relevant factors such as social class, age and ethnicity. Theories such as feminism, labelling and Marxism were well integrated by the best candidates and conceptual understanding was also impressive. Ideas such as chivalry thesis, hegemonic masculinity, peer group, sub-cultures, unemployment, breadwinner role, differential gender socialisation and social control etc. were regularly used and were duly rewarded.

Section D

Question 4

Media

(a) This term (broadcasting) was generally not well understood; the few correct answers seen typically referred to radio or television and to reaching a wide, large audience. Many candidates did not seem clear what was meant by the term at all, others described it in rather general and unspecific terms, producing only a partial answer without the required two discrete elements.

(b) Candidates were typically able to identify and describe at least one way young people are living in a media culture. While there was usually some understanding of the question shown, a significant number of candidates found it hard to make two distinct and different points e.g. claiming that young people relied on the media for everything with little further development or detail, The strongest answers used clear examples such as global communication, media saturation, consumption, social media, online protest groups, streaming of film, TV and music etc.

(c) The terms 'interactive' and 'new media' seemed to cause problems for some candidates, with answers referring to aspects of the media that are not interactive e.g. traditional media. These could not be credited. Better answers referred to, for example, uploading media content, citizen journalism, user generated content, prosumers and commenting on social media posts. Specific examples of interactivity within new media were also, at times, used to good effect.

(d) This was an accessible question, but some answers made rather general points about the media rather than drawing out how these were about socialisation. Better answers often referred to processes and concepts such as imitation, role modelling, norm referencing, agenda setting and the hypodermic syringe and cultural effects models of media effects. Specific examples were used to develop and substantiate points made by the better candidates, for example as regards body image, appropriate behaviour, social expectations, gender expectations, moral issues etc.

(e) Most answers were aware of a range of relevant points to debate the issue in the question. Some candidates, however, were unclear about how to use these ideas within the answer (for example, whether private ownership meant that media were free from government control or whether it meant the owner's bias would be present). There were often good points seen on both sides of the debate and some balance to answers as well, allowing candidates to form appropriate and reasoned conclusions. Typical areas covered on the 'for' side were new media, user generated content, globalisation, postmodernism, online protest groups and social movements e.g. hashtag campaigns. On the 'against' side more traditional sociology was typically seen, for example, news values, media ownership, hegemony, agenda setting, legislation, political reporting and gatekeeping. A good range of responses were seen here.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/22
Paper 22

Report to CIE

The marking process seemed straightforward with few problems, probably helped by the marking of this paper following closely from paper 24, which all AE's bar one had marked.

The failure of RM Assessor in the final days was by far the greatest problem; fortunately with fairly small allocations it was still, just, possible to finish marking on time.

Key messages

It is essential that candidates read question wording carefully and realise the significance of terms used. This showed itself particularly with **Questions 1(e)** 'ethnicity', 2**(b)** 'patterns', 3**(b)** 'rehabilitation', 3**(d)** 'functionalists' and 4**(c)** 'use the media'.

Question (e) requires a debate – for and against developed points, with a conclusion. Several one-sided **(e)** answers were seen which hindered the marks awarded. It is also crucial to specifically address the question asked – in some cases a lot had been written by candidates, but it was not answering the particular question set and so could not be credited.

Some candidates still repeat questions in an opening paragraph or spend too long on definitions or historical context before starting to address the question. This may help candidates prepare to answer the longer questions but is unlikely to gain any marks and may mean that they run out of time before the end of the question paper. Best advice is to get straight into the main body of the answer.

Candidates should be encouraged to show their sociological knowledge by using terms, concepts, studies and theories whenever possible. This allowed several candidates to achieve very high marks in this series. However, some candidates could only score low marks as their answers tended to be based on common sense rather than Sociology.

Candidates should spend time thinking about what the questions are asking and planning answers to those specific questions in their designated 15 minutes of reading time – this is particularly important in the 15-mark essay questions to ensure that candidate's remain focused on the specific demands of the question.

Some candidates are not using paragraphs in the longer responses, making it difficult for Examiners to see where points begin and end. The 'point per paragraph' structure is thus recommended. Candidates would benefit from centres teaching discrete essay writing skills and techniques for the 'part e' questions to try and rectify this as 'range' is one of the key factors considered by the examining team when awarding their mark.

A surprising number of candidates struggled to access questions when they did not understand the key term in the question (e.g. patterns of educational achievement, ethnicity, rehabilitation, use the media etc.). As the key terms in the questions will be drawn directly from the specification, it is essential that candidates become familiar with all of these in their examination preparation. Some candidates could not score any marks at all for some questions because of this issue.

Candidates should be encouraged to use the marks per question as guidance for how much is to be written and how long should be spent on a particular question. At times, for example, candidates were writing as much for a **part (c)** question worth 6 marks as for a **part (e)** question worth 15. Time needs to be better managed in order to maximise the marks awarded.

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Command words are crucial. In the **part (b)** questions, for example, some answers were insufficiently developed (remember that the command word is to 'describe'), so the candidate was unable to achieve full marks even though it was evident that they possessed some relevant knowledge. Similar issues were seen in questions c-e.

General comments

For the May 2021 marking session entries were fewer than normal due to the Covid-19 pandemic and thus are perhaps not typical of usual trends and performance. *Section A* (Family) was the most popular option answered, followed by *Section B* (Education) and *Section C* (Crime). The least answered option was *Section D* (Media) where the examining team saw very few responses.

It was encouraging to see that some relevant contemporary, global and localised examples were well used alongside the more traditional 'textbook' examples in order to justify and substantiate several of the points made. These were all duly credited with the 'LNK' annotation.

Very few rubric errors were seen in the examination session, allowing most candidates to maximise their chances of success. Some candidates did not number or incorrectly numbered their answers, though, and centres would be advised to ensure candidates are aware of the importance of doing this diligently.

There was a good range of answers produced, with marks awarded across the full spread of marks. In the **part (a)** question, candidates should look to include **two** separate elements in their definition. Examples can be a really useful way of adding a second element to an answer and are thus to be encouraged. **Part (b)** needs **two** distinctly different points with some development – candidates should separate these and label them clearly for the Examiner. In **part (c)** questions make sure there are more than two sociological points made, evidenced and developed. For **part (d)** adopt the same approach as for **(c)** but develop ideas further, consider more range and ensure concepts/theory/studies are used appropriately. Concepts and explicit sociological engagement tend to be the key differentiator between a **part (c)** and a **part (d)** question. In terms of the 15-mark **part (e)** question, candidates should be encouraged to organise their answers into paragraphs and to develop each idea fully using theory, studies, examples and/or concepts wherever relevant. Aim for three points for and three against the claim in the question. There also needs to be a well focused conclusion that makes a supported judgement on the claim in the question. Each point made should be directly focused upon what the question is asking about and should engage sociologically and conceptually wherever possible (use reading time to plan this). Scoring well on the 15-mark questions obviously helps to boost the overall marks on the paper for candidates so is thus really important. Some candidates are choosing to answer the 15-mark questions first to make sure that they do not run out of time, this worked well for several candidates this session but ultimately this is the candidates' own decision to make.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Family

(a)   Most candidates were able to answer this well, although a few suggested roles were shared. Good answers mainly defined the term 'traditional conjugal roles' as segregated roles, frequently specifying men as breadwinners and women as housewives/taking care of the family. Weaker candidates sometimes rehashed the terms from the question and thus could not score any marks as no sociological knowledge was demonstrated.

(b)   The majority of the responses described at least one way in which families may not be symmetrical. Some of the most frequently made points were about the domestic division of labour, dual/triple burden and single parent families.

(c)   There were some excellent answers focusing on the effects on women and a change from extended to nuclear families. Typical points made and developed included, smaller family sizes, an increase in DINK families, more or less child-centred families, a rise in beanpole families, a

breakdown in marriages and/or women being able to become breadwinners/have careers. Some candidates misunderstood the question and focused on reasons why birth rates are falling.

(d)   A lot of sociological knowledge was displayed in this answer as the majority of candidates felt able to write about the impact of feminism; the key to success was ensuring that they linked this to the changing roles of men which more able candidates did well. Weaker candidates still accessed marks on this question as they could write generally about men doing more housework and being more emotionally open than previously. Furthermore, a few candidates described rather than explained the changes in men's roles and therefore failed to gain marks in the highest band or even Band 2.

(e)   Some answers showed uncertainty about the meaning of ethnicity. There was a tendency to fall back on stereotypes and not to recognise hybridity, the multicultural nature of many societies or the positive and growing presence of inter-ethnic relationships. Despite this, many successful answers were seen where some candidates discussed ethnicity in general, while others concentrated more on specific ethnic groups, primarily the African Caribbean and/or South Asian ethnic groups. The weaker answers were not organized into paragraphs, offering undeveloped or underdeveloped points as well as common-sense arguments. The evaluation side of the question was generally handled better with discussions of, for example, gender, social class and age.

Section B

Question 2

Education

(a)   There was some repetition of terms in the question seen, which failed to gain marks – conformity. Most candidates, however, were able to use appropriate synonyms and thus demonstrate relevant understanding.

(b)   This was, perhaps surprisingly, poorly answered by many. Candidates did not understand that 'patterns' was directing them to make points about achievement by, for example, social class, gender or ethnicity.

(c)   More able candidates could easily identify aspects of the culture of masculinity and apply them to the question appropriately. Weaker candidates were often very general and simply listed the differences between males and females in education without picking up of aspects of the culture of masculinity at all.

(d)   A large number of candidates provided a range of valid reasons to explain why there are different types of schools. In general, candidates discussed the reasons for specific types of schools such as state, private, faith, single-sex schools, etc. Some responses also included special schools and/or primary and secondary levels of schooling. The better answers used theory well in support of their points, Marxism in particular. Weaker candidates tended merely to describe different types of schools.

(e)   This question proved accessible to all with both sides of the question often covered well, with good use of theories to support points made by the better candidates. Functionalism, Marxism and feminism were all well applied. Most candidates could comfortably discuss the fact that free education is available in most places around the world on the one hand and in evaluation they could identify that class/gender/ethnicity were barriers to fairness.

Section C

Question 3

Crime, deviance and social control

(a)   Some candidates answered this question correctly, defining 'stigma' as a negative label linked to the person's self-image. However, a number of candidates provided more partial answers e.g. 'a label' or sometimes misunderstood the term and so were unable to score any marks.

(b) Most candidates had at least one example that they could describe, such as community service or treatment for drug addiction. Prison as punishment or deterrent was the most common incorrect answer. The better answers focused on treatment and training programs, victim-offender meetings, community service and work/education schemes.

(c) This was an accessible question for most candidates which produced some answers lacking in concepts but also some strong answers referring to, for example, Cohen's status frustration, Marx, Merton's strain theory, relative deprivation and the pressures of consumer society. Weaker candidates could identify that being without money/resources led some people to commit crimes but then repeated this idea in different words in their other points which limited the marks awarded.

(d) Some candidates explained functionalist views of crime in impressive detail; Durkheim, Merton and the New Right were frequently covered. Most candidates related it to socialisation and social control. The better answers linked the functionalist view with value consensus, social change, job creation, and the idea that a certain amount of crime is necessary in the society. Some, however, were not clear as to what constituted functionalist explanations and thus simply described general reasons such as poverty which could not be credited.

(e) The question was accessible to most candidates and thus many good answers were seen. Many answers were stronger on the evaluation side, able to suggest a range of reasons for underreporting and under recording of crime but struggled to explain in what ways the official crime statistics can be accurate. Candidates that integrated their knowledge from research methods, however, used conceptual terms such as validity and representativeness well. There was also some uncertainty about the statistics, how they are produced and the role of the police, with some answers confusing the statistics with victimisation or self-report studies and with survey or interview research.

Section D

Question 4

Media

Note: few Examiners marked more than a few scripts answering this question, so these generalisations are perhaps a little questionable.

(a) Several candidates did not seem clear what was meant by the term, others described it in rather general and unspecific terms. It was not well answered with few candidates getting two different elements to their answer.

(b) Candidates were typically able to identify and describe at least one way globalisation has affected the media, the most common idea being that of communication across the world.

(c) This produced some 'common sense' answers with candidates finding it difficult to make points about specific ethnic groups and their media usage. Some candidates did not talk about media use at all and instead focused on representations of ethnicity which could not be credited.

(d) This was an accessible question but there were few high-level answers seen, with a lack of relevant concepts being commonplace. Un/under-developed points were typical, and the effects of gender representations were rarely fully considered e.g. impact upon careers, status, body image, inequality, sexualisation etc.

(e) While some candidates presented a few valid reasons to support or refute the argument, including references to the hypodermic syringe or other media effects models, most answers were rather vague and confused with undeveloped and/or underdeveloped points and often failed to reach higher than Band 2. Disappointingly few pertinent examples were seen in these responses.

SOCIOLOGY

Report to CIE

The marking process seemed straightforward with few problems, probably helped by the marking of this paper following closely from paper 24, which all AE's bar one had marked.

The failure of RM Assessor in the final days was by far the greatest problem; fortunately with fairly small allocations it was still, just, possible to finish marking on time.

Changing allocations mid-way through the marking period on RM was frustrating and meant Examiners were unsure of their actual allocations – similarly for myself as PE. This needs to be looked at as to do so with no communication whatsoever really is not ok (happened across the /22 variant predominantly).

Key messages

It is essential that candidates read question wording carefully and realise the significance of terms used. This showed itself particularly with **Questions 1(e)** 'alternatives to the *family*', 2**(c)** 'home factors', 3**(b)** 'corporate crime', 3**(c)** 'informal agencies of social control', 3**(d)** 'official measurements' and 4**(c)** 'new media is interactive'.

Question (e) requires a debate – for and against developed points, with a conclusion. Several one-sided **(e)** answers were seen which hindered the marks awarded. It is also crucial to specifically address the question asked – in some cases a lot had been written by candidates, but it was not answering the particular question set and so could not be credited.

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Candidates should be encouraged to show their sociological knowledge by using terms, concepts, studies and theories whenever possible. This allowed several candidates to achieve very high marks in this series. There were some excellent papers where the candidates had a high level of sociological knowledge, using key concepts to good effect. The very best used theory correctly. However, some candidates could only score low marks as their answers tended to be based on common sense rather than Sociology.

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Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Family

(a)   Most candidates had some understanding of the term as referring to decline in religious belief, but a few had no knowledge of it. The best answers recognised that the process was not just about individuals but about societies and lifestyles too.

(b)   The majority of the responses described at least one example of the dark side of the family. Most candidates were able to gain good marks here; the most common answers were domestic violence

and child neglect. Some candidates repeated the same idea across their two examples and could not be double credited.

(c) There were some excellent answers focusing on the changing position of women. The question was generally well answered by reference to, amongst other factors, women's greater financial independence, legal changes such as divorce law reforms and the impact of feminism. Typical points used examples to illustrate the gaining of power such as shared conjugal roles, decision making, breadwinner role etc. A few candidates wrote generically about females gaining more power but did not link this back to the family meaning that the answer was rather tangential in focus.

(d) Some answers interpreted the question as being about individuals ageing which meant the full range of marks could not be accessed. The best answers often focused on the role of grandparents (positively as carers/financial support and negatively as economic and emotional burdens); some also discussed changing family types, such as the move towards beanpole families. Some candidates did not focus on the 'ageing population' part of the question and talked about declining birth rates instead – it is crucial that answers maintain a full focus on what the question is asking about.

(e) A significant number of responses misinterpreted the question and wrote about how alternative types of family might affect and threaten marriage. These answers usually gained some marks on the 'against' side, arguing that marriage was not threatened or was threatened by other factors. The best answers focused on alternatives to the family such as single person households, communes and living with friends. Candidates who did focus on such points were able to make a range of well-developed points both for and against the debate using conceptual ideas such as feminism, individualism, decline in the importance of the family, friendship networks, changing norms and values etc. Answers covering the full range of marks really were seen within this question, again raising the key message about the importance of focusing on the wording of the question and planning responses during reading time.

Section B

Question 2

Education

(a) This was a well answered question with a significant number of candidates gaining full marks. Examples such as Catholic schools or the naming of a local faith school often secured the second mark for the candidate.

(b) This was another well answered question by many candidates. Reference was commonly made to, for example, truancy, rejection of the school's authority, 'cheeking' the teacher, aversion to schoolwork and negative/mocking attitudes to conforming candidates. Some candidates referred to sociological studies such as Willis' 'The Lads' to evidence their points – these were, of course, duly credited.

(c) This question was generally well answered, with most candidates able to make points about a range of material and cultural factors at home that might influence school life and experiences. Some missed opportunities to integrate sociological concepts, however, which would have improved the marks awarded further still e.g. material deprivation, cultural capital, linguistic barriers, restricted code etc. Some candidates unfortunately did not sufficiently focus on the 'home factors' element of the question and made points relating to schools or teachers which could not be credited.

(d) 'Those in power' was most frequently interpreted to mean the upper or ruling class and men, with answers therefore drawing on Marxist and feminist ideas. Answers often referred to private education, curriculum content, teacher expectations, cultural capital, access to education and discrimination within schools. There were some strong, sociological answers seen here that utilized theory and concepts well – other candidates, however, relied on more of a commonsense approach which could not be highly rewarded.

(e) This question proved accessible to most candidates with both sides of the question often covered well, with good use of theories to support points made by the better candidates. There was good

understanding of the term 'hidden curriculum', with references to ideas such as instilling values, acceptance of hierarchy, gender roles and preparation for the world of work. Most candidates were able to consider both sides of the question in a balanced way, arguing on the 'against' side that the official curriculum was more important in terms of examination results and skills gained or that candidates often rejected aspects of the hidden curriculum, so lessening its importance. Marxist and feminist theories were both well applied with well chosen examples to substantiate points made.

Section C

Question 3

Crime, deviance and social control

(a) This question was typically answered well, usually by referring to behaviour that fitted in with accepted norms and values. Some candidates unfortunately just repeated the term in the question (conformity) and so could only score 1 mark e.g. conforming to norms and values. Repeating terms in the question does not demonstrate full understanding of a sociological term and so is to be avoided.

(b) Most candidates were able to give two examples of corporate crimes, such as fraud and tax crimes. The development of the chosen examples, however, sometimes demonstrated confusion with white-collar crime whereby candidates discussed individuals (rather than corporations) committing crime. These such answers could not score full marks – it is therefore essential that candidates focus closely on the key terms in the question when planning their response.

(c) This was an accessible question for most candidates which produced some answers lacking in concepts but also some strong answers referring to different informal agencies of social control and their processes and methods. Typically, answers referred to the family, schools, the media or peer groups. There was, surprisingly, often only limited use of concepts and this held back the marks awarded for some candidates. In 'explaining how…', candidates should look to consider and develop how these informal agencies control individuals e.g. through canalization, role modelling, the hidden curriculum, peer pressure etc.

(d) This was a well answered question with a number of candidates able to make a range of points about unreported and unrecorded crime, the actions and decisions of the police and other law enforcement agencies and the social construction of official crime statistics. This allowed for good inclusion of concepts such as validity, invisibility, the dark figure, police targeting etc. Unfortunately, some candidates did not seem to be clear what was meant by 'official measurements of crime', and they instead discussed self-report studies survey/interview research and/or victimisation studies. There was little that could be rewarded in such answers.

(e) The question was accessible to most candidates and thus many good answers were seen. A significant number of answers were strong on both sides of the question, making a range of balanced points about both male and female criminality (or lack of it), and on the 'against' side discussing other relevant factors such as social class, age and ethnicity. Theories such as feminism, labelling and Marxism were well integrated by the best candidates and conceptual understanding was also impressive. Ideas such as chivalry thesis, hegemonic masculinity, peer group, sub-cultures, unemployment, breadwinner role, differential gender socialisation and social control etc. were regularly used and were duly rewarded.

Section D

Question 4

Media

(a) This term (broadcasting) was generally not well understood; the few correct answers seen typically referred to radio or television and to reaching a wide, large audience. Many candidates did not seem clear what was meant by the term at all, others described it in rather general and unspecific terms, producing only a partial answer without the required two discrete elements.

(b) Candidates were typically able to identify and describe at least one way young people are living in a media culture. While there was usually some understanding of the question shown, a significant number of candidates found it hard to make two distinct and different points e.g. claiming that young people relied on the media for everything with little further development or detail, The strongest answers used clear examples such as global communication, media saturation, consumption, social media, online protest groups, streaming of film, TV and music etc.

(c) The terms 'interactive' and 'new media' seemed to cause problems for some candidates, with answers referring to aspects of the media that are not interactive e.g. traditional media. These could not be credited. Better answers referred to, for example, uploading media content, citizen journalism, user generated content, prosumers and commenting on social media posts. Specific examples of interactivity within new media were also, at times, used to good effect.

(d) This was an accessible question, but some answers made rather general points about the media rather than drawing out how these were about socialisation. Better answers often referred to processes and concepts such as imitation, role modelling, norm referencing, agenda setting and the hypodermic syringe and cultural effects models of media effects. Specific examples were used to develop and substantiate points made by the better candidates, for example as regards body image, appropriate behaviour, social expectations, gender expectations, moral issues etc.

(e) Most answers were aware of a range of relevant points to debate the issue in the question. Some candidates, however, were unclear about how to use these ideas within the answer (for example, whether private ownership meant that media were free from government control or whether it meant the owner's bias would be present). There were often good points seen on both sides of the debate and some balance to answers as well, allowing candidates to form appropriate and reasoned conclusions. Typical areas covered on the 'for' side were new media, user generated content, globalisation, postmodernism, online protest groups and social movements e.g. hashtag campaigns. On the 'against' side more traditional sociology was typically seen, for example, news values, media ownership, hegemony, agenda setting, legislation, political reporting and gatekeeping. A good range of responses were seen here.