

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/11
Paper 11

Key messages

- Encourage candidates to avoid sampling issues when discussing validity, such as in **Question 1c**.
- In Parts **(c)** and **(d)** of **Question 2** and **3** candidates should develop at least three points with evidence. Candidates should be aware that the expectations in terms of the quality of development in **(d)** is higher than in **(c)** so responses should be longer and offer more by way of supporting evidence.
- Candidates should be discouraged from using the term 'interview' generically; they should be able to specify the types of interview preferred by both interpretivists (**Question 1b**) and positivists.
- Candidates could be clearer on the strengths (and weaknesses) of laboratory experiments. Using classic studies in teaching, such as Milgram's experiment on obedience and authority or Bandura's imitative aggressive experiment, offers an engaging way of discussing the possible strengths and weaknesses of the method.
- Many responses to **Question 2e** included limited evaluation of the idea that childhood is a social construction. It would be useful for candidates to have some general critical points to use not just for childhood but for the whole idea of age/s as socially constructed, including old age or youth. Drawing on common media representations, labelling and socialisation would help to broaden out candidate understanding of this complex idea.
- Responses should be written in paragraphs to separate points being made in the extended **Questions (1f, 1g, 2/3d and e)** and should include more sociological evidence in support – this could be examples, use of concepts, statistics, studies and/or a theoretical perspective.

General comments

Overall candidates showed a satisfactory level of engagement with the question paper and the assessment objectives. All candidates completed the compulsory **Question 1** on Theory and Methods. Candidates then chose to answer either **Question 2** on Culture, Identity and Socialisation or **Question 3** on Social Inequality.

A good knowledge of research methodology was shown by many candidates. The general understanding of laboratory experiments, snowball sampling and secondary was more limited than understanding of mainstream sociological methods such as questionnaires. Candidates were well prepared in terms of the rubric as very few candidates answered questions in all three sections of the paper. In addition, few candidates appeared to run out of time or give no response to questions. Most candidates evaluate where appropriate and most essays were two-sided. The biggest challenge was the length of answers in extended questions such as the essays – many were too short to achieve more than band one (1 – 4 marks) or band two (5 – 8 marks) and this then limits candidates overall score and grade.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: 'Theory and methods'

Question 1

- (a)** Almost all candidates used the source to identify two weaknesses of focus groups, correct answers were that they can be expensive to organise and are time consuming.
- (b)** Most candidates correctly identified at least one method that could be used by interpretivists, apart from focus groups. The most popular answers were participant observation and unstructured interview. Other possible answers were group interview and case studies. Some candidates chose questionnaires which illustrated a lack of understanding. Answers which cited interviews without

specifying either semi- or unstructured were deemed too vague and not creditworthy as the term could also include structured interview which is not a method generally used by interpretivists.

- (c) The source-based question proved a challenge for some candidates. The most successful candidates directly identified a feature of the research method from the source, for example the fact that focus groups *allow researchers to obtain in-depth data* or *researchers were able to create an atmosphere where the girls felt comfortable to open up*. Candidates then described how this may lead to validity, for example because interviewees would be encouraged to talk freely and with each other leading to detailed data or the researcher would build a rapport so the girls may trust the researcher enough to give honest opinion. Other correct source references were that *researchers were able to observe body language and interaction between multiple participants* and/or *researchers deliberately took a less active role to allow the girls' conversation to develop naturally*. These then needed to be described or unpacked in terms of how they may lead to valid data. Where candidates only scored two marks it was usually the case that they were successful in identifying suitable source-based points but did not develop them. Some candidates discussed sampling issues which were not creditworthy in terms of the question.
- (d) This question required candidates to describe two strengths of using laboratory experiments in sociological research. Some responses incorrectly stated that laboratory experiments give in-depth data or that they focus on understanding people's feeling, emotions and attitudes. Others gave vague, uncreditworthy references to getting exact data or that it is cheap or that people do not know they are being researched. Creditworthy answers included that researchers can control the variables so they produce reliable data (i.e. can be replicated to check results), they produce quantitative data which can measure effects, for example, and are easily analysed and presented; in addition they tend to be objective and less biased than other methods due to the scientific aspect of being in a laboratory with a neutral researcher. There were a couple of no responses, some candidates did not score any marks at all and others only made one point and/or did not describe or develop their identified point(s) sufficiently.
- (e) This question on snowball sampling drew a mixed response. Whilst many candidates clearly knew what snowball sampling entails – often defining it in a sort of introduction – very few were identified two strengths and two limitations. Creditworthy strengths included that having one participant who then finds another who finds another, and so on, cuts down the personal time and possible expense needed for the researcher to gather a relevant sample; it also allows sociological researchers to access hard to reach groups such as those engaged in criminal or socially unacceptable activities for which no sampling frames exist; or, that due to the sample recruiting each other, a basic trust is established which suggests that ensuing data is likely to be more valid. Creditworthy limitations included that snowball samples may not be representative of the target group as the researcher lacks control, for example it may be composed of only one gender or ethnicity; getting a sample can be time-consuming as it may take a while for one person in the sample to persuade another to take part, particularly if involved in illegal activities; also, that people are likely to recruit friends and acquaintances and so the sample is likely to be skewed and lack variety. Many candidates scored in band one (1 – 3 marks) due to a lack of range and/or development of points made.
- (f) This question proved to be challenging. To achieve top band (8 – 10 marks) candidates should try to make at least three different points in separate paragraphs. Better responses made several points linked to different types of secondary data such as official statistics, diaries and letters. This was an effective way to approach the question as some of the sources are quantitative and others qualitative, thus allowing candidates to make different points associated with positivist or interpretivist approaches and linking to concepts such as patterns and trends and reliability (statistics) and rich, in-depth data which is high in validity (diaries and letters). Other candidates alluded to the use of previous sociological studies as part of an initial literature review to assess the viability of research and aid in the formulation of a focus and a hypothesis. Very few candidates made three developed points, instead focusing on one or two which limits the number of marks available. For example, responses including one well-developed point are limited to the top of band 1 (3 marks). Some responses were too short, being only one paragraph.
- (g) This question asked about the extent to which questionnaires are the best method for sociological research. There was a variable response with better quality responses presenting clearly distinct and well-developed points on both sides of the argument. On the 'for' side of the debate the standardised nature of the closed questions was often used to argue for questionnaires producing quantitative and reliable data. Practical advantages of time and cost also featured prominently, as

did the idea that they are more convenient for respondents to self-complete without the pressure of a researcher present. Some candidates linked the method with a macro, positivist approach and used the ability to disseminate questionnaires across a wide geographical area to argue that they are a good method to use with large samples and for representative data sets. On the 'against' side answers often focused on the greater usefulness of other methods, usually interpretivist ones, such as unstructured interviews and observations. These often focused on the need for more in-depth, qualitative data to understand individuals and their social interactions. Some candidates argued for a triangulated approach to maximise the amount of data and to supplement quantitative methods like a questionnaire with more qualitative methods to give a more holistic, valid picture. Most candidates scored in band 1 (1 – 4 marks) or band 2 (5 – 8 marks) due to limited range and not enough detail. A few candidates talked about the respondent being able to talk freely and giving a lot of qualitative data whilst others treated a questionnaire as synonymous with a structured interview. Such responses drew little, if any, credit.

Section B: 'Culture, socialisation and identity'

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates scored at least one mark for their definition of 'ethnicity.' To score two marks two core elements must be present. Many candidates identified the ideas that ethnicity is about one's culture, heritage or racial background. Some candidates gave examples as the second element to gain the second mark.
- (b) This question asked candidates to describe two examples of customs. Customs are accepted practices that persist in a culture over time. The question had a mixed response. Candidates who scored full marks gave two separate examples and unpacked each with some further detail in terms of why the tradition exists or what it signifies. Common examples often derived from candidates' own cultural setting, for example eating turkey on Thanksgiving, giving cards at Eid, having a party to celebrate a girl's fifteenth birthday in Latin American cultures or females marrying in a white dress etc. Candidates who only scored two marks invariably did not unpack their descriptions. A few candidates showed no understanding of customs and therefore failed to score any marks.
- (c) This question asked candidates to explain how peer groups encourage conformity. The most successful candidates identified three or more points and developed each point in a simple way. Popular answers focused on the use of negative sanctions by the peer group such as peer pressure, ostracism, sarcasm and bullying to bring an individual into line with group norms and values. Some candidates set up scenarios such as boys enjoying study and disliking sports who would then be ridiculed by male peers to change their attitudes and behaviour. Few candidates discussed rewards or positive influences such as praise, compliments etc. though these were rewarded, for example praise when peers show gender conforming behaviour. Candidates who scored less well typically made fewer points and/or did not explain their points.
- (d) This question asked why living in a multicultural society may benefit its members. Common answers discussed the possibility of hybrid cultures emerging, the likelihood of being able to speak more than one language or be exposed to different cultural norms, religions, foods etc., all of which was seen as enriching people's lives. Many candidates argued that having different cultures living side by side brings greater tolerance and open-mindedness amongst citizens who are more likely to respect cultural differences rather than seeing them as a threat. There were few band three answers containing three or more well developed points. Most candidates scored in band 1 (1 – 3 marks) or band 2 (4 – 6 marks) and offered shorter answers with fewer developed points.
- (e) The essay question asked candidates to discuss the extent to which childhood is a social construction and proved to be a challenge. One of the main problems was that responses were frequently limited in terms of the length and the range of arguments made for and against. This had an inevitable consequence in terms of the number of marks available. To achieve band three (9 – 12 marks), for example, candidates needed to make at least four points, covering both sides of the debate, all with some level of development. This proved difficult, and many responses scored at the lower end of band two (5 – 8 marks) and many in band one (1 – 4 marks). There were also a few no responses. Popular points arguing that childhood is a social construction were that the meaning of childhood has changed historically (Aries) and varies cross-culturally. Others pointed to the necessity of socialisation and social control mechanisms for induction into society, as illustrated by cases of feral children who lack such socialisation and who do not experience childhood as we

would understand it. Evaluation proved difficult and a number of one-sided responses were seen. Creditworthy evaluation points that did feature focused around the universal features of childhood that appear to transcend time and culture. Thus some argued that childhood is a biological stage with its own developmental characteristics, that there is clear agreement about what childhood is and should be like, for example, the UN recognition of children's rights or that childhood is a universal experience in the sense that all children need to be socialised due to their physical and mental immaturity.

Section C: 'Social inequality'

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates gave a clear definition of the term 'Marxism,' referring to two elements such as the sociological theory or perspective that argues that society is divided along social class lines. Many referred to the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and/or the idea that the former exploits or oppresses the other. A small number of candidates did not understand the term in the question, confusing it with feminism.
- (b) This question asked candidates to describe two examples of prejudice based on ethnicity. Only about half of the cohort scored full marks. Correct responses included examples of discrimination that were clearly based on prejudice. Some cited racism against Black people or discrimination against Jewish people but did not elaborate. A few candidates neglected the ethnic element to the question and cited working class people suffering negative stereotypes. Common correct answers developed the example of racism against Black people by adding some clarification such as that they are often negatively labelled as deviant by media and police; or, as an example of a positive prejudice, the stereotype that all Chinese children are clever as they routinely do well in exams.
- (c) This question asked candidates to explain how being working class can affect a person's life chances. Many candidates found this a challenge. Creditworthy points most often linked to worse life chances in terms of education due to material deprivation so they have no access to better private schools nor even decent quality resources or an environment conducive to study. In terms of social mobility there were some intelligent links to Marxist ideas. For example, the working class experience false consciousness and fatalism which inhibits their chances of upward mobility and they lack the social capital or access to the 'old boy' network which will open the door to better opportunities. Other popular points alluded to a lack of access to good medical services which negatively affects overall health and fitness as well as life expectancy. Even access to decent quality food and clean water were cited as an issue for some working-class people. Answers scored in band 1 frequently made two or three points and did not develop them.
- (d) This question asked candidates to discuss why women experience a glass ceiling in the workplace. As might be expected on an extended answer question the quality of responses was varied. Most candidates understood the idea of the glass ceiling. In responses many candidates alluded to stereotypes of women as less capable than men, men feeling threatened by females who wish to 'get to the top' and male expectations that pregnancy will impede work or affect commitment to work. Other responses focused on structural barriers such as women's experience of the dual burden or triple shift as obstacles to promotion for women. Marks awarded were directly linked to the number and quality of points made. The expectation is that more detailed development will be given in part (d) than in part (c) where there are fewer marks available.
- (e) The essay question required candidates to discuss the extent to which people's life chances are affected by achieved status. Whilst responses were usually two-sided, they were usually too short for a good quality essay. Answers featured links to life chances in terms of social mobility, in the workplace, for education and in health and housing. On the 'for' side of the debate many candidates gave examples pointing to the idea that people can achieve better life chances through merit and hard work through things such as work and promotion, often linking to the claim that most societies are now meritocracies. In evaluation some candidates argued that the life chances of those with ascribed status do not depend on achievements or merit. This applies at both ends of the status spectrum whether it be royalty or the highest caste through to the socially excluded such as the underclass or the lowest caste in a closed society. Other common approaches included some intelligent theoretical references to the Marxist view that social class is the main influence on a person's life chances or the feminist claim that gender is the most important factor. A few candidates also offered ethnicity or age as a key element in determining a person's life chances.

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Paper 0495/12
Paper 12

Key messages

- Encourage candidates to have a clear understanding of secondary data and to be able to give examples. This was important for the 2 mark **Question (1b)** on this paper, but secondary data may also feature in more extended methodological questions.
- Many responses to 1f were confined to describing ethical issues rather than engaging with the question and discussing why they can be a problem in research. Candidates should understand the core issue at the heart of a question to enable them to stay focused and achieve more marks.
- The concept of values should be distinguished from the concept of norms in teaching so that candidates have a clear understanding of how they differ and what the relationship is between the two.
- In the part (a)s in **Section B** and **Section C**, candidates should try to include two separate elements in their definition to be awarded two marks. Examples can be a useful way of adding a second element and candidates should be encouraged to add one to their definition.
- Candidates could be better prepared in terms of evidence for 'nature' rather than 'nurture' as an explanation for human behaviour.

General comments

Candidates showed a good level of engagement with the question paper and the assessment objectives, and the full range of available marks was awarded. All candidates complete the compulsory **Question 1** on Theory and Methods. Candidates must then choose to answer either **Question 2** on Culture, Identity and Socialisation or **Question 3** on Social Inequality. The majority of candidates chose to answer **Question 2**.

Time management appears to have been good, with few candidates not finishing the paper. There were some no responses on several questions, notably 1e (interpretivism), 1f (problems caused by ethical issues) and 2e (nurture v nature). Very few rubric errors were seen and generally these were weaker responses.

Some candidates showed an impressive knowledge and understanding of sociological concepts, ideas and theories. Not all applied this knowledge consistently to the questions, particularly in extended responses. On questions where the use of concepts was more challenging some candidates used relevant examples to good effect and were given credit for doing so. In essay responses the evaluation skills evidenced by some candidates were good, and many gave a two-sided response. The research methods unit was challenging for many candidates and the technique for answering the data response **Question 1c** and the methods evaluation **Questions (1d and 1e)** could be further improved.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Theory and Methods

Question 1

- (a) A particularly good response was given to the opening source-based question. Almost all candidates achieved full marks by correctly identifying Japan and Canada as the two countries that complete a census every five years. Occasionally US and UK were given but these answers were very few.
- (b) This question asked candidates to identify two types of secondary data, apart from a census. It is an accessible low tariff question, but it drew a mixed response. Candidates who understood the term 'secondary data' correctly identified two examples, the most common being official statistics,

historical documents and personal documents such as diaries and photographs. However, a sizeable minority of candidates made incorrect references to primary methods, types of sampling or qualitative and quantitative data. Others made vague references to media or the internet which were not creditworthy.

- (c) The source analysis question drew a mixed response. Candidates were asked to use the source to describe two reasons why a census is useful for researchers. Many candidates gained two marks by identifying two ideas directly from the source, for example that it gives information about the size of the population or that it gives information on age, ethnicity, health and employment. However, it was less common for candidates to develop both points in terms of how they might be useful for researchers. Some candidates made generic (i.e. non-source-based) points about the usefulness of the census, without referring to ideas in the source, which limited their marks.
- (d) This question asked candidates to describe two strengths of using pre-coded questions in sociological research. The key to success in this question was to identify an aspect of pre-coded questions and then describe why or how that is a strength. Successful responses referenced the fact that pre-coded questions are closed or tick box questions which are thus quick and easy for participants to complete, or that they provide quantitative data which can be easily turned into statistics and presented in tables and charts. Some candidates correctly identified reliability as a strength but then went on to define the term without reference to what it is about pre-coded questions that makes them reliable. A few candidates did not appear to know what a pre-coded question is and incorrectly stated that they were 'highly valid' or gave 'in-depth data'. Other candidates assumed the question was about questionnaires or interviews (rather than a type of question) and hence points made were often tangential in nature e.g. that the researcher can easily clarify the question for respondents or they lack bias.
- (e) This question asked candidates to describe two strengths and two weaknesses of using interpretivist methods in sociological research. Most candidates discussed the interpretivist approach generally rather than interpretivist methods. Such responses were creditworthy but answers which referenced methods such as unstructured interviews and participant observation often made better quality points. Candidates who scored full marks clearly identified an aspect of interpretivist methods (e.g., that they use a micro approach) which they then described in terms of a strength (e.g., that this allows an in-depth focus on individuals). The most popular strengths cited were that interpretivist methods rely on qualitative data that is more valid than quantitative data because it allows respondents to freely express their own thoughts and feelings, and that interpretivists may achieve *verstehen* by showing empathy and putting themselves in the shoes of participants who they are observing or conversing with. In terms of limitations, candidates identified the lack of generalisability resulting from a micro approach or the greater likelihood of the researcher effect and bias occurring in methods where the researcher and respondent are face to face. Candidates who scored less well did not develop their points sufficiently.
- (f) This question required candidates to explain why ethical issues may cause problems when conducting sociological research. It is an extended response question and requires a minimum of three well developed points to score in band three (8 – 10 marks) with the level of conceptuality and quality of development being the discriminator within the band. The question proved to be challenging for many candidates. A small minority of responses incorrectly gave ethnic issues instead of ethical; whilst other responses focused on general problems associated with research. Many candidates showed an understanding of ethical issues such as harm, informed consent, privacy and deception etc., but then described the issues rather than explaining why they are problematic for sociological research. Examples of the latter might be: a researcher involved in covert observation may face the dilemmas of having to report illegal activities which may mean going into hiding due to safety fears; or the requirement to gain informed consent from participants may be difficult when researching a group who cannot give consent, e.g. children or people in institutions who may be viewed as not of sound mind; or, the requirement to not invade the participant's privacy can limit the type of questions asked or method used, or limit the use of personal documents, and this may negatively impact the quality of the data gathered. Some candidates spent valuable time describing issues of bias such as the interviewer effect which were not creditworthy as ethical issues.
- (g) The essay question focused on evaluating the extent to which structured interviews are the best method for sociological research. There were some high-quality responses. The best responses achieved level four (13 – 15 marks) by identifying and developing a minimum of six points for and against the view, drawing on sociological language throughout. Most candidates understood what

structured interviews involve, though some made generic points which can apply to any type of interview and others confused structured interviews with questionnaires. The best responses developed several strengths of structure interviews, showing good understanding and drawing upon methodological concepts such as positivism, standardisation of questions, reliability and/or representativeness. In terms of evaluation some candidates chose to criticise aspects of structured interviews such as the use of closed questions limiting the level of depth and detail, or the possibility of the interviewer effect skewing the truthfulness of data. Others directly challenged the structured interview approach by showing how aspects of interpretivist methodology are more effective, offering alternative methods such as participant observation, unstructured interviews and the use of triangulation. Some responses were very brief and list-like, limiting the marks awarded.

Section B: Culture, identity and socialisation

Question 2

- (a) The definitional question asked candidates to describe what is meant by the term 'values.' Very few candidates scored both marks. Many appeared to confuse values with norms, describing values as behaviours rather than as ideals. Even if candidates misunderstood the term itself, it was still possible to gain one mark for a correct example such as honesty, equality or freedom. Those that were successful in achieving two marks gave a response which identified values as standards or beliefs that are used to judge what is right and wrong, or ideals that are precious or worth striving for.
- (b) This question required candidates to describe two features of a multicultural society. Most candidates scored at least two marks, often citing one society hosting different ethnicities, religions, languages, foods and clothing styles. These features were then developed by successful candidates in terms of examples. Others focused more on features such as many cultures living side by side respecting each other's traditions. Many candidates took a positive view of multiculturalism and the idea of living together in harmony were common. A few candidates confused multiculturalism with globalisation/westernisation which was not creditworthy.
- (c) Candidates found this question demanding. It asked candidates to explain how individuals may achieve a higher status in society. Those candidates who scored well focused on education, hard work in a meritocracy, gaining promotion, doing charity work, using talents or marriage and then briefly explained how these could improve an individual's status. Candidates often referred here to climbing the social ladder or achieving social mobility into a higher class or gaining social respect and recognition. Some candidates who scored less well wrote about ascribed status, not focusing on the word 'achieve' in the question, offering examples such as being born into an upper class family as a way. Others wrote in general terms about conforming to the norms and values of society. Neither of these two approaches were creditworthy in terms of being ways of achieving status in society.
- (d) This question asked candidates to explain why rewards and sanctions are useful for social control. Almost all candidates demonstrated an understanding of rewards and sanctions and described their operation in different social contexts such as the family, school, peer group and workplace. Some also distinguished between formal and informal agencies of social control and discussed penalties for crime and deviance in wider society. However, the majority of responses did not get beyond mid band two marks as they did not move beyond simple description of how sanctions work to address the question of why rewards and sanctions are useful in social control. Candidates were rewarded for discussions of rewards being linked to encouraging and motivating conformity and sanctions to punishing and deterring non-conformity with social expectations.
- (e) The essay question focused on the extent to which nurture is more important than nature in explaining human behaviour. There were a few one-sided responses. Weaker responses were often brief and characterised by points lacking development and conceptuality. Some candidates were confused about what was meant by nature in this context, with a few referring to plants and trees for example, and some linking nature to primary socialisation and nurture to secondary socialisation or vice versa. However, many candidates did show some understanding and achieved marks in bands three and four. Those that latched on to the idea of nurture as socialisation were able to showcase some solid knowledge and use concepts to discuss the learning of norms and values and gender roles through different institutions such as the family and education. Such responses offered evidence including studies relating to gender socialisation, such as Oakley and Margaret Mead's research. Such responses often discussed feral children and the role of different

agents of socialisation, including education, peers and media. On the nature side, more successful answers referred to genetic evidence on IQ, Lombroso's ideas on inherited criminality or Murdock's functionalist ideas about natural gender roles.

Section C: Social Inequality

Question 3

- (a) This question on 'apartheid' was answered reasonably well. Most candidates gave a definition of the term with a fair degree of clarity. Successful responses described a system of racial segregation linking to South Africa and/or White oppression of Black people. Candidates who achieved both marks defined apartheid in terms of movement between the social classes (one element) across generations such as from parents to children (the second element). Both elements were needed to score two marks. Answers which only scored one mark lacked one of the two definitional elements or simply gave an example with no definition. Other candidates did not know or understand the term and made incorrect guesses.
- (b) There was a mixed response to this question which asked candidates to describe two examples of scapegoating in modern industrial societies. Candidates either knew what scapegoating was or guessed and referred to inequalities. Responses needed to be sociological rather than commonsense such as 'someone' being blamed for something unfairly. Common sociological examples that did gain credit were related to ethnic minority groups being targeted and blamed for crime by the police or media, working class or ethnic minority candidates being negatively labelled and blamed for bad behaviour by teachers and immigrants being blamed for taking working class jobs. Examples which were focused on discrimination rather than being blamed, labelled or targeted were not creditworthy.
- (c) This question asked candidates to explain how a welfare state may cause a dependency culture. Whilst many candidates clearly understood the question it was not always answered effectively. To achieve 5 – 6 marks candidates needed to describe three points. Not many achieved this and did not move beyond the obvious point about people getting used to welfare payments and becoming lazy, feeling that they had no need to look for a job. The key to achieving higher marks was to focus on aspects of the dependency culture itself, the norms and values that influence people to remain on benefits. Examples used by higher scoring candidates were often linked to the New Right such as the idea of individuals developing fatalism, succumbing to immediate gratification, the development of an underclass with anti-social values and a sense of entitlement. Other impressive responses referred to being stuck in a poverty cycle or poverty trap or to the idea that if welfare payments become too high this encourages people to rely on the 'nanny state' and thus taking away personal responsibility.
- (d) This question asked candidates to explain why the working class may find it difficult to achieve upward social mobility. It was generally well answered and gave an opportunity for some candidates to exhibit some impressive knowledge. Key ideas that were explored by candidates included a lack of education, fatalism, the urge for immediate gratification and the culture of dependency amongst the working class which can inhibit them from moving up the social class ladder. More sophisticated answers utilised the poverty trap and poverty cycle as structural impediments to mobility or Marxist ideas of false consciousness and oppression as strategies employed by the bourgeoisie to keep working class people in a subordinate social position. Some candidate strayed from the question somewhat and discussed ethnicity or gender not linked to social class and thereby did not achieve credit.
- (e) The essay question asked candidates to discuss the extent to which institutional racism explains social inequality. The level of candidate success largely depended on their knowledge of the central concept of institutional racism, or even racism. In some cases institutional racism became another term for general inequality, and candidates wrote at length about gender and social class discrimination, clearly thinking they were giving examples of institutional racism. Some candidates were well-prepared and produced excellent answers which discussed institutional racism in the police and criminal justice system, in education and in the workplace, often supported with concepts and examples. Candidates then evaluated the view by discussing other types of discrimination which are more prevalent or arguing that institutional racism is declining in significance due to equal opportunities policies and legislation. Whilst a few responses addressed the 'to what extent' and provided focused conclusions, these tended to be in the minority.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/13
Paper 13

Key messages

- In **Questions 1d** and **1e** a good technique is for candidates to first identify a feature of the method in question and then describe how that feature is a strength and/or limitation. For example, in **Question 1e** identifying that longitudinal studies have flexibility regarding their methods is a feature, the candidate could then point out that this allows for multiple methods where data from one method can be crossed checked by data from another.
- Candidates should have a clear understanding of reliability and its usefulness in checking and validating data through being able to replicate results. This was important for **Question 1b** on this paper but candidates often bring the concept into their responses to other questions.
- In the definition questions, candidates should try to include two separate elements in their definition to be awarded two marks. Examples can be a useful way of adding a second element and candidates should be encouraged to add one to their definition.
- Candidates could use real life examples as evidence in their points and arguments as they can boost the quality of an answer and show how the candidate is able to apply their learning to society.
- It is a good idea to practise deciphering questions. For example in **Questions 2d** and **3c** some candidates did not gain full credit as they did not reference the full context of the question i.e. the 'influence on identity' element in **Question 2d** and the 'trapped in poverty' idea in **Question 3c**.

General comments

Candidates showed a generally good level of engagement with the question paper and the assessment objectives. All candidates complete the compulsory **Question 1** on Theory and Methods. They must then choose to answer either **Question 2** on Culture, Identity and Socialisation or **Question 3** on Social Inequality. The majority of candidates chose to answer **Question 3**.

Some candidates showed an impressive knowledge and understanding of sociological concepts, ideas and theory and displayed some sophisticated ideas in extended questions. Not all candidates applied their knowledge appropriately to the questions. On questions where the use of concepts was more challenging some candidates used relevant examples to beneficial effect and this is to be encouraged. In essay responses the evaluation skills evidenced by some candidates were good, and most candidates offered a two-sided response.

Candidates appeared to have been well prepared in general, evidenced by the fact that time management appears to have been good, with the vast majority of candidates finishing the paper, and there were very few no responses or rubric errors.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Theory and Methods

Question 1

- (a) A particularly good response was given to the opening source-based question. Almost all candidates gained full marks by correctly identifying teachers and candidates as the two groups participating in the field experiment. Occasionally researchers were given as a group but such answers were rare.

- (b) This question asked candidates to identify two methods that are good for reliability. Basically any positivist-type method was acceptable. Common answers included questionnaire, survey, structured interview and experiment. Some incorrect answers were given, such as pilot studies, participant observation or sampling. Candidates who cited interviews, without specifying either structured or semi-structured were not awarded a mark as it was deemed too vague.
- (c) The source analysis question drew a good response. Candidates were asked to use the source to describe two ethical issues in sociological research. Many candidates gained two marks by identifying two ideas directly from the source, for example the anonymity of the school, the teachers being deceived by the researchers, the possibility of harm being caused to the candidates and the lack of informed consent throughout. Many candidates then developed their points by discussing the issue as wrong within the context of the source. Candidates who simply identified two correct issues without development could not move beyond two marks. Candidates who made generic (i.e. non-source-based) points about ethical issues, without referring to ideas in the source, were unable to achieve full marks.
- (d) This question asked candidates to describe two limitations of using closed questions in sociological research. A sizeable number of candidates achieved full marks. The key to success in this question was to identify an aspect of closed questions and then describe why or how it is a limitation. Successful responses referenced the fact that closed questions are yes/no or tick box questions which are limiting as respondents are confined to predetermined options, give no qualitative data and can lead to false answers if people feel compelled to choose an option with which they do not actually agree. Some candidates achieved one good point but did not give a second. A few candidates conflated closed questions with questionnaire and talked about a researcher not being present or a researcher not being able to form a bond with the participant; neither being a creditworthy response.
- (e) This question asked candidates to describe two strengths and two weaknesses of longitudinal studies in sociological research. Many candidates achieved good marks. Candidates who scored full marks clearly identified an aspect of longitudinal studies (e.g. that they take place over time) which they then described in terms of a strength (e.g. the length of the study allows researchers to study change) or a weakness (because they may be years in duration, they can be expensive to run due to the costs of researchers re-visiting the sample periodically). The most popular strengths cited were that researchers could gain an understanding of how people changed and what factors caused these changes, participants are likely to act naturally as they are used to being studied, thus increasing validity and the idea that by making comparisons over time, they can identify correlations between variables. In terms of limitations, candidates identified the time and possible costs involved, sample attrition and a researcher effect taking place as people know they are being studied. A few candidates cited longitudinal studies such as 7Up and the Millenium Cohort Study to support points made. Candidates who scored less well often did not make the requisite number of points or made vague allusions to accuracy, validity or reliability with no substantiating reference to any aspect of longitudinal studies.
- (f) This extended question required candidates to explain why focus groups are a useful method for sociological research. It is an extended response question and requires a minimum of three well developed points to score in band three (8 – 10 marks) with the level of conceptuality and quality of development being the discriminator within the band. This question proved to be challenging. A few responses showed no creditworthy knowledge of focus groups. Many other responses included a few creditworthy points such as that they give in-depth or qualitative data or they are high in validity but often such points were not explained in terms of the mechanics of a focus group; for example, that people are encouraged to talk freely giving opinions and feelings or that participants often interact with each other giving a true to life aspect of data gathering. If points were short and undeveloped then they scored in band one only (1 – 3 marks). Responses including several partially developed points scored in band two (4 – 7 marks). The best responses identified aspects of focus group methodology, such as rapport being gained, and then discussed why these were useful to researchers.
- (g) The essay question focused on evaluating the extent to which sociological research can be generalisable. This is a term often used by candidates but is not always well understood. The best responses focused most points upon the sample – for example that only a sample that is likely to be representative can produce results which can then be applied to the target population. Some candidates discussed stratified and quota sampling in this regard. Others made sound arguments about being able to generalise from well-selected case studies or even a small sample from a small

community. Some candidates identified generalisability with positivism and a macro approach using large samples. In addition credit was also given to candidates who pointed out that validity and reliability are also pre-conditions for generalisability in the sense that one can never apply findings to a target group from an invalid study nor one which could not be replicated to check results, however large or representative the sample may be. The issue with the latter points was that they often did not include the sample as a source of reference and thus gave the impression that just because findings were highly valid then this means that it can be safely generalised – which is not true as it still depends on the sampling choices made. In evaluation some candidates argued that sampling error is always a possibility and that interpretivists negate the need or possibility of generalisability due to the individualised nature of qualitative data; whilst others pointed to problems with some sampling methods such as snowball and random sampling.

Section B: Culture, identity and socialisation

Question 2

- (a) The definitional question asked candidates to describe what is meant by the term ‘social interaction.’ Most candidates knew what the term meant and scored at least one if not both marks. Those that were successful in achieving two marks gave a response which identified two elements such as the idea of conversing or enacting behaviours and the idea of this being done with others i.e. more than one person.
- (b) This question required candidates to describe two roles that adolescents may have in modern industrial societies. This was well-answered and the majority of candidates named and briefly described roles such as son/daughter, employee, member of a sub-culture etc. Candidates who did not score full marks often stopped after identifying two roles and did not describe them.
- (c) This question proved challenging, it asked candidates to explain how value consensus is maintained in society. There was a good response from many candidates. Common creditworthy points tended to focus on the ideas that consensus is maintained through sanctions and rewards in different agencies and through basic socialisation into conformity and socially accepted roles within the family and at school. Some candidates made intelligent links with functionalism and there were some decent quality conceptual answers. Candidates who scored less well usually only made one or two points.
- (d) This question asked candidates to explain why gender is an important influence on identity. Whilst material on social inequality and women’s subordination could be relevant to the question, in general not all candidates kept their discussions linked to identity and hence such points were only partially developed. This apart, there were some decent quality responses scoring in band two (4 – 7 marks). Social expectations and stereotypes of males and females featured heavily with some candidates developing this in terms of childhood socialisation, whilst others made connections with the functionalist view of male instrumental and female expressive roles. Some candidates made clever use of concepts such as toxic and hegemonic masculinity and studies such as Oakley on canalisation and manipulation were frequently seen. Candidates who scored in band one (1 – 3 marks) invariably only made one developed point or several that were undeveloped, perhaps with one partially developed.
- (e) The essay question focused on the extent to which Marxist explanations of youth sub-culture are the most useful. There was a rather mixed response with very few responses demonstrating familiarity with the classic Marxist studies, such as Cohen, Brake and Willis, and their ideas on sub-cultures as resistance or a ‘magical’ way of coping with their low status. One way of approaching the ‘for’ side of the debate was to consider several different working-class youth sub-cultures such as punks, skinheads or anti-school sub-cultures and discuss how each in their separate ways show resistance to capitalism and it’s notion of the social class hierarchy. However, very few responses included the details of the sub-cultures. Some candidates made references to a general lack of status amongst working class youth who thus turned to sub-cultures and gangs to achieve more respect as well as friends. In evaluation some pointed out that not all working class youth join sub-cultures and others used both functionalist ideas to challenge the Marxist view. A few candidates offered the idea of sub-cultures providing a sense of belonging in the transition from childhood to adulthood or acting as a safety valve to allow youth to let off steam and experiment before succumbing to conformity and adult roles. The postmodernist idea of thrill seeking youngsters looking for an adrenaline rush provided by rule-breaking also featured in some answers. Feminist

interpretations of youth sub-culture such as McRobbie and Garber were rare but could easily have provided a counterpoint to the Marxist view.

Section C: Social Inequality

Question 3

- (a) The definitional question on the 'upper class' was answered very well. Candidates achieved both marks by including reference to the highest class in society/above the middle and working classes and often brought in terms such as the elite, the bourgeoisie or those who hold the most power and status in society. Answers which only scored one mark lacked one of the two definitional elements required.
- (b) There was also a strong response to the four-mark question which asked candidates to describe two features of absolute poverty. Many candidates put together a list of necessities which people in absolute poverty lack such as clean water, housing, sufficient food or healthcare. These could have been broken up into separate features and briefly described rather than lumping them all together. For example, a candidate could have used no access to healthcare and then briefly linked this to higher mortality rates. For a second feature such candidates often turned to the idea of being stuck in the poverty trap, living below the poverty line or experiencing social exclusion. All were creditworthy and candidates picked up both marks if they briefly described the link between absolute poverty and these issues.
- (c) This question asked candidates to explain how an individual becomes trapped in poverty. Many candidates wrote knowledgeably about how individuals may come to experience poverty and showed good conceptual knowledge drawing on terms such as poverty cycle, discrimination, the culture of poverty, fatalism and immediate gratification. In general it was well answered, with most candidates scoring in band two (4 – 6 marks). Not all candidates followed through on the 'trapped' idea and hence did not achieve full marks. Popular points included not having access to education and therefore only having access to unskilled, low-paid work or being born into poverty. All such answers needed was to show how these situations made it difficult to escape poverty, by making better quality jobs inaccessible and therefore no social mobility or, in the case of being born into poverty, the idea that this will likely affect one's values and fatalism is likely to set in making it difficult for people to believe they can escape their poverty.
- (d) This question asked candidates to explain why social exclusion has negative consequences for individuals. Many responses demonstrated a limited understanding of social exclusion. Those who scored in the highest band three (6 – 8 marks) made at least three well-developed and conceptual points. Popular successful answers drew upon the idea of those who are socially excluded are likely to experience discrimination, fatalism, poverty and a lack of access to numerous services such as education and healthcare, both necessary for personal and social wellbeing. There was no need for candidates to delve down into the causes of social exclusion, or even to explore groups who may suffer social exclusion, as the question focused on the consequences.
- (e) The essay question asked candidates to discuss the extent to which minority ethnic groups experience the most discrimination. The best responses scored in band four (13 – 15 marks) and had both range and depth, offering at least six well-developed and conceptual points. Such points were of paragraph length and invariably identified the point in the first sentence before unpacking and giving evidence to support it. This unpacking often involved concepts, examples and/or a study or theory reference. Common creditworthy points referenced ethnic minorities having problems securing decent quality housing and healthcare, being labelled in school and targeted by police in the community, suffering institutional racism in the workplace and being scapegoated for the loss of working class jobs. In evaluation most candidates offered other groups who suffered equal if not worse discrimination including women, the underclass and working class, the old and the very young. Even the best answers often wrote introductions which were too long and not necessary. Candidates should concentrate on producing a quality conclusion rather than an introduction which often only defines the key terms in the question. Candidates who scored in band three (9 – 12 marks) had a mixture of developed and partially developed points; in band two (5 – 8 marks) fewer points were made and usually development was only partial. Candidates who scored in band one for the essay were few but gave list-like answers with little supporting evidence or development.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/21
Paper 21

Key messages

- Candidates do not need to write an introductory paragraph. Some candidates start their answers to 8 and 15 mark questions with a substantial paragraph briefly introducing each point they will make, and then covering these points in greater detail later in the essay. This leads to quite a lot of repetition, and lost time. It would be better for candidates to have a brief plan in note form, not intended to be marked.
- Candidates should write in paragraphs, particularly in the banded parts – **(c)**, **(d)** and **(e)**.
- **Part (e)** requires a debate, with several points for and against, and a judgement at the end in a conclusion. To further improve performance, candidates should include some form of sociological evidence to substantiate each point made. This could be in the form of examples, statistics, sociological concepts, theory or even a sociological study. This way answers will be better developed and explained.
- Responses for **parts (b)** and **(c)** can be short – perhaps a couple of sentences per point. A couple of words, however, does not meet the requirement to ‘describe’ in **(b)** questions or ‘explain’ in **(c)** questions. The command words really are crucial to candidate success.
- Points in **parts (d)** and **(e)** should be developed more fully, sociologically evidenced and always be in paragraphs with an explicit, clear focus on the question.
- Candidates’ knowledge of definitions could be further improved. This would enable them to not only obtain full marks in **(a)** questions but would also help them to understand key terminology in other questions as well. Questions are always based on the specification, and the specification gives a list of key terms. Candidates need to be familiar with all the key terms in order to ensure they can engage with the full set of questions asked.
- Candidates should show their sociological knowledge by using terms, concepts, studies and theories whenever possible.
- Candidates should spend time thinking about what the questions are asking and planning answers to those longer questions before they start to write – this is particularly important in **part (e)** essay questions to ensure that candidates remain focused on the specific demands of the question set.
- Candidates should use the marks per question as guidance for how much should 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 marks. Time management skills and regular practice of timed examination questions in the classroom will really help with this.
- Credit is given for appropriate examples, particularly in questions where it is perhaps more difficult to demonstrate conceptual knowledge.

General comments

The paper succeeded in balancing accessibility with a degree of challenge for more confident candidates. In general candidates showed a reasonable knowledge of the subject matter, often integrating sociological concepts and, in some cases, a range of theory into their answers. **Family and Education** were the most popular questions followed by **Crime, deviance and social control** and then **Media**.

Many candidates used relevant contemporary, global and localised examples alongside the more traditional 'textbook' evidence in order to justify and substantiate several of the points made. This demonstrated both sociological knowledge and the ability to apply sociological concepts and theory to the real world and so should be encouraged.

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

In the **part (a)** question, candidates should 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.

In **part (c)** questions candidates need to make **more than two** sociological points, evidenced and developed.

For **part (d)** candidates should adopt the same approach as for **(c)** but develop ideas further, consider more range and ensure concepts/theory/studies are used appropriately. Concepts, development, quality of response 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 organise their answers into paragraphs and develop each idea fully using theory, studies, examples and/or concepts wherever relevant. Candidates should aim for **three** developed points 'for' and **three** developed points '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 and should engage sociologically and conceptually wherever possible. Some candidates choose to answer the 15-mark questions first to make sure that they do not run out of time, this worked well for several candidates but ultimately this is up to the candidates.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Family

Question 1

- (a) Many candidates were awarded 2 marks for a full definition of 'cohabitation'. Sometimes, however, there was some vagueness in the definition; the term here means being in a relationship, not just sharing a home.
- (b) This was generally well answered, a few candidates gave alternatives to marriage rather than to the family in their response; these did not get marks.
- (c) Most candidates gave some response about ethnicity and family life. Answers that discussed cultural and religious differences were accepted. Better answers referred to specific examples, e.g. South Asian families perhaps being more likely to be extended/contain traditional gender roles etc. Most candidates referred to minority ethnic groups but the term 'ethnicity' allows for any ethnic group. Some answers focused on work, education or other more general issues and so were less successful through not focusing as explicitly on family life.
- (d) This question was generally well answered with most candidates offering several reasons why family size is getting smaller. Most common responses included development of ideas regarding secularisation, feminism, the privatised nuclear family, industrialisation and the cost of living. The best answers integrated concepts and theory into points. There was some overlap in points made at times which prevented some candidates from achieving the top marks available.
- (e) On the whole this question was answered well. Most answers covered both sides of the question, but often the 'for' side on the positives of single parent families was less well explained, resulting in a somewhat unbalanced response in terms of quality. Stronger answers made good use of feminism (escaping domestic abuse/removal of patriarchal ideologies and expectations) and

postmodernist ideas about choice and negotiated roles and structures on the 'for' side. The 'against' side engaged with functionalism/The New Right critiques well and also often brought in economic considerations too. The best answers didn't allow their responses to drift into a generic discussion of family life but instead remained focused on single parent families, as per the question.

Section B: Education

Question 2

- (a) The majority of candidates explained what selective education meant by reference to ability, fees, gender, etc. Most candidates referred to schools selecting who can study there but answers referring to streaming were also accepted.
- (b) This question was well answered with candidates clearly understanding the 'hidden curriculum'. Common answers typically referred to hierarchies, socialisation and sanctions and rewards. Answers were also sometimes linked to theories such as feminism and Marxism.
- (c) This question was accessible and most candidates addressed it with some degree of success. Peer pressure and anti/pro-school sub-cultures were frequently discussed. The best answers remained focused on the 'educational achievement' part of the question but in a number of answers seen this was not the case, resulting in lower marks. At times, candidates did not separate out their points into paragraphs and thus it was hard to see where one point began and ended.
- (d) Most candidates understood the functionalist view of education and separated out different aspects of it in order to construct their response. Typical points made included social order, meritocracy, social mobility, skills, secondary socialisation, economics and social control. Some weaker responses were repetitive and did not include the required three points. It is crucial that points are separated out by the candidate and that each idea discussed is clearly different. Some candidates included reference to Marxism and/or feminism, which was not relevant to the question and so was not credited.
- (e) This question on whether private schools are the best for students was answered well. On the 'for' side enhanced facilities and resources was the most commonly seen idea. Functionalist ideas were often integrated too, alongside points about scholarships and enhanced life chances for the bright working classes. On the 'against' side, Marxist and feminist theories were often well used alongside more generic points about unfairness and a lack of equal opportunities. It was the level of theoretical and conceptual engagement with the issues that typically separated the candidates.

Section C: Crime, deviance and social control

Question 3

- (a) This term 'master status' was not well understood, with some candidates seeing it as a synonym for a successful criminal. The best answers linked to labelling theory and recognised that this was the main way a person became seen, e.g. as a criminal.
- (b) This conceptually challenging question was answered well by candidates who linked crime successfully to such ideas as consumerism, material/relative deprivation and inability to achieve the American Dream.
- (c) This question required candidates to compare and differentiate between the terms 'crime' and 'deviance'. Answers generally demonstrated understanding of both terms but explanation was often limited to either breaking a law or a norm. More developed answers considered severity of punishment, perceived seriousness of the transgression and societal responses. Examples were also a good way to consolidate understanding.
- (d) Candidates had a good understanding on the whole of the concept 'dark figure of crime'. Marks were not always maximised, however, as responses often included points made were not clearly different to one another. To make a number of points which accumulate marks, it is best for candidates to avoid presenting one broad point (such as, crime may not be reported) which is then exemplified in several ways within the same paragraph. Better responses gave three clearly different reasons why there is a dark figure of crime, e.g. it is not reported and a discussion of

some of the many reasons for this, it is not recorded and a consideration of policing issues such as coughing and cuffing or an inability to solve the crime and then white-collar crime, which is often not known about, often dealt with internally, can be linked to corruption and bribery.

- (e) There was some good knowledge and understanding demonstrated on both sides of the debate. Quite a few answers incorrectly focused on the media influencing people to commit crime, rather than influencing ideas about crime which resulted in low marks. Those that maintained focus on the question did well, using on the 'for' side ideas such as moral panics, folk devils, sensationalism, agenda setting, stereotyping and labelling theory. The 'against' side allowed candidates to discuss how agencies other than the media influenced ideas about crime as well as how the media did not influence. This meant that a wide variety of successful responses were seen.

Section D: Media

Question 4

There were very few responses to the Media question.

- (a) This was not answered well. Most responses achieved no credit or only gave a partial definition.
- (b) There were frequent misunderstandings of this question on funding. Better answers often referred to state funding, private funding and/or advertising. Examples were well used to back these up.
- (c) This question required candidates to compare and differentiate between traditional and new media. Candidates demonstrated understanding of the key differences between traditional and new media and there were some successful answers, but also some misunderstandings of the terms and some questionable claims about differences (e.g. that traditional media are for information and new media for entertainment). The best answers chose non-debateable differences such as interactivity, globalisation, on-demand access, citizen journalism and portability to achieve their marks, well backed up by examples.
- (d) There were some good points made about why media stereotypes were changing; better answers often made points clearer by including examples of such changing stereotypes or stereotyped groups. A range of creditable reasons were given, with the most common being minority group employment in the media industry, changing societal norms and values, anti-discrimination legislation and social movements such as feminism and #BLM.
- (e) Very mixed responses were seen to this question. The best answers often linked media effects theories to voting patterns on both sides of the debate, e.g. on the 'for' side the hypodermic needle and on the 'against' side the audience selection. This worked well. Similarly, some candidates made good use of localised and global examples of voting and elections to substantiate their points. Some weaker responses demonstrated a limited understanding of the issues raised by the question and did not get further in the debate than state censorship and propaganda which was not well focused on voting patterns. It is crucial in the **part (e)** questions that candidates do keep their focus on the specific question and the themes it raises in order to be successful.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/22
Paper 22

Key messages

- Candidates do not need to write an introductory paragraph. Some candidates start their answers to 8 and 15 mark questions with a substantial paragraph briefly introducing each point they will make, and then covering these points in greater detail later in the essay. This leads to quite a lot of repetition, and lost time. It would be better for candidates to have a brief plan in note form, not intended to be marked.
- Candidates should write in paragraphs, particularly in the banded parts – **(c)**, **(d)** and **(e)**.
- **Part (e)** requires a debate, with several points for and against, and a judgement at the end in a conclusion. To further improve performance, candidates should include some form of sociological evidence to substantiate each point made. This could be in the form of examples, statistics, sociological concepts, theory or even a sociological study. This way answers will be better developed and explained.
- Responses for **parts (b)** and **(c)** can be short – perhaps a couple of sentences per point. A couple of words, however, does not meet the requirement to ‘describe’ in **(b)** questions or ‘explain’ in **(c)** questions. The command words really are crucial to candidate success.
- Points in **parts (d)** and **(e)** should be developed more fully, sociologically evidenced and always be in paragraphs with an explicit, clear focus on the question.
- Candidates’ knowledge of definitions could be further improved. This would enable them to not only obtain full marks in **(a)** questions but would also help them to understand key terminology in other questions as well. Questions are always based on the specification, and the specification gives a list of key terms. Candidates need to be familiar with all the key terms in order to ensure they can engage with the full set of questions asked.
- Candidates should show their sociological knowledge by using terms, concepts, studies and theories whenever possible.
- Candidates should spend time thinking about what the questions are asking and planning answers to those longer questions before they start to write – this is particularly important in **part (e)** essay questions to ensure that candidates remain focused on the specific demands of the question set.
- Candidates should use the marks per question as guidance for how much should 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 marks. Time management skills and regular practice of timed examination questions in the classroom will really help with this.
- Credit is given for appropriate examples, particularly in questions where it is perhaps more difficult to demonstrate conceptual knowledge.

General comments

In general candidates responded well to the demands of the paper which balanced accessibility with a degree of challenge for more confident candidates. Many candidates had been well-prepared by centres in terms of exam technique, for example giving two-sided responses in essays and backing points up with evidence. Knowledge and understanding was generally good although some candidates did not always use their knowledge to best effect because they slightly misconstrued the question, for example **1(e)** – ‘norm’ not ‘best’. **Family** and **Education** were the most popular option questions, followed by **Crime, Deviance and Social Control** and finally the **Media** option which was chosen by very few candidates.

Rubric errors were very rare and most candidates appeared to have ample time in which to finish the paper. Some candidates did not number or incorrectly numbered their answers, however, and centres would be advised to ensure candidates are aware of the importance of doing this diligently.

Many candidates used relevant contemporary, global and localised examples alongside the more traditional ‘textbook’ evidence in order to justify and substantiate several of the points made. This demonstrated both

sociological knowledge and the ability to apply sociological concepts and theory to the real world and so should be encouraged.

In the **part (a)** question, candidates should 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.

In **part (c)** questions candidates need to make **more than two** sociological points, evidenced and developed.

For **part (d)** candidates should adopt the same approach as for **(c)** but develop ideas further, consider more range and ensure concepts/theory/studies are used appropriately. Concepts, development, quality of response 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 organise their answers into paragraphs and develop each idea fully using theory, studies, examples and/or concepts wherever relevant. Candidates should aim for **three** developed points ‘for’ and **three** developed points ‘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 and should engage sociologically and conceptually wherever possible. Some candidates choose to answer the 15-mark questions first to make sure that they do not run out of time, this worked well for several candidates but ultimately this is up to the candidates.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Family

Question 1

- (a) In general, the question was answered well, with a large number of candidates scoring full marks by stating that family diversity involves an increase in many different types of families in society and then giving specific examples such as extended family, etc. A few candidates incorrectly referred to family diversity as the roles of men and women in the family being shared equally. Others gave a confused definition but achieved one mark by giving a relevant example that did demonstrate some knowledge.
- (b) This question asked candidates to describe two positive functions of the family and most candidates scored well. The most popular correct answers focused on primary socialisation, social control, reproduction and the care and support of family members. Candidates who scored less well tended to leave points undeveloped or make points that were too vague to credit.
- (c) The question on how family roles are changing drew a variable response. Some candidates demonstrated some impressive knowledge of changes within married/partner roles such as the development of joint conjugal roles, the New Man and women as breadwinners along with the dual burden and triple shift emerging. Studies such as Wilmott and Young and Ann Oakley regularly featured. Others noted the emergence of child-centred families and the changing role of grandparents as carers and sources of financial and emotional support. A few candidates discussed the process of different social institutions taking over the role of the family in certain respects, e.g. looking after the elderly in care homes, the socialisation of children in schools etc. It was noticeable that some candidates spent too long describing the past before turning to the change in family roles which was the crux of the question. This wasted time and simpler characterisation of past to present would have sufficed.
- (d) There was a mixed response to the question on why some individuals have a negative experience of family life. Many candidates latched onto the idea of the dark side of family life and made numerous points revolving around different kinds of abuse such as domestic violence, physical abuse and child neglect. While reasons such as divorce, forced/arranged marriage, the burden on women and poverty were mentioned as well, there was a tendency to concentrate on domestic violence, making responses narrow in focus, generally lacking range and often preventing a top

band mark from being awarded. There were some intelligent references to Marxist views of the 'warm bath' theory as an explanation for male domination and violence in the home. The best responses made three well developed points, with each point explaining why particular experiences in a variety of different areas of family life had a negative impact on individuals. Candidates who fared less well tended to describe the negative experiences with little explanation of their impact.

- (e) This 15-mark essay question required candidates to discuss the extent to which the nuclear family is the norm. A noticeable feature of many candidate responses was a fundamental misunderstanding of the question. Most candidates on the 'for' side of the debate employed a variety of arguments to show that the nuclear family is the 'best' rather than the 'norm'. Many deflected from the focus of the question and even candidates with excellent conceptual and theoretical knowledge of the family did not achieve maximum credit due to this lack of focus. Candidates who did understand the question correctly gave well thought out answers, such as geographical mobility, advertising (cereal packet family), best fit thesis, modern equivalents, etc. with good use of supporting theory, i.e. functionalism, feminism and postmodernism. Evaluation was good, many argued that other types of families such as reconstituted and lone parent were now more common for a variety of social reasons including secularisation, changing laws and more liberal attitudes. Others argued that the extended family has always been the norm in certain cultures where the functional role of grandparents and the wider family network remains crucial. A few candidates even mentioned singlehood, friends as family and living in communes as alternatives to the nuclear family and thus challenged the idea of that family form remaining as the norm.

Section B: Education

Question 2

- (a) When defining 'single-sex school' the majority of candidates scored both marks by referring to schools for just one gender, either just boys or just girls. Sometimes candidates gave an example of a school or college in their local area and such examples were creditworthy.
- (b) This question asked candidates to describe two functions of education. Popular answers described education's role as an agent of secondary socialisation, the transmitter of skills/knowledge as preparation for work, an agent of social control and a conduit for national unity. A few candidates explicitly described functionalist and/or Marxist and/or feminist views and linked these well to the question. The best answers identified the function and then used examples as part of their description to develop the point and thus score full marks. Some of the responses were repetitive, not developed and/or too vague to be credited, such as 'preparing us for life' with no description pertaining to schools.
- (c) This question asked candidates to explain how gender discrimination has been reduced in schools. Common answers included the right of both genders to study the same subjects (particularly STEM), positive discrimination (such as girls getting first use of lab equipment), new laws in some countries allowing girls access to school, more positive female representations in textbooks and more female teachers in schools to act as role models. Candidates who scored less well tended to stray from discussing school actions to discuss the efforts of girls themselves through improving results or the immaturity and bad behaviour of boys in the classroom and thus had less specific focus on the question. Some responses offered vague and/or repetitive points such as 'there is more equality now' or 'there are equal opportunities', without clarifying points or sufficiently linking them to school practices.
- (d) This question asked candidates to explain why private schools are criticised by some sociologists. The quality of answers varied from simple common sense to highly conceptual. Only a few candidates concentrated on Marxist critiques demonstrating strong theoretical and conceptual knowledge. Most candidates referred to the cost of private education but not all then progressed to explain what the problem with this might be. Others linked the issue to social class inequality and often continued their point to make sound arguments about private schools breeding a sense of social superiority and giving advantages to students beyond the classroom via the old boy network and social capital. Others focused on the material advantages of private schools when compared to public or state schools – smaller class sizes and enviable facilities in which students can thrive. A few candidates described positive aspects of the private school system and did not explain why these may be problematic for some sociologists. There were some candidates who made sensible

and convincing points from feminist theory, focusing particularly on the linkage between private schools and male privilege.

- (e) The essay style question asked candidates to discuss the extent to which educational achievement is determined by a student's intelligence and effort. Many responses lacked a range of good quality arguments 'for' the view. The best points linked to functionalist arguments about meritocracy and school success being linked to natural intelligence and hard work. Other well used ideas were IQ tests and standardised testing, equality of opportunity, a national curriculum and evidence to show that lower classes or oppressed groups can overcome inequality if helped by the state, e.g. through scholarships. Some candidates treated 'intelligence and effort' separately, which typically led to a better range of points, whilst others tended to conflate both in repetitious arguments. In evaluation candidates adopted clearer lines of argument on factors over and above intelligence and effort that impeded academic success. Popular responses included the barriers to success created because of material deprivation, cultural deprivation, linguistic factors, sexism, teacher labelling and racism and the ethnocentric curriculum. The best responses demonstrated some sophisticated and impressive theoretical and conceptual knowledge. Responses that scored less well contained fewer points with less development and often had common-sense tone rather than engaging with sociological theory, concepts and studies.

Section C: Crime, deviance and social control.

Question 3

- (a) There was a mainly good response to the definitional question on material deprivation. Candidates who scored best included two aspects in their answer – for example referring to the idea of a lack of goods, money or things needed for life in society. Some candidates referred to those on a very low income. Several candidates conflated material with relative deprivation. Candidates who scored less well usually only identified one element in their answer or repeated the term 'deprivation' from the question.
- (b) Here candidates were asked to describe two examples of a criminal sub-culture. A wide variety of groups were creditworthy as 'criminal' including youth sub-cultures, hacking groups, drug gangs, delinquent gangs, terrorist groups etc. Popular answers included skinheads (violence), punks (anti-social behaviour and drugs), hippies (drugs) and the Mafia and other named gangs. Candidates who scored less well on this question incorrectly identified a group (e.g. ethnic minorities in general) and/or did not show how the particular subcultures identified are criminal, e.g. only mentioning that they are non-conformist or that they have a distinct style of dressing, and thus gaining only partial credit.
- (c) This question asked candidates to explain how formal agencies of social control deal with crime. Many candidates demonstrated understanding of the meaning of formal as opposed to informal social control agencies. The best responses dealt separately with three or more different agencies such as the police, courts and prison service and so ensured the range required and then discussed the sanctions used by each. The best answers also identified elements such as fear, deterrence, punishment, rehabilitation etc., that made such sanctions impactful. Sometimes candidates listed formal agents without making the link to how they dealt with crime.
- (d) This question which asked why white-collar crimes are not always reported to the police was a challenging question for some candidates. Few candidates specified examples of white-collar crimes in their answers, a few mentioned tax evasion and theft from a company. A common response was the idea that this type of crime is linked to the middle and upper class who have the power and connections to ensure their crimes are not reported, e.g. bribing employees and authorities to 'turn a blind eye'. Other popular answers included police being too busy targeting the working class and minorities to catch white-collar criminals, the idea that victims are frequently not aware of financial crimes perpetrated against them and the idea that businesses often deal with internal crimes administratively to avoid bad publicity.
- (e) The 15-mark essay question concerned the extent to which gender socialisation explains why females commit less crime than males. The question revolved around females but, of course, implicitly suggests that males commit more crimes. Points made needed to ensure that arguments focused on females or were brought back round to females to be creditworthy. Many points made only discussed males, e.g. the socialisation of males into masculinity which makes them more likely to commit acts of violence. So, despite many candidates offering an impressive range of

conceptual and theoretical points they could not achieve band four due to this imbalance and lack of explicit focus on the question in their answer. Those who scored best made a range of points for gender socialisation of females linked to how girls are manipulated into 'gentle' femininity and socially controlled in the home so that they lack any real opportunity to commit crimes in the public sphere. Feminist theory was well used as were studies such as Oakley and McRobbie. In evaluation, the chivalry thesis featured prominently, as did the idea that female crimes may not be detected because women are not expected by the police to commit crime due to gender stereotyping. Some candidates also noted that some self-report studies now show that female crime is on the rise. The other common strategy in evaluation was to use classic theories about why males commit more crime and utilise them to suggest why women commit less. For example, some discussed Cohen's status frustration as a reason why young males might commit crime but pointed out that the frequent 'gang' or peer element of such crimes was less likely to be a driver for females. Most candidates did produce a two-sided response with a short conclusion and scored marks in at least band two, if not band three. For those that didn't, the most common issue was candidates discussing gendered socialisation with no reference to crime or discussing ethnicity/class with no reference to gender.

Section D: Media

Question 4

- (a) The definitional question asked candidates to describe what is meant by the term traditional media. The best answers included two elements, for two marks, such as old media that people do not interact with or non-digital media. Some used an example as the second element such as newspapers or films.
- (b) This question asked candidates to describe two examples of media folk devils. Many candidates found this challenging and many responses demonstrated no understanding of the term. Those answers that were creditworthy often listed two examples but then did not describe them adequately. Responses seen included youth sub-cultures as trouble (mods and rockers, hoodies) and ethnic minorities being labelled as criminals.
- (c) The question on how males are represented in contemporary media was an accessible question which drew a mixed response from candidates. Common-sense answers were frequent, such as that men were often shown as the boss, having muscles, dominant, etc. More sociological and higher scoring responses identified males being depicted as the breadwinner and as demonstrating hegemonic masculinity. Toxic masculinity was also discussed by some candidates. A few candidates also referred to the metrosexual man or New Man.
- (d) The question on why political beliefs might be influenced by the media was generally not well done. Better responses cited real life examples such as the use of propaganda, e.g. in Hitler's Germany or the famous case of the Sun newspaper influencing the 1992 British election result. Other more general but equally creditworthy points included the idea that the ruling class use the media to justify the status quo or that the media injects its message into a passive audience (hypodermic syringe model) so that we vote for parties whose messages receive positive appraisals in the channels/programmes we watch. Very few candidates discussed the role of new media and social media platforms in influencing the public's political opinions. Candidates who scored less well made fewer developed points and/or did not focus specifically enough on the question e.g. talking about media influence but not about politics.
- (e) The essay-style question focused on the extent to which the new media has created a digital divide. Some responses demonstrated a lack of understanding of the core term 'digital divide'. On the 'for' side of the debate commonly seen answers included the idea that the poor cannot afford digital technology, that there may be areas in some developing countries where digital signals do not yet reach and that old people are not interested in, and cannot get to grips with, the new technologies. In evaluation candidates often argued that times are changing and hence the technology is becoming cheaper and therefore more accessible for all, that more people in developing countries are now accessing digital media due to government initiatives, e.g. the one laptop scheme and that the elderly are frequent and expert digital consumers, e.g. the 'silver surfer' idea.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/23
Paper 23

Key messages

- Candidates do not need to write an introductory paragraph. Some candidates start their answers to 8 and 15 mark questions with a substantial paragraph briefly introducing each point they will make, and then covering these points in greater detail later in the essay. This leads to quite a lot of repetition, and lost time. It would be better for candidates to have a brief plan in note form, not intended to be marked.
- Candidates should write in paragraphs, particularly in the banded parts – **(c)**, **(d)** and **(e)**.
- **Part (e)** requires a debate, with several points for and against, and a judgement at the end in a conclusion. To further improve performance, candidates should include some form of sociological evidence to substantiate each point made. This could be in the form of examples, statistics, sociological concepts, theory or even a sociological study. This way answers will be better developed and explained.
- Responses for **parts (b)** and **(c)** can be short – perhaps a couple of sentences per point. A couple of words, however, does not meet the requirement to ‘describe’ in **(b)** questions or ‘explain’ in **(c)** questions. The command words really are crucial to candidate success.
- Points in **parts (d)** and **(e)** should be developed more fully, sociologically evidenced and always be in paragraphs with an explicit, clear focus on the question.
- Candidates’ knowledge of definitions could be further improved. This would enable them to not only obtain full marks in **(a)** questions but would also help them to understand key terminology in other questions as well. Questions are always based on the specification, and the specification gives a list of key terms. Candidates need to be familiar with all the key terms in order to ensure they can engage with the full set of questions asked.
- Candidates should show their sociological knowledge by using terms, concepts, studies and theories whenever possible.
- Candidates should spend time thinking about what the questions are asking and planning answers to those longer questions before they start to write – this is particularly important in **part (e)** essay questions to ensure that candidates remain focused on the specific demands of the question set.
- Candidates should use the marks per question as guidance for how much should 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 marks. Time management skills and regular practice of timed examination questions in the classroom will really help with this.
- Credit is given for appropriate examples, particularly in questions where it is perhaps more difficult to demonstrate conceptual knowledge.

General comments

The paper succeeded in balancing accessibility with a degree of challenge for more confident candidates. In general candidates showed a reasonable knowledge of the subject matter, often integrating sociological concepts and, in some cases, a range of theory into their answers. **Family** was the option question answered by nearly all candidates, followed by **Education** and **Crime, deviance and social control**, with the **Media** option being answered by only a very small cohort of candidates.

Many candidates relevant contemporary, global and localised examples alongside the more traditional 'textbook' evidence in order to justify and substantiate several of the points made. This demonstrated both sociological knowledge and the ability to apply sociological concepts and theory to the real world and so should be encouraged.

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

In the **part (a)** question, candidates should 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.

In **part (c)** questions candidates need to make **more than two** sociological points, evidenced and developed.

For **part (d)** candidates should adopt the same approach as for **(c)** but develop ideas further, consider more range and ensure concepts/theory/studies are used appropriately. Concepts, development, quality of response 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 organise their answers into paragraphs and develop each idea fully using theory, studies, examples and/or concepts wherever relevant. Candidates should aim for **three** developed points 'for' and **three** developed points '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 and should engage sociologically and conceptually wherever possible. Some candidates choose to answer the 15-mark questions first to make sure that they do not run out of time, this worked well for several candidates but ultimately this is up to the candidates.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Family

Question 1

- (a) The majority of candidates achieved 2 marks with a full definition of 'dual worker families', many of the remaining candidates were awarded 1 mark typically through recognising it as being linked to paid work.
- (b) This was generally well answered, with many answers naming vertically and horizontally extended families and briefly explaining each term. Some correct responses gave wholly acceptable alternatives such as modified extended families and beanpole families. Some candidates wrongly gave other types of family (such as dual worker families or symmetrical families).
- (c) This question was well answered. Many candidates explained and developed several points, often on changes to roles within families or to size, type and functions of families. Feminism and the changing role of women in the context of paid employment was also seen frequently and allowed for good, conceptual knowledge to be displayed through, for example, ideas such as the dual burden and the triple shift.
- (d) Most candidates successfully identified examples of traditional conjugal roles. Some focused too much on what the changed roles are like, rather than explaining reasons for the changes as per the question. The best answers utilised ideas about changing notions of masculinity, 'new men' and the decline of the male breadwinner, career women and single parent families.
- (e) On the whole this question was answered well with most candidates making points on both sides of the debate and bringing in sociological concepts, studies and theories to support their points. At the top end, functionalist theory was really well used on the 'for' side and both feminism and Marxism were also frequently seen. On the 'against' side, candidates should keep to points which show why

the nuclear family may not be the best. A clear and explicit focus on the specific demands of the question is the key to success. Some candidates wrote too generally, discussing good and bad points of the family without a specific focus on the nuclear family form.

Section B: Education

Question 2

- (a) A significant number of responses did not give correct definitions of 'elaborated code' and thus did not score any marks. Some accurately defined it as a form of language and used examples to develop this idea, e.g. used in formal settings, used in school/exams, associated with the higher social classes.
- (b) This question was generally well answered. Some candidates made points that overlapped (often repeating words like 'jobs' or 'opportunities'); better responses made two clearly different points.
- (c) This question required candidates to compare formal and informal education and to be clear in terms of how they are different. When a question asks for differences, it can help candidates make clearer and more focused points if these are explained in one sentence (e.g. 'formal education... while informal education...'). Writing one paragraph on formal education and then a separate one on informal education can leave it unclear what the explicit differences are. Candidates that adopted this style of approach or something similar, typically demonstrated good understanding and scored well.
- (d) Many candidates recognised the links to Marxism and used this to help them formulate a response. Candidates made a wide range of different points, which often tied into key themes of class, gender and ethnicity. Some strong answers were also seen that used functionalist notions of meritocracy both as a way to challenge the fairness of selective education (lack of equal opportunities) as well as a supporting point (working hard deserves better education). There were some conceptually and theoretically complex answers produced that worked well.
- (e) Range was often limited on the 'for' side of this question. The concept of labelling needed to be broken down in order to create different lines of argument. For example, some candidates made a point on self-fulfilling prophecy, another on self-negating prophecy and another on peer group labelling and anti-school subcultures. Ensuring a different focus for each point, as in this example, ensures that there is the required range to the response without becoming repetitive. The 'against' side was well addressed by most candidates who used a wide range of alternative explanations in their discussion. Some weaker responses did not focus sufficiently on the 'educational achievement' part of the question and thus did not gain 'fully developed' credit.

Section C: Crime, deviance and social control

Question 3

- (a) Candidates typically based answers on the values and norms associated with being male. Many gave well-chosen examples to back up the definition for the second mark.
- (b) The question asked candidates to describe two moral panics. A significant number of responses instead discussed key features of a generic moral panic, e.g. media sensationalism. Where moral panics were described, they were often done well and used examples.
- (c) The term 'master status' was often not fully understood by candidates. Many answers had the basic idea of a label affecting behaviour but then focused on a person becoming a successful criminal rather than on their identity and how they are perceived by others.
- (d) Candidates demonstrated good understanding and gave both range and depth on explanations for lower class crime. Theory was well used with Marxism, strain theory, status frustration and subcultural norms and values being frequently seen. Answers were typically sociological in focus and some excellent work was therefore seen.
- (e) A lot of candidates discussed and developed a range of points that evaluated the notion of subcultures causing youth crime. For example, deprivation, police targeting, inadequate socialisation and status frustration were all seen on the 'against' side. The 'for' side, however,

proved more challenging with several responses containing only one point. More successful answers considered specific subcultures in their debate (e.g. gangs/the skinheads/the mods and the rockers) and therefore elicited clearly different points from each case study in order to marshal their argument. Others considered different subcultural explanations for crime and generated their range of points in this way. Typically, the work of Cohen, Cloward and Ohlin and Miller were all applied well to the question. Some candidates did not maintain focus on the 'youth' element in the question and thus points could only be credited as partially developed as they lacked the specific focus necessary for full credit.

Section D: Media

Question 4

There were very few responses to the Media question.

- (a) The term 'social control' was not well understood. This is a common term in sociology which candidates should have been aware of from studying other topics on the syllabus.
- (b) This question was well answered on the whole. Both generic (e.g. 'censorship of violence') or specific (e.g. of particular cases or media) examples were accepted.
- (c) This question was about differences in the use of the media according to social class. Some candidates did not focus on the idea of 'media use' and instead talked about media representations of social class. This could not be credited. Candidates that did focus on the question used ideas such as different newspaper content i.e., tabloid versus broadsheet, TV content i.e., documentaries versus soap operas and ideas about entertainment versus information. Some focused on material factors and how these often limited or determined how the media could be used. There was good use of examples here, both global and local.
- (d) Not all candidates were familiar with the term moral panic, and some misunderstood it or used it in a wide sense to apply to any topic of concern. Such answers could not score well. Better answers discussed factors such as the media's need to attract audiences with sensationalised reporting (higher ratings) or the need for scapegoats (often linked to Marxism and ruling class power).
- (e) Candidates were confident in discussing some changes that the internet has brought to how the audience use the media, often providing well-chosen examples. The better responses used sociological concepts and ideas such as interactivity, citizen journalism and presumption. Most answers made points on both sides of the debate. Answers were often stronger on the 'for' side, however, with less knowledge and understanding of the media before the internet (traditional media) being demonstrated. Some candidates did use material factors well on the 'against' side (i.e. the internet is irrelevant if you don't have access to it) alongside some good discussion of the generation gap and notions of the digital divide also being relevant.