SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/11

Research Methods, Identity and Inequality

Key messages

- In **Questions 1 (a)(ii)** and **(a)(iii)** the same technique should be used for answering both questions. Firstly, identify an element from *within the source itself* and, secondly, *clearly* explain why it is useful (**1(a)(ii)**) or problematic **(1(a)(iii))** for studying or understanding *the topic in the question*. When using words like validity, representativeness or reliability ensure these are explained fully by reference to the source material.
- In **Question 1 (e)** the justifications for methods, samples and evidence was often done better than the description of them. Candidates should try to describe their chosen methods *in some detail*. This may mean, for example, specifying the type of questions to be used or exactly how an observation will be conducted.
- In **Questions 1 (b)** and option **Question (b)**, where candidates are asked to identify/state something or to give examples, an extended response is not required. A word/phrase or sentence will suffice.
- In extended **Questions 1 (d)** and option **Questions 2** and **3 (e)** and **(f)** arguments should be given are in paragraph form to prevent overlapping of discrete points. Crucially arguments should be developed by explaining, giving examples and sociological concepts, studies and theory as appropriate to the question.

General comments

This was the first November assessment opportunity for the revised 2025 syllabus. Candidate responses showed that they had a good grasp of the demands of both the content of the new syllabus and the new assessment structure. Candidates appeared to benefit from the new guidance given in the bulleted instructions in **Questions 1 (d)**, **1 (e)** and option **Questions (e)** and **(f)**. All candidates completed the compulsory **Question 1** on Research Methods. Candidates then answered one of the optional questions, with **Question 2** on Identity: Self and Society being slightly less popular than **Question 3** on Social Stratification and Inequality. Candidates utilised different skills, such as analysing and evaluating source material, defining sociological concepts, designing and justifying a research design and explaining and evaluating sociological views or arguments. Overall, a range of different quality responses were in evidence across all sections of the paper, with some candidates demonstrating a very positive engagement with the questions and the three assessment objectives. There were relatively few no responses or timing issues and almost no rubric errors.

Question 1 'Research Methods' proved to be a good test of candidates' knowledge of key research concepts and methods. Answers to **Question 1 (a) (i) – (iii)** showed that candidates were engaged with and understood both the qualitative and quantitative elements of the source material on the internet activities of individuals in five different countries. Other questions showed that the knowledge of personal documents was very good, whilst quota sampling and the interpretivism were dealt with less confidently. The final research plan **Question 1 (e)** tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of research methods and sampling choices and their ability to apply this knowledge to a given research scenario. Here a few candidate responses made clear and confident use of methodological terms, though chosen primary research methods and sampling could be described in more detail.

In both option questions some candidates showed a good knowledge and understanding of the key theories, concepts and arguments within the topics. New aspects of the syllabus were generally understood, including social media, emigration, modern slavery and the work of transnational companies (TNCs). New content that

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was not understood as well included consumption patterns, postmodernist views of identity and the strategies some societies use as cultural defence against globalisation. Some responses showed sociological insight and a degree of sophistication in their grasp of the questions and handling of sociological evidence. Many candidates achieved at least half marks in **Questions (c)** and **(d)** by explaining or describing three things, for example three ways TNCs damage the environment. In terms of quality, some candidates were well organised and used evidence effectively in option **Question (e)**. In option **Question (f)**, some responses lacked range and/or were not sufficiently sociologically developed. A number of the extended responses to option **Questions (e)** and **(f)** were also not organised into paragraphs and tended towards the narrative and description, thereby only achieving limited marks. There were few list-like and/or one-sided answers.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 Research methods

(a) (i) An excellent response here with almost all candidates identifying Germany and the United Arab Emirates as the two countries with the highest percentage of people using the internet to buy goods and services.

(ii) This question required candidates to use information in Source A to explain two reasons why the research is useful for studying people's internet activity. It drew a mixed response. The majority of responses demonstrated some engagement with the source and presented at least one identified and/or developed point to show why the data is useful. Creditable responses frequently included the fact that the research used a questionnaire thus allowing for a large sample or yielded quantitative data which can allow researchers to easily spot key patterns and trends in people's internet use. Other frequently seen answers included the fact that the statistics came from the World Bank, which is a reputable and professional source, enhancing the likelihood that the data is accurate; and also, that the researchers looked at a good number of different internet activities allowing a comprehensive overview or comparison between different activities. Many responses only achieved one mark per point given (instead of two) because whilst they identified appropriate reasons in the source, they did not explain them.

(iii) This question required candidates to explain three problems with the research for understanding people's internet activity. The overall response was marginally stronger than **1 (a) (ii)**. As with **1 (a) (ii)** any possible problems identified from the source would be awarded one mark each. To achieve the second mark the candidate needed to unpack or develop the explanation in terms of why this aspect of the research is not useful for the topic. Answers can be concise but must be clear and correct. Popular points often focused on the fact that the researchers used a questionnaire, and this could be seen to be problematic in several ways. Firstly, the questionnaire was online so researchers had no way of ensuring that it was completed by the intended recipient and also there was no one available to help should participants not understand a question, leading to possible inaccuracies in data gathered. In addition, the quantitative nature of the data does not allow for a understanding of why people are using the internet in the ways they do. Other answers identified the sample as an issue, in that it focused on those aged 18 – 65 and thus cannot be fully representative as it omits those below the age of 18 and over 65. Weaker answers often made fewer than the three required points or made generic points such as that researchers could be biased, people may lie etc. for which there was no basis in the source.

(b) This question required candidates to give two examples of personal documents. It was done well by the majority of candidates. Common correct answers included diaries/journals, letters, passports/identity cards, photos and blogs. Some answers gave primary methods such as questionnaires which were not creditworthy. There were also several no responses.

(c) In this question candidates were asked to explain one strength and one limitation of quota sampling. It proved to be perhaps the most challenging question in section one in terms of candidates' knowledge and understanding. In terms of the strengths of the method, some candidates correctly identified that quota sampling allows researchers to select people with certain social characteristics that are appropriate to the study (e.g. people who are nurses) and this may make the sample more representative. Others recognised that it is one of the easier sampling techniques to administer as it simply involves approaching people in relevant places (e.g. finding nurses in a hospital setting) without the need to consult sampling frames and then subdivide into various social characteristics as in stratified sampling. Limitations seen included the fact that quota

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sampling can still be unconsciously biased as researchers can approach people in the target group on how they look (e.g. whether they look friendly or interesting) rather than purely on the basis of the characteristics required. Others noted that the resulting sample may be unrepresentative if stratification is not put in place (for example only female nurses are chosen, neglecting male nurses). Answers scoring two marks often identified an appropriate strength or limitation but then did not develop the point or with sufficient clarity. Some responses demonstrated very little knowledge and understanding of quota sampling.

(d) This essay-style question asked candidates to evaluate the interpretivist view that it is important for a researcher to achieve verstehen in sociological research. Most candidates used the steer towards interpretivism in the question and embarked on a debate between interpretivism and positivism. In this approach sometimes the notion of verstehen itself was only indirectly referenced. For example, many answers recognised that interpretivism adopts a micro approach and aims for validity through understanding meanings and motivations as shown through qualitative data and research methods that go in-depth. These characteristics are of course relevant and necessary to achieving verstehen, but few candidates made the links clear and explicit. A few answers gave points directly linked to verstehen by discussing methods like participant observation and unstructured interviews where it may be possible to immerse oneself or to engage one's own subjectivity in order to 'step into the shoes' of participants and see the world through their eyes. In evaluation most answers adopted a positivist mindset, rejecting the need to gain an insider's view and instead discussing the need for a more scientific, objective approach to sociological study whereby researchers need to cultivate detachment rather than deep engagement with their subjects. Others simply juxtaposed features of a positivist approach such as that quantitative methods are better as they offer the possibility for large scale studies which yield patterns and trends in data which is also replicable due to standardised procedures. Another point seen was the criticism that the interpretivist quest for verstehen is more prone to bias of one kind of another due to the involvement of the researcher. Most candidates provided a two-sided answer but very few showed the required range of points (two points for and against). In most answers arguments were only briefly stated and many found the demands of the essay-style challenging. Most candidates scored marks in levels one (1 – 3 marks) and level two (4 – 7 marks). A few answers showed no knowledge and understanding of interpretivism or verstehen and did not score marks or left a no response.

(e) This question asked candidates to explain the research methods and evidence they would choose to investigate ethnic inequalities in education. In other words, candidates are asked to create a research design for this topic. The question type was a new addition to the assessment in June 2025 and it posed a challenge for candidates this session. There were several no responses and most other candidates scored between 1 and 7 marks with very few scoring higher. The first of the three marks given for this question was for **Knowledge and understanding** of methods and evidence. Here successful answers provided detailed and accurate *descriptions* of the research methods chosen, with relevant sampling, along with a *description* of a suitable a piece of secondary evidence. For example, describing the types and examples of questions to be asked in an interview, the composition of a sample and how access could be gained or exactly how a questionnaire was to be administered. Such descriptions integrated sociological concepts such as open/closed questions, a standardised approach, rapport, qualitative/quantitative data, probing etc. Many answers gave a brief description of how research choices were to be implemented which meant that they were likely to score only 1 or 2 marks for Knowledge and understanding. The second mark was given for **Reasons for choices**, in other words explaining why a particular method or sample was chosen, including the use of appropriate terms such as reliability, validity, representativeness and generalisability. This was often done better than the description of methods and evidence. However, many justifications tended to be rather generic – for example a structured interview was chosen to gain 'reliable data', with little explanation as to how this was to be done by using this interview technique. The final mark was given for **Application to context** or how well the candidate oriented their research choices to the topic of ethnic inequalities in education. Many responses repeated the phrase ethnic inequalities with little or no real engagement. Others made good reference to schools, different ethnic groups in sampling, the ethnocentric curriculum etc. The best answers *integrated* contextual insights into their descriptions and rationale for methods, sampling and secondary evidence. A few candidates engaged in evaluation, describing the disadvantages of chosen methods, sampling or secondary evidence which was not creditworthy.

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Question 2 Identity: self and society

(a) (i) The definitional question on social media drew a positive response. The majority of answers demonstrated a clear and correct understanding of the term and achieved full marks. The best answers made reference to people connecting or posting videos and messages on apps on the internet. A few answers offered examples of social media sites. A small number of responses were too vague to credit, for example describing social media as '*a place where society shares any time of information*'.

(ii) The question on consumption patterns was more challenging than **Question 2 (a) (i)**, with a large number of responses demonstrating little or no understanding of the term. The term is a new addition to the syllabus for topic two and denotes the variations (patterns) in buying things (consumption) depending on time, place and social group. Many answers were vague, for example '*consumption patterns are some traditional patterns people use'*. Some candidates scored one mark by referring to the idea of a *purchasing goods* or by referencing consumption *by different social groups*.

(b) This question asked candidates to state two traditional female roles. It drew a confident response. The most popular correct answers included mother, childcaring and housewife. Answers scoring only one mark invariably only stated one role. Several answers gave lengthy descriptions of traditional female roles which was unnecessary for this question.

(c) This question asked candidates to describe three examples of cultural defence against globalisation. The notion of cultural defence is another new feature of the syllabus in the Identity: self and society topic. Many candidates offered generic answers by saying that populations may offer resistance via protests, demonstrations or stricter immigration controls with little or no explanation of how this defends against globalisation. A few answers argued that some cultures deliberately foster a sense of national pride, giving examples of flag and national holidays to reinforce cultural identity against globalising forces. Other answers discussed globalisation with no reference to cultural defence. There were also several no responses to this question.

(d) This question asked candidates to explain three postmodernist views of identity. Commonly seen points included the idea that people have more freedom to create and change aspects of their identity, such as their gender identity and that consequently traditional aspects of identity are now not as central as they once were. Another insight seen was that consumption plays a greater role in identity now as people are seen much more in terms of the products they buy and lifestyle they adopt. A few answers referenced the emergence of more hybrid identities with people mixing and matching elements from different cultures into their own identity. Lower scoring answers made fewer points and/or did not explain them clearly.

(e) This question asked candidates to discuss why positive sanctions are an effective method of social control. This is not a question where candidates are expected to engage in evaluation, unlike **Questions 1 (d)** and option **Question (f)** where there is a specific instruction to create arguments for and against. In option **Question (e)** candidates only need to develop three evidenced points for the view. Most candidates formulated some points, though not always three, and very often development was sparse, resulting in many Level one marks (1 – 3 marks). The most successful answers focused on discussing the use of positive sanctions in a variety of settings such as the family, schools and the workplace. Examples given included praise, awards and promotions/pay rises. In order to achieve full credit arguments needed to move beyond description to address why these positive sanctions are effective in social control. Some argued that they encourage repetition of socially approved behaviours, others pointed out that they reinforce social values which help to keep society together. Some candidates showed no knowledge or understanding of the term positive sanctions. A small number included negative sanctions in their discussion which drew no credit.

(f) This proved to be a challenging question for the majority of candidates. In their answers candidates were asked to evaluate whether feminist views on gender socialisation are correct, including at least three arguments for and three arguments against, with a conclusion. Most answers scored in Level two (4 – 7 marks) or occasionally the bottom of Level three (8 – 9 marks). The family was a major discussion point. Stronger answers frequently described how girls and boys are socialised into gender stereotypes through the processes of canalisation, manipulation and verbal appellation (Oakley). Discussions of parental role modelling also featured, with boys mirroring behaviours and attitudes shown by their father and girls copying their mother. A few answers talked about media

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socialisation through gender representations in film and TV. In evaluation some answers showed that some parents are now attempting to raise children in a gender-neutral way or that today young people have more choice about how they navigate their gender identity. Another approach seen was to argue using the functionalist view that gender roles are linked to biological differences between the sexes and are not simply socially constructed stereotypes as many feminists argue. Most answers drew a conclusion; most often a concise summary rather than a reasoned judgement based on the evidence presented.

Question 3 Social stratification and inequality

(a) (i) Most candidates achieved at least one mark on the definitional question on the term emigration. Clear but simple definitions sufficed with many scoring two marks by describing it as moving from one's own or home country to live in another country. Partial definitions often made reference to only one of these elements, for example leaving a country.

(ii) Unemployment benefits is a new concept in the syllabus. The term refers to money paid by the government to support those without a job. It was done marginally less well than **Question 3 (a) (i)** but many candidates scored either one or both marks. Answers scoring one mark often talked in less clear terms about advantages or rewards that jobless people receive from the welfare state.

(b) This question required candidates to state two features of modern slavery, another new addition to the syllabus. Common answers seen included forced marriage, debt bondage and human trafficking. Some answers talked about those on a minimum wage or who work very long shifts which may be classed as exploitation but not modern slavery. A few answers gave extra and unnecessary explanation for their points. A minority of responses demonstrated no understanding of the term.

(c) This question asked candidates to describe three ways transnational companies (TNCs) damage the environment. It drew a good response. Common answers seen included the carbon dioxide pollution caused by the global transportation of goods, air pollution emitted through manufacturing and industrial processes, plastic pollution in the environment caused by the packaging of products and other waste products generated by large transnational companies. Such points needed to be unpacked concisely to achieve the second mark per point. Answers that scored three or less marks invariably only made one developed point or identified three salient points but did not then unpack with description.

(d) The question asked candidates to explain three ways patriarchy creates global inequalities. Whilst many answers displayed a good knowledge of gender discrimination these were seldom linked to global inequalities. So, for example, there was frequent reference to the dual burden and triple shift, horizontal and vertical segregation/glass ceiling and discrimination against women in recruitment for jobs. All such points gained credit, but there needed to be some recognition of the universal or global nature of such practices across different countries in order to achieve the second mark. Hence three out of six was a common mark for this question.

(e) This question asked candidates to discuss how non-governmental organisations (NGOs) reduce inequalities. As in option question two, answers needed to include at least three developed points with evidence for the view; no evaluation is required. Few candidates attained marks in Level three and most answers demonstrated a basic understanding of the demands of the question, scoring marks in Levels one and two. Most answers focused on general ways in which NGOs offer help. For example, through giving emergency aid, helping individuals to start their own small business through loans, helping countries through infrastructure such as schools and medical facilities etc. A wide range of points were thus seen and accepted; however, answers would have benefitted by references to real life examples or case studies of NGO projects, enhancing points with detail and evidence, which was seldom seen.

(f) The essay-style question required candidates to evaluate the functionalist view that societies are meritocratic. Most candidates presented two-sided answers and offered a range of points though not always the three for and three against as required by the question rubric. Popular answers discussed free and universal education and greater possibilities for social mobility due to anti-discrimination laws. Many used the reference to functionalism in the question to good effect, outlining their view that in society talents and abilities are rewarded such that people now get what they deserve in terms of rewards and status. In evaluation there were good references to theory with some answers focused on the fact that societies are capitalist and hence, Marxists argue,

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social class inequalities remain entrenched; similarly some described the feminist views of continued gender inequalities in both the home and in the workplace. Another common argument concerned poverty, specifically the continued existence of both the cycle of poverty and the culture of poverty which continue to blight the lives of children born into the lowest ranks of society. The differentiator in terms of the level and mark awarded tended to be the quality of development and evidence given in support of arguments.

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Paper 0495/12

Research Methods, Identity and Inequality

Key messages

- In **Questions 1 (a)(ii)** and **(a)(iii)** the same technique should be used for answering both questions. Firstly, identify an element from *within the source itself* and, secondly, *clearly* explain why it is useful (**1(a) (ii)**) or problematic (**1(a) (iii)**) for studying or understanding *the topic in the question*. When using words like validity, representativeness or reliability ensure these are explained fully by reference to the source material.
- In **Question 1 (e)** candidates should try to describe their chosen methods *in some detail*. This may mean, for example, specifying the type of questions to be used or exactly how an observation will be conducted.
- In **Questions 1 (b)** and option **Question (b)**, where candidates are asked to identify/state something or to give examples, an extended response is not required. A word/phrase or sentence will suffice.
- In extended **Questions 1 (d)** and option **Questions 2** and **3 (e)** and **(f)** it is helpful if arguments are written in paragraph form. Within each paragraph the point should be developed by reference to explanation and evidence. The development of points can include examples, sociological studies, sociological theory or empirical evidence such as statistics.
- **Questions 1 (b)**, **1 (c)**, and **1 (d)** all require knowledge of the specific strengths and limitations of named research methods and approaches. Avoid making generic points which could apply to almost any research method or approach. Similarly, answers that assert that a research method is *cheap* or *expensive* or *time-consuming* are often best avoided as they can be hard to develop and contextualise.

General comments

This was the first November assessment opportunity for the revised 2025 syllabus. Candidate responses showed that they had a good grasp of the demands of both the content of the new syllabus and the new assessment structure. Candidates appeared to benefit from the new guidance given in the bulleted instructions in **Questions 1 (d)**, **1 (e)** and option **Questions (e)** and **(f)**. All candidates completed the compulsory **Question 1** on Research Methods. Candidates then answered one of the optional questions, with approximately three quarters of the cohort answering **Question 2** on Identity: Self and Society and a third opting to answer **Question 3** on Social Stratification and Inequality. Candidates were able to utilise different skills, such as analysing and evaluating source material, defining sociological concepts, designing and justifying a research design and explaining and evaluating sociological views or arguments. Overall, some good quality responses were in evidence across all sections of the paper, demonstrating a positive engagement with the questions and the three assessment objectives. There were relatively few no responses or timing issues and almost no rubric errors.

Question 1 'Research Methods' proved to be a good test of candidates' knowledge of key research concepts and methods. Analysis and interpretation of the source material was generally good. There was a good level of engagement and understanding of the source material on women's experiences of paid work and the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology used in the study. Responses showed a good knowledge of secondary evidence (**1b**), but a less confident grasp of triangulation (**1 (a)(ii)**), non-participant observation (**1c**) and random sampling (**1d**). The research plan **Question (1e)** tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of research methods and sampling choices. Here many candidate responses made clear and confident use of methodological terms, though chosen methods and sampling could be described in more detail in some candidate answers.

The 'Identity: Self and Society Culture' option was more popular than 'Social Stratification and Inequality. In both option questions most candidates showed sound and, in a few cases, excellent knowledge and understanding of the key theories, concepts and arguments within the topics. New aspects of the syllabus

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were generally well understood, including digital surveillance, the digital self and feminist criticisms of equality legislation. Several questions proved challenging, notably the idea of society as a social construction and how identity can be positively affected by global culture. Some responses showed real insight and sophistication in their grasp of the question and handling of sociological evidence. In terms of quality, some candidates were well organised and marshalled evidence very effectively in option **Question (e)**, and very few engaged in evaluation which is not required by these questions. In option **Question (f)**, most essay responses had the required range but some fell short due to insufficient sociological development. A number of the extended responses to option **Questions (e)** and **(f)** were also not organised into paragraphs and tended towards the narrative and description, thereby only achieving limited marks. There were few list-like and/or one-sided answers.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 Research Methods

(a) (i) An excellent response here with almost all the candidates identifying (unstructured) interviews and (online) questionnaires as research methods used in the study. A few candidates incorrectly identified triangulation or qualitative/quantitative data as research methods (triangulation being an approach).

(ii) This question required candidates to use information in Source A to explain two reasons why triangulation was a useful approach for studying women's experiences of paid work. Few candidates scored more than two marks. Many responses did engage with the source and presented at least one identified and/or developed point to show why triangulation was useful. Points seen included the fact that the data gained was both qualitative and quantitative, that the weaknesses of one method could be offset by the strengths of another, that two methods were used, namely questionnaires and unstructured interviews, or that triangulation enabled some measure of validity and reliability in data gathered. However, few answers properly explained more than one of these points. Instead, candidates frequently made one point about questionnaires and a second point about unstructured interviews which, taken separately, are not properly focused on *triangulation* which involves a *combination* of research methods. To be given full credit *each* point needed to focus on triangulation. Other responses only referred to information from the source without development or offering vague explanations that could not be credited, e.g. the data is valid/easy to understand, etc.

(iii) This question required candidates to use information in Source A to explain three problems with the research for studying women's experiences of paid work. A wide range of answers were possible, and answers could be fairly concise. Overall the response to this question was stronger than that for **1 (a)(ii).** Commonly seen answers identified issues with the sample size of only 219 online questionnaires and only 15 interviewed, the fact that the researchers were male, the age group of the women being researched was confined to 35 – 55, the fact that the women were from the same Ghanaian university and worked the same professions and, finally, that the study took place in 2017. As with **1 (a)(ii)** any of these points by themselves would be awarded one mark. To achieve the second mark the candidate needed to unpack or develop the explanation in terms of why this aspect of the research is not useful for studying the topic. Successful responses unpacked potential problems; for example by arguing that the sample size is too small to represent all working women or that male researchers interviewing females could result in women giving socially desirable answers which would then lack validity. A few answers did not link points to the source and were generic.

(b) The majority of candidates scored full marks by giving two correct examples of secondary evidence. The most common answers included: official/non-official statistics, personal documents such as diaries, letters, historical documents, digital sources such as websites and social media and media content e.g. newspaper articles. There were some incorrect responses to the question, e.g. quantitative/qualitative data or primary methods such as questionnaires. A few answers used phrases such as media or the internet which were too vague to credit as secondary evidence.

(c) In this question candidates were asked to explain one strength and one limitation of non-participant observation. Most responses did not achieve more than half marks and many scored no marks. The main issue was the conflation of non-participant observation with covert observation. Not taking an active part in an observation was frequently presumed to *mean the same thing* as covert observation, when in fact non-participant observation may be done overtly as well as covertly.

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Candidates who recognised this and who explicitly stated that *if* the observation is done covertly, the Hawthrone Effect could be avoided, were given credit. Ultimately the question is about *non-participant* observation and answers needed to focus upon the consequences of the researcher not being part of the group under study and doing activities with them. In terms of the limitations of the method, some candidates identified that non-participant observation can be low in validity because it yields limited qualitative data and researchers cannot go in-depth or achieve verstehen due to not being a part of group activities. Creditworthy strengths included the idea that such observations can be set up in naturalistic settings where people are likely to behave as normal, the covert/overt nature of participant observations; that researchers can take notes easily because they are not participating or can review material again if cameras are used.

(d) This essay-style question asked candidates to evaluate the view that random sampling is the best sampling technique to use in sociological research by developing at least two arguments for and two against. Most candidates provided a two-sided answer with the required range of points and came to a conclusion. The quality of arguments was variable and most candidates achieved marks in Level 1 or Level 2. Most answers scored in Level 2 (4 – 7 marks) due to some points being only partially, rather than fully, developed or explained. Most answers showed some understanding of the basics of random sampling in terms of techniques such as pulling names out of a hat and the idea that everyone has a chance of selection. Many then linked this to a lack of researcher bias. Many answers did not unpack a second strength if one was identified, instead often slipping into vague discussions about data gathered being somehow more valid. Candidates sometimes used the term 'validity' and 'reliability' in a generic manner when discussing random sampling. As a result, discussion often veered into data rather than focusing on the sampling and issues to do with representativeness, practicality, access to sample etc. The other most common strength seen was the fact that it is perhaps the easiest and most time efficient technique to use and hence convenient for researchers. In evaluation many pointed out that a key problem for random sampling is the fact that it is likely to be unrepresentative. Such answers often gave illustrations of samples that could over or under-represent certain social characteristics such as gender, social class, age and ethnic group. Alternative sampling techniques were used to good effect, especially stratified sampling and snowball sampling. Where candidates did less well, points lacked proper development.

(e) The new research design question drew a varied response. The question required an explanation and rationale for two primary research methods, with sampling, and one source of secondary evidence for investigating why people migrate from one country to another. Many candidates followed this rubric explicitly. The first of the three criteria for which up to four marks are available was **Knowledge and understanding** of methods and evidence. Here successful answers provided detailed and accurate *descriptions* of the research methods chosen, with relevant sampling, along with a *description* of a suitable a piece of secondary evidence. For example, describing the types and examples of questions to be asked in a questionnaire, the size of a sample and how access could be gained or exactly how an interview was to be conducted. Such descriptions integrated sociological concepts such as open/closed questions, a standardised approach, rapport, qualitative/quantitative data, probing etc. The second criterion was explaining **Reasons for choices**, in other words for explaining why a particular method or sample was chosen, including the use of appropriate terms such as reliability, validity, representativeness and generalisability. The final criterion was **Application to context** and again four marks were available for how well the candidate linked their research choices to the context of the topic of migration. Many responses had a clear structure with regular reference to the context of migration throughout as well as more description of the primary research methods and samples chosen. The best responses achieved three – four marks for each criterion, giving a clear and contextualized picture of their research choices and why they were appropriate, drawing upon evaluative terms such as validity, representativeness etc. This level of response also often gave examples of questions they would ask. Most candidates scored mid-range marks as not all research methods, evidence and sampling choices were fully described and justified. Some answers used triangulation as a primary method when it is better seen as an approach which utilises different primary methods rather than a primary method per se. Sampling was also sometimes only stated or even overlooked, even by candidates whose responses were strong elsewhere. Some justifications of research methods were also generic. For example, interviews were used *'to get a deep insight'* and many candidates proffered key evaluative concepts without demonstrating clear knowledge, for example simply adding *'this will gain validity and reliability'*. Answers scoring in Levels 1 and 2 often stated primary methods with no real description or proper justification for their use. A few responses included development of points about the weaknesses of chosen methods which was not creditworthy.

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Candidates should be encouraged to concentrate their efforts on explaining how they would use their methods and why they are appropriate.

Question 2 Identity: self and society

(a) (i) The definitional question on 'role' drew a good response. The majority of the responses demonstrated some understanding of the term. The best answers described a role in terms of expected behaviours that are linked to a particular status in society. Others talked about a role as a part that people play in society which drew one mark and many candidates then added an example for their second mark, such as the role of mother or breadwinner. A few answers were too vague to achieve credit.

(ii) The majority of candidates scored full marks for their definition of the term 'digital surveillance'. Successful answers offered two creditable elements, most frequently describing digital surveillance as a form of monitoring or observation of people through cameras/CCTV or online. Others described it as a form of social control used by authorities such as governments and police to track people's behaviours Answers that scored only one mark often defined surveillance but lacked an unpacking of the digital aspect.

(b) This question asked candidates to give two examples of youth sub-cultures. It drew a mixed response. Candidates who scored both marks gave named examples such as the classic goth, punk or skinhead sub-cultures. Others gave more modern examples such as Gyaru or K-poppers. More generic answers such as anti-school sub-cultures were also accepted. Answers which achieved no credit tended to describe an aspect of youth-subculture, such as fashion sense or a liking for a brand of music, rather than giving an example.

(c) This question asked candidates to explain three ways identity can be positively affected by global culture. The best answers gave three developed points explaining how examples such as common foods, globally popular fashion/clothing styles or global media enhanced people's identity in terms of self-expression, interests or ability to join and connect with others in different places. Others discussed the emergence of cultural hybrids as a response to global influences or the idea of an emerging common value consensus on key issues across the world. Some candidates linked their points to multiculturalism within a society, rather than global culture, while others gave vague responses the question. Some candidates identified correct points but did not show how a person's identity is positively affected.

(d) This question asked candidates to explain three ways individuals may create an online digital self. Popular correct answers identified the creation of personal profiles (including fakes), personas and avatars on social media, posting videos or the creation of vlogs/blogs online. Answers which did not score any marks commonly outlined reasons *why* individuals create an online digital self rather than *how*. For example, discussing how some individuals are insecure about an aspect of their identity and want to join with other like-minded individuals, without reference to how they do this online.

(e) This question asked candidates to discuss the view that that society is a social construction. It drew a mixed response. In their answer candidates were asked to include at least three developed points with evidence for the view. This is not a question where candidates are expected to engage in evaluation, unlike **Questions 1 (d)** and option **Question (f)** where there is a specific instruction to create arguments for and against. In terms of the content this is really a question about the idea that society is something created and maintained by human beings through their social activities rather than something that is a universal and unchanging given. Successful answers focused on ideas such as that cultures differ cross-culturally or that norms and values change over time or according to situation, showing that society is not something fixed but something created by people differently across space and time. Other successful answers homed in on social characteristics such as age identity which has changed across time (Aries) or gender identity which has to be taught through the processes of socialisation and social control (Oakley), showing that society and its structures are not biological givens but have to be built and maintained. Less successful responses discussed a wide range of aspects of society and socialisation without such clear focus on the question set, describing society rather than arguing whether it is constructed. A few answers showed no understanding of the idea of social construction.

(f) In this question candidates were asked to evaluate the view that the family is the most effective agency of socialisation. It proved to be generally accessible for the majority, with the quality of

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development being the chief discriminator in terms of marks awarded. The vast majority of responses gave three points for and three against; one-sided answers were rare. Stronger responses demonstrated a good understanding of concepts as well as theory and there was widespread use of postmodernism, functionalism (Parsons) and feminism (Oakley) as evidence. Popular arguments supporting the view drew on functionalist claims that socialisation and social control as social processes that are crucial for individual integration, the development of gender identity and wider social consensus and social cohesion. Some candidates used feminist arguments on socialisation into gender identity and Marxist ideas about socialisation into class identity as arguments for the view whilst others deployed them as arguments against. Both approaches were credited according to how the candidates utilised them. In evaluation most answers juxtaposed other agencies of socialisation such as peers, education, religion and workplace as equally or more effective than the family. Other answers gave a critique of the effectiveness of aspects of socialisation by the family, arguing for example that the family can be a site for abuse and neglect which can result in feral children and destructive social consequences. Others pointed to the fact that the core socialising functions of the family are now being done by other institutions such as nurseries thus showing the family to be less effective than in previous times. Most answers fell into Level 2 or 3 due to some points being only partially developed though range was generally solid and knowledge good. Most answers drew a conclusion which was most often a summary rather than a reasoned judgement based on the actual arguments presented.

Question 3 Social stratification and inequality

(a) (i) The definitional question on the caste system proved difficult. Partial definitions often made reference to a hierarchy or being born into a status and many answers referenced India. The best answers defined the caste system as a closed system in which a person's status is ascribed at birth and/or cannot be changed.

(ii) Relatively few candidates provided a clear and accurate definition of the term 'universal education'. Many described it vaguely as education that exists all around the globe. A large number of responses offered a partial definition, claiming that this is education 'for everyone' or people having access to education everywhere. Answers that achieved the second mark identified such access as regardless of background such as a person's social class, gender etc. A few answers defined universal education with reference to some characteristics such as being taught the syllabus which was not creditworthy.

(b) This question required candidates to state two forms of wealth. Some candidate responses showed good knowledge. Common correct answers seen included property/houses, jewellery, shares and inherited money. Some responses identified social goods such as health or education or included explanations which were not creditworthy, while others confused wealth with income. Simply stating money was not sufficient to achieve credit.

(c) This question asked candidates to explain three ways people can be affected by a lack of power. A wide range of answers were acceptable and, whilst reference to particular social groups was desirable, generic answers that talked about people who lack power in society were still able to achieve full marks provided they identified an effect and briefly but accurately developed it. So, stronger answers explained effects such as social exclusion, poor life chances in education and employment, being deprived of basic necessities and political marginalisation. The other approach was to focus on a particular social group such as the working class/underclass, women or minority ethnic groups and how these groups are impacted by a lack of power. There was some good reference to theory, especially Marxism and feminism. Weaker responses generally only offered undeveloped points.

(d) This question asked candidates to explain three feminist criticisms of equality legislation. Some candidates gave three reasons why feminists criticise gender inequality in society rather than equality laws specifically. Such answers were limited to three marks as there was no mention of legislation. There were relatively few references to specific laws, such as the Equality Act or localised versions. Responses were often generic, with candidates referencing the phrase *equality legislation;* but if they then identified an issue with such legislation then full marks were still available. For example, some argued that the equality laws were not always followed by employers but in such cases, discrimination was difficult for women to prove.

(e) This question asked candidates to discuss the view that societies are becoming more culturally diverse. Answers needed to include at least three developed points with evidence; no evaluation is

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required. Whilst few candidates attained marks in Level 3, the majority of answers demonstrated some understanding of the demands of the question and scored marks in Level 2. Many responses were descriptive rather than analytical. The strongest answers linked cultural diversity to concrete examples such as social change, globalisation and migration. Whilst most candidates identified various correct examples like language, food, clothing, intermarriage etc. many points were only partially developed. A few answers made reference to the development of hybrid identities. After identifying correct factors the majority of points were not then fully developed with evidence and examples. Therefore, it was common that most marks were limited to Level 2.

(f) The essay-style question asked candidates to evaluate the view that the welfare state has failed to reduce poverty. As with **Question 2 (f)**, the guidance bullets in the question appeared to be helpful in making it clear that at least three arguments for and three against should be given with a conclusion offered at the end. Most candidates presented two-sided answers and offered a range of points. A wide range of responses were seen with more confident answers drawing on practical examples of welfare state failure such as a lack of resources, the Marxist argument that welfare fails to address the core inequalities bred in capitalism and other points noted the continued cycle of poverty and the culture of poverty. Discussions were often informed by theoretical criticisms from the New Right, especially when discussing dependency culture. A smaller number of strong responses also used feminist critiques of welfare to fully address gender inequalities. In evaluation, some responses showed good knowledge of Scandinavian-type welfare systems and the provision of pensions, housing or job support and national health systems. Few candidates provided the range of developed points needed to approach marks in Level 4. Less developed responses explained some key failures of welfare but did not develop points beyond common sense critiques echoing popular media stereotypes of dependency.

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Paper 0495/13

Research Methods, Identity and Inequality

Key messages

- In **Questions 1 (a) (ii)** and **(a) (iii)** the same technique should be used for answering both questions. Firstly, identify an element from *within the source itself* and, secondly, *clearly* explain why it is useful (**1 (a) (ii)**) or problematic (**1 (a) (iii)**) for studying or understanding *the topic in the question*. When using words like validity, representativeness or reliability ensure these are explained fully by reference to the source material.
- In **Question 1 (e)** the justifications for methods, samples and evidence was often done better than the description of them. Candidates should try to describe their chosen methods *in some detail*. This may mean, for example, specifying the type of questions to be used or exactly how an observation will be conducted.
- In **Questions 1 (b)** and option **Question (b)**, where candidates are asked to identify/state something or to give examples, an extended response is not required. A word/phrase or sentence will suffice.
- In extended **Questions 1 (d)** and option **Questions 2** and **3 (e)** and **(f)** it is helpful if arguments are written in paragraph form. Within each paragraph the point should be developed by reference to explanation and evidence. The development of points can include examples, sociological studies, sociological theory or empirical evidence such as statistics.

General comments

This was the first November assessment opportunity for the revised 2025 syllabus. Candidate responses showed that they had a good grasp of the demands of both the content of the new syllabus and the new assessment structure. Candidates appeared to benefit from the new guidance given in the bulleted instructions in **Questions 1 (d)**, **1 (e)** and option **Questions (e)** and **(f)**. All candidates completed the compulsory **Question 1** on Research methods. Candidates then answered one of the optional questions, with around 57 per cent of candidates choosing to answer **Question 2** on Identity: self and society and 43 per cent choosing **Question 3** on Social stratification and inequality. Candidates utilised different skills, such as analysing and evaluating source material, defining sociological concepts, designing and justifying a research design and explaining and evaluating sociological views or arguments. Overall, some very good quality responses were in evidence across all sections of the paper, demonstrating a positive engagement with the questions and the three assessment objectives. There were relatively few no responses or timing issues and almost no rubric errors.

Question 1 Research methods proved to be a good test of candidates' knowledge of key research concepts and methods. There was a good level of engagement and understanding of the source material on the number of people who do not have access to safe drinking water and the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology used in gathering the data (**1 (a) (i) – (iii)**). Responses showed a confident understanding of sampling techniques (**1b**) and the strengths and limitations of digital secondary sources (**1c**). Many candidates also engaged in a good discussion of the existence of bias in sociological research, often drawing on sound conceptual and theoretical knowledge of positivism and interpretivism (**1d**). The research plan **Question 1 (e)** tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of research methods and sampling choices. Here many candidate responses made clear and confident use of methodological terms, though chosen methods and sampling could be described in more detail in some candidate answers.

The Identity: self and society option was marginally more popular than Social stratification and inequality. In both option questions most candidates showed sound and, in some cases, sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the key theories, concepts and arguments within the topics. New aspects of the syllabus were generally well understood, including push factors in migration, pollution, the impact of the welfare state on life chances and the effects of colonialism on societies. Online sub-cultures and Marxist views of

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socialisation were new elements that were not handled with as much confidence. Many candidates achieved high marks in **Questions (c)** and **(d)** by providing concise but accurate explanations of three elements, for example three ways status can be ascribed. In terms of quality, some candidates were well organised and marshalled evidence very effectively in option **Question (e)**, and very few engaged in evaluation which is not required by these questions. In option **Question (f)**, some responses lacked range and/or were not sufficiently sociologically developed. A number of the extended responses to option **Questions (e)** and **(f)** were also not always organised into paragraphs and tended towards the narrative and description, thereby only achieving limited marks. There were few list-like and/or one-sided answers.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 Research methods

(a) (i) An excellent response here with almost all candidates identifying two countries where the number of people who do not have access to safe drinking water in their home has decreased between 2000 and 2020. The correct answers were Brazil and Japan.

(ii) This question required candidates to use information in Source A to explain two reasons why the data is useful for understanding people's access to safe drinking water. The majority of the responses engaged with the source and presented at least one identified and/or developed point to show why the data is useful. Responses frequently included the idea that the data showing increases and decreases in the number of people who cannot access safe water. Another common response was that being in numerical or quantitative form, the table allows researchers to see key patterns and trends in access to safe water. Finally, some responses also pointed to the fact that the data was collected by the World Health Organisation who are a reputable source or that the data is given in five yearly intervals. Each of these points were identified from the source itself and were clearly potential reasons why the data could be useful. Each point could achieve one mark. To achieve the second mark per point the candidate needed to unpack or explain why this aspect of the source was useful or beneficial. For example, the fact that *the data shows increases and decreases allows governments and charities to see where the needs are greatest so they can target resources to help and see the impact of their efforts in giving more people access to safe drinking water.* Another example: *the source showing quantitative data allows researchers to see patterns and trends in the numbers having access to safe drinking* was sufficient to score both marks. Some responses only referenced information from the source without development, thus limiting themselves to one mark per point.

(iii) This question asked candidates to use the information in Source A to explain three problems with using the data for understanding people's access to safe drinking water. In general, it was well answered with many candidates scoring at least half marks. One commonly seen answer reversed a point often made in **1 (a) (ii)**, namely that the data was in numerical or quantitative form. Other common issues raised included that the table only includes data from six countries, that the figures have been rounded up or down to the nearest million and that the data has been adapted by the researchers. As with **1 (a) (ii)** any of these points by themselves would be awarded one mark. To achieve the second mark the candidate needed to unpack or develop the explanation in terms of why this or another aspect of the data are not useful for the topic. Answers could be fairly concise. So, to say that *data from only six countries is shown means that the table is not representative of all countries and hence cannot give a global picture*. *S*imilarly the fact that the *data has been rounded up or down to the nearest million lacks accuracy as the figures could hide big differences of up to half a million people who cannot access safe drinking water*. Weaker answers did not make a specific source reference or else did not give a clear explanation as to why the aspect of the source identified was a potential problem for understanding the topic.

(b) This question required candidates to state two sampling techniques. Many candidates correctly gave two techniques. The most common answers were random and snowball sampling. A small number of answers incorrectly gave primary research methods such as survey or interview.

(c) In this question candidates were asked to explain one strength and one limitation of digital sources of secondary evidence. It drew a fairly confident response, and many candidates scored at least two marks. In terms of strengths, many candidates correctly identified that digital sources such as websites and research articles are easily and widely accessible due to being online. Some blended the issues of low cost and time saving into the issue of accessibility. Others noted that secondary data digital sources are often useful for researchers to gain an understanding of their topic or

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provide supplementary evidence e.g. in the form of statistics. Limitations frequently focused on the idea that digital sources must be treated with caution due to the proliferation of fake data or data which has been manipulated for political or commercial gain. A few candidates also said that online sources are often difficult to check due to the difficulty of tracing the ultimate source. The other most common limitation was that such data may be outdated and hence not perhaps as relevant to the topic under study. Answers which scored less than two marks invariably only identified a strength or a limitation or gave both a strength and limitation but did not unpack the points.

(d) This essay-style question asked candidates to evaluate the view that researcher bias exists in all sociological research by developing at least two arguments for and two against. Most candidates provided a two-sided answer with the required range of points and came to a conclusion. The quality of arguments varied and most answers scored in Level two (4 – 7 marks) due to some points being only partially, rather than fully, developed or explained. Arguments for the view could come from numerous directions. Some answers focused on primary research methods and discussed the dangers of interviewer bias (conscious or unconscious) or interviewer effect or the impact of the Hawthorne Effect or losing objectivity during participant observations. Others pointed out that many sociologists come to their research already showing some level of bias whether this be in their choice of topic and approach, questions they seek to answer or their theoretical commitments as feminists, Marxists or functionalists etc. A few answers argued that interpretivist approaches are far more likely to result in biased data due to the presence and active involvement of the researcher in the research process. In evaluation many answers argued that sociologists, particularly those of a positivist persuasion, aim to be objective in their research, minimising bias by using methods where the researcher is not present or at least not directly interacting with participants. Other common points seen included the idea that triangulated research may allow for biases to be minimised or that summaries of interviews can be checked by the respondent and/or other members of the research team to ensure an accurate representation is given. A few candidates who scored marks in Level 1 gave only one or two weak points with little or no development.

(e) The research design question is a new addition to the assessment structure in June 2025 therefore posed a new challenge for candidates in the November cohort. The question asked candidates to explain the research methods and evidence that they would choose to investigate gender inequalities in the home. The majority of answers were at the low to mid-range (1 – 6 marks). Relatively few candidates scored in the 10 – 12 mark range (Level 3/4). However, many candidates were clearly well prepared and worked to a simple but effective structure that closely followed the bullet point rubric in the question. By doing so many responses scored marks at the lower end of Level 3. The first of the three marks given for this question was for **Knowledge and understanding** of methods and evidence. Here, more successful answers provided detailed and accurate *descriptions* of the research methods chosen, with relevant sampling, along with a *description* of a suitable a piece of secondary evidence. For example, describing the types and examples of questions to be asked in an interview, the size of a sample and how access could be gained or exactly how an observation was going to be carried out. Such descriptions integrated sociological concepts such as open/closed questions, a standardised approach, rapport, qualitative/quantitative data, probing etc. Some strong responses did not get top level marks as they did not discuss sampling for *both* of the primary methods. In addition, many answers gave only a brief description of how research choices were to be implemented which meant that they were likely to score only 1 or 2 marks for Knowledge and understanding. The second mark was given for **Reasons for choices**, in other words for explaining why a particular method or sample was chosen, including the use of appropriate terms such as reliability, validity, representativeness and generalisability. This was often done much better than the description of methods and evidence. However, many justifications tended to be rather generic – for example a questionnaire was chosen to gain ‘quantitative data’, with little explanation as to why quantitative data might be helpful when investigating gender inequalities in the home. The final mark was given for **Application to context** or how well the candidate oriented their research choices to the context of domestic gender inequalities. Many responses simply repeated the phrase inequalities in the home with little or no real engagement. The best answers *integrated* contextual insights into their descriptions and rationale for methods, sampling and secondary evidence. So, for example, some discussed looking at the division of labour in the home or who makes the most important decisions in the family. A few candidates engaged in evaluation, describing the disadvantages of chosen methods or evidence which was not creditworthy.

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Question 2 Identity: self and society

(a) (i) The definitional question on 'social construction' drew a varied response. Less than half of all responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the term and achieved full marks. The best answers made reference to the fact that identities, norms and values or social behaviours are not given by nature or biology but are created and reinforced through social processes. Two creditable elements were needed for full marks. Some answers gave a less clear definition but added an example, such as the construction of gender identity through the process of socialisation or the fact that our understanding of childhood has changed thereby showing it is not a biological given but given meaning in and through societies. Answers that drew only one mark invariably gave an example but no definition.

(ii) The question was answered more confidently than **Question 2 (a) (i)**, with a good proportion of candidates scoring full marks for their definition of the term 'negative sanction'. Common answers included reference to punishments to correct deviant behaviours with some accompanied by an example such as being told off by parents or being given detention at school. Answers scoring one mark usually identified negative sanctions as punishment but did nothing further in defining it. A small number of responses showed no understanding of the term.

(b) This question asked candidates to give examples of online sub-cultures. The issue of sub-cultures that are predominantly to be found on the internet is a new addition to the syllabus as from 2025. Many candidates did not provide clear examples. The best answers cited gamers, hacktivism sub-cultures, the Clean Girl sub-culture, musical fandoms such as K-poppers or protest movements such as #MeToo or #BlackLivesMatter. Answers which achieved no credit included features rather than examples, such as hairstyles and clothing, or gave examples of traditional offline sub-cultures such as Goths, Mods and punks.

(c) This question asked candidates to explain three ways families teach children norms and values. It drew a fairly confident response. Popular correct answers focused on Oakley's concepts of canalisation and manipulation when teaching gender norms and parents acting as role models and exemplifying values such as respect or norms such as manners. Other answers briefly discussed how social controls are used in the family, such as positive and negative sanctions, to bring children into line with expectations and to encourage continued conformity. Points made needed only relatively simple unpacking to achieve the second mark. Answers that scored between one and three marks often did not identify a clear 'way' and sometimes points fell into description of what norms and values children are taught rather than how the family teaches them.

(d) This question asked candidates to explain Marxist views of socialisation. It drew a varied response in that whilst most candidates understood the question and had some knowledge of the Marxist view of socialisation few put forward three distinct points. Most answers featured the general idea that the working class or proletariat are taught values and norms which keep them in a subordinate position in capitalist society. Better quality answers explained this basic idea via different agencies of socialisation. For example, that education brainwashes the working class into fatalism and subservience via the hidden curriculum. In a similar vein a few candidates drew on the work of Bourdieu to argue that working class children lack cultural and social capital from their family and this disadvantages them through school and later into the workplace. Other arguments seen included the way that the family acts as an Ideological State Apparatus (Althusser) teaches capitalist norms such as obedience and deference thus enabling the reproduction of social class. Another argument was that religion socialises the working class into servitude by discouraging resistance and promising a reward in an afterlife. Less confident answers frequently fell short in terms of range of points.

(e) This question asked candidates to discuss the view that globalisation affects cultural identity. The question offered a good degree of challenge in terms of unpacking three discrete points with sociological evidence. The most successful answers focused directly on aspects of globalisation and then sought to explore how these positively impact people's cultural identity. Popular answers revolved around global foods, music and clothing and fashion styles giving more choice but also, in a sense, drawing people together. Other correct responses focused on the growing global consensus around key universal values with a few linking this to the work of organisations like the United Nations. A small number of answers explored negative effects of globalisation such as the fact that some feel under threat due to Westernisation and its associated cultural products promoting largely American norms and values. In such cases some societies react against homogenisation by engaging in different forms of cultural defence in order to protect heritage,

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religion and culture. Some answers showed little or no working knowledge of the effects of globalisation on cultures.

(f) In this question candidates were asked to evaluate the view that the police are the most effective agency of social control including at least three arguments for and three arguments against, with a conclusion. Stronger answers put forward discrete ways in which the police control the population, often including localised examples. Common acceptable answers included police power of arrest, the use of coercion and their ability to issue penalties like fines. Some answers argued that the police have the power to send people into prisons which was deemed acceptable as a localised function. In evaluation the most effective approach tended to look at the effectiveness of other forms of social control. This could include other agencies of formal control such as the armed forces, government, courts and prison service but also informal agencies of social control such the family, education, peers etc. A few answers also put forward arguments criticising the effectiveness of the police due to issues with corruption, racism and ineptitude. So, a wide range of points was acceptable – the challenge for candidates was to include sufficient sociological evidence in their development. Many essays contained partially, rather than fully, developed points and engaged purely in description rather than analysis of their effectiveness for social control. Few answers attempted a theoretical approach, but those that did frequently made mention of the Marxist view that the repressive state apparatus in the form of police use of coercion and the law to control and deter working class resistance. Most answers drew a simple conclusion which was most often a summary rather than a reasoned judgement on the basis of arguments presented.

Question 3 Social stratification and inequality

(a) (i) The definitional question on push factors drew a mixed response. The term is a new addition to the syllabus and indicates reasons for leaving or emigrating from a country. Some candidates repeated the word factors from the question but mentioned the idea of being forced to leave a country, often giving an example to achieve the second mark, such as natural disasters, war and conflict, high taxes or a lack of economic opportunities in the home country. A few answers confused push factors with pull factors describing how facilities or opportunities in another country draws people to leave their homeland. A few answers showed no understanding of the term push factor.

(ii) This question drew a generally good response. Some candidates provided a 'textbook' definition of the term dependency culture in terms of a set of values that keep people reliant on welfare benefits. Two creditable elements needed to be present in candidate answers and this could be the idea of reliance on welfare, the idea that this is due to certain norms and values (culture) and even the idea that this keeps people stuck in a poverty cycle or poverty trap. Answers scoring only one mark very often repeated terms in the phrase *dependency culture* without sufficiently describing them.

(b) This question required candidates to give two examples of pollution that can affect societies. It drew a generally positive response with answers seen including types such as air, land and sea pollution as well as specific examples of such types like increased carbon dioxide emissions, plastic pollution in the ocean or toxic waste on the land. Answers which did not score any marks often discussed the effects of pollution rather than simply stating two examples.

(c) This question asked candidates to explain three ways status can be ascribed. A majority of candidates showed some knowledge of the term ascribed and talked about gender, age, being born into a social class/royalty and caste or ethnicity. All that was needed in terms of development was to show how the selected aspects of identity are given at birth, are fixed and not easily changed. A few candidates incorrectly used marriage as an example of ascribed status. Candidates who scored lower marks often made fewer than the three points required or did not develop points identified.

(d) This question asked candidates to explain three ways the welfare state can improve life chances. It drew a confident response from many candidates. Popular correct points included the giving of financial support through unemployment benefits, pensions and benefits aimed at families with children. Other commonly seen points referenced free and universal education, free health services and support with housing. Each point needed to be briefly explained in terms of the impact on life chances. For example, education allows working class people the chance to gain qualifications which in turn opens up the possibility for social mobility. Likewise, free health services administer vaccines and treatment for ailments which can improve quality of life, extend a person's working life

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and improve life expectancy. Lower scoring answers frequently made less than three points or made little attempt to unpack the link between the welfare state measures and life chances.

(e) This question asked candidates to discuss the view that individuals are advantaged by being upper class. Many candidates gave a good response and were thus able to score marks in Level 2 (4 – 6 marks). Whilst few candidates attained marks in Level 3, the majority of answers demonstrated a good understanding of the demands of the question. Most creditworthy answers homed in the advantages conferred by private schools or prestigious universities, and this often led into discussions of social and cultural capital and the ensuing ability of upper class individuals to achieve high status positions in the workplace. A few candidates referenced nepotism in this regard. Other points seen included the idea that the upper class have access to well-built or luxurious housing and private healthcare which enhance the quality of life. A few answers engaged with a Marxist perspective arguing that the bourgeoisie enjoy power and profit for very little effort whilst the proletariat remain as powerless wage slaves barely managing to survive. Another Marxist idea seen was that the upper class benefit by being the makers of the law which they can use to protect their property and privileges whilst ensuring that the working class are kept in a subordinate position by using the repressive state apparatus when political resistance rears its head. Less confident answers often dwelt more on the disadvantages experienced by the working class rather than the advantages of the upper class.

(f) The essay-style question asked candidates to evaluate the view that colonialism is the best explanation for global inequalities. Considering the nature of the challenge and the fact that colonialism is a new addition to the syllabus many candidates demonstrated good understanding and some really interesting responses were seen. Arguments seen included the idea that colonialism leaves a legacy of economic instability and weak or corrupt governments that perpetuate relative poverty in global terms. Some argued that colonial powers exploited both the manpower and natural resources of colonies leaving inhabitants impoverished. Others argued that colonial powers often failed to address already existing inequalities such as the caste system or even encouraged and perpetuated institutional racism through social institutions. Some excellent examples were see including references to colonial powers like Great Britain, France and their impact on countries such as India, Indonesia, Malaysia, East Timor and Australia. In evaluation many turned to other possible theoretical explanations of global inequalities such as the feminist arguments about the destructive nature of patriarchy and Marxist arguments about the structural inequalities embedded in global capitalism. Also seen were arguments linked to international institutions like the World bank and non-governmental organisation (NGOs) which can step in when a colonial power withdraws and offer economic support thereby lessening the damage done by former colonial powers. As with **Question 2 (f)**, the guidance bullets in the question appeared to be helpful in making it clear that at least three arguments for and three against should be given with a conclusion offered at the end. Most candidates presented two-sided answers and offered a range of points though not all gave the required number. The best answers were also consistently conceptual in arguments both for and against the view that colonialism is the best explanation for global inequalities. Answers that did not fully explain or develop their chosen points, resulting in partial development, tended to score marks in Level 2. There were also a few no responses to this question.

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SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/21
Family, Education and Crime

Key messages

- Candidate knowledge of the limitations of theoretical perspectives could be improved, perhaps by getting students to draw up 'for and against' tables during preparation and revision.
- In **part (a)(i)** and **(ii)** of the questions candidates did not always include two separate elements, which prevents full marks being awarded.
- In **part (b)** some responses presented long paragraphs which were unnecessary and often caused timing problems for candidates later in the examination.
- Candidates did not always develop their points in the **(c)**, **(d)**, **(e)** and **(f)** questions.
- In the **(e)** and **(f)** questions, some of the responses lacked range and/or were not sociologically engaged to a sufficient degree and therefore could gain marks in the highest level.
- In **part (e)** there is no requirement to evaluate, nor to provide a conclusion; candidates should focus only on providing three developed (i.e. evidenced) points for the view in the question.
- Some responses in the **(f)** questions were not organised into paragraphs and in some areas appeared confused and underdeveloped, and/or descriptive, lacking clarity and synthesis. There were also some list-like and/or one-sided answers that could not score higher than level 2. Most candidates, nonetheless, provided a judgement, mainly as a conclusion to their answer, although developed conclusions were rarely seen.
- Knowledge of key concepts usage could be improved. Candidates need a good working knowledge of key terms and concepts within the specification and the topics.
- Time management should be better considered. The **(a)** and **(b)** questions are worth just two marks, as such there is no need for candidates to write lengthy paragraphs.
- Candidates should read the questions carefully – this caused issues with a number of questions. For example, if the question asks for limitations of a theory, answers that simply describe the theory are unlikely to be credited. Another example would be if the question asks for negative views, raising positive issues will not be credited, e.g. **2(e)**, criticisms of state schools.
- Sociological theories – candidates are expected to have a good working knowledge of the main theoretical approaches in Sociology for the topics of Family, Education and Crime. The key aspects, ideas, strengths and limitations of each theory in relation to each topic need to be covered.
- Using distinct paragraphs for each point made – it is good practice for candidates to separate answers and points into clear paragraphs, making it obvious where one point ends and another begins. For example, using discourse markers such as, 'First', 'Second', 'On the other hand'.
- The **(f)** question is the only one which requires evaluation, a number of candidates were evaluating in **(c)**, **(d)** or **(e)** questions when this is not required. Such answers will never be credited.
- Candidates should develop their points further and demonstrate more sociological engagement, especially in the **(e)** and **(f)** parts of the questions where this is rewarded.
- Candidates should avoid writing introductions and conclusions where they are not required. Introductions are never needed and conclusions only in the **(f)** questions.
- Generic, common-sense, list-like answers should be avoided.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read all questions carefully before starting to write and to make a short plan to best answer each essay question **(f)**; points should not be grouped together rather they should be separated and expanded on in turn.

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General comments

- ***Section A Family***, remained the most answered section, followed by ***Section B Education***, and then ***Section C Crime*** – Education and Crime seemed to be equally as popular this session.
- This was the first paper of the new specification to be sat in the November session.
- There were very few rubric errors seen this session.
- However, there were a number of no-responses with a few for the **(f)** questions which are worth approximately a third of the total marks.
- Generally, answers were well written, and candidates signposted their points using clear signal words, discourse markers and punctuation.
- Overall, there were some high-quality responses seen with candidates showing very good knowledge of the subject matter and successfully integrating sociological concepts and theory into their answers.
- In addition to sociological knowledge, many candidates successfully used localised examples well as evidence for the arguments they were making.
- A few candidates did not number, or incorrectly numbered, their answers which causes difficulties for the examining team, and which runs the risk of candidates not receiving credit for what they have written. It is essential that this is improved.
- Candidates who performed well demonstrated a secure knowledge of sociological concepts and theories, with some reference to specific studies; answers were written in direct context of the question and there was good use of evidence to support answers. Some weaker answers to the essay questions were too short and lacking in evidence of knowledge, concepts and sociological studies. Responses need to include justified and developed conclusions, not just a re-stating of earlier points in a summative way.
- Time management was generally good, with a small number of candidates opting to answer the **(e)** and **(f)** questions first. Those candidates that did run out of time typically spent far too long on the lower tariff questions than the marks available would justify.

Comments on specific questions

Section A Family

Question 1

(a) (i) Many candidates demonstrated good understanding of the term 'domestic division of labour', linking the idea clearly to the home setting and often giving examples of tasks typically completed by males and females within the family to support the definition.

(ii) Many responses used terms that were in the question to define the term 'life expectancy' and thus could not be credited. Creditable responses seen included 'number of years' 'approximate within a society', 'expected to live' etc. Some candidates exemplified responses with data to demonstrate increasing life expectancy within some societies, demonstrating clearly relevant sociological knowledge.

(b) This question was typically well answered with the most common structures given being nuclear, extended and lone-parent families. Some responses gave conjugal roles rather than family structures, which were not relevant to the question.

(c) This question was also well answered with many candidates recognising and illustrating how family life can be positive. Ideas such as the necessity of primary socialisation for children, the 'warm bath' to support men and the creation of emotional bonds and support mechanisms. Answers needed to be linked explicitly enough to the positive element of the question to receive the development mark here, emphasising the need for candidates to pay close attention to the wording of a question.

(d) Those candidates who understood the term 'urbanisation' could access this question well and demonstrated strong sociological knowledge and understanding through their three points. Ideas about the shift to nuclear families, the rise of the dual labour market, the creation of urban struggles and issues on the family, such as crime and the impact of the dual burden on women were all well used. Weaker responses often did not include reference to 'urbanisation' and thus did not score many marks.

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(e) Several responses were limited to stating different family types and did not include other examples of diversity. This meant answers were often lacking in range. Responses needed to give consideration to other ways in which families can be diverse, for example through family roles, social characteristics, culture/religion and through various forms of marriage. The higher tariff questions require this more complex level of understanding in order for candidates to be successful.

(f) Some impressive answers were seen here for a theoretically focused essay question. Most candidates gave at least one or two reasons to show how the family supports capitalism and then evaluated the view with functionalism and/or feminism. Stronger responses were very conceptual in focus, using ideas such as unit of consumption, ideological state apparatus, reproduction of inequalities and various forms of exploitation.

Section B Education

Question 2

(a) (i) Most candidates scored full marks on this question. Typical ideas seen were education not in school, taught by parents/tutors/online and a more flexible form of education.

(ii) This question was also well answered by most candidates who made points to link to creditable ideas such as follows national curriculum, education in a formal institution, e.g. school and tested at the end point through examinations.

(b) This question had a mixed response. Some responses did not demonstrate an understanding of a hierarchy in schools and some did not focus on the gender aspect of the question. Those that did focus well used ideas such as, male heads/female teachers, more attention given to boys than girls and gendered curriculum/gendered subject choices.

(c) Candidates who knew the term 'progressive schooling' from the new specification, achieved well here. Many responses did not demonstrate an understanding of the term and some had interpreted it incorrectly. It is essential that all areas of the new specification are taught. Correct ideas focused on democratic principles, less value on memory skills, more focus on collaboration/problem solving and learning by doing. Some responses included relevant examples such as Montessori schools to illustrate the points being made.

(d) Many candidates gave three ways schools prepare students for the workplace and elaborated on and explained them well. Some answers were vague and did not link ideas clearly enough to the workplace, for example stating, 'it teaches punctuality'. In the 'explain' questions it is essential that candidates develop their ideas and consider how they can link them to theory and concepts. For example, in this question Marxism was well used to make points about the bourgeoisie exploiting the proletariat (being trained for this role at school) as well as functionalism and the idea of 'sifting and sorting' to ensure the right people are in the right jobs.

(e) Some strong responses were seen here with a good number of candidates giving developed criticisms of state schools, often comparing them to private schools to make their points. This typically worked well, e.g. the differences in examination results, the differences in resources, the differences in life chances/cultural capital. Some responses were not conceptual and used examples instead which could still be credited in level two.

(f) Strong debates using contemporary examples and issues were written by some candidates, giving their answers a real sense of sociological relevance. Responses tended to start with reasons why 'ethnic groups are not given equal opportunities in schools', allowing for discussion of institutional racism, teacher stereotyping/expectations, setting and streaming and the ethnocentric curriculum. The more challenging side of the debate was the notion that ethnic groups were treated equally. Successful responses gave reasons such as meritocracy and standardised testing. Functionalism was well applied by some. Conclusions were not always included in candidate answers and to achieve full marks for the essay questions a reasoned judgement on the debate must be made.

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Section C Crime, Deviance and Social Control

Question 3

(a) (i) A clear understanding of the term 'discrimination' was shown by many candidates. Some responses did not explicitly demonstrate the treatment/action aspect of discrimination as opposed to prejudice/thoughts so only gained one mark. Good examples were used by some candidates to really emphasise the idea of differential treatment being central to any aspect of discrimination, e.g. through education, the workplace and the housing market.

(ii) This was a new term from the new syllabus, and many candidates did not attempt this question. There were some candidates confident with the term who used ideas linked to 'community supervision' and 'being watched'. Many responses did not demonstrate an understanding of the term 'probation'.

(b) There were two crucial elements to this question, firstly the need to focus on victims and secondly the need to show a pattern/trend. A vague answer such as 'age' could not therefore be credited as it shows no pattern at all. Answers that were credited stated things such as, young people are more likely to be victims or women are more likely to be victims of domestic crime or ethnic minorities being victims of hate crimes. Those specific answers gained the two marks available.

(c) Some candidates correctly listed several informal agencies within their answer but did not split these up into different points meaning their development marks were limited. Those that made three clear points about informal agencies and explained how/why these prevented crime gained credit. Some candidates talked generally about the powers of informal agencies whilst others made each of their three points focused on a different specific informal agency, e.g. peer group/family. Both approaches were credited but the latter was perhaps best in terms of avoiding overlap and repetition.

(d) Many responses were not focused on the key word 'limitations' in this question and instead described the feminist view of crime which could not be credited. Successful responses gave clear criticisms of the feminist explanation, e.g. just based on gender and ignores other inequalities, chivalry thesis and reduction in patriarchal processes in the criminal justice system.

(e) This was a well answered question with many strong responses to reasons why ethnicity is an important factor in explaining crime. There was a good breadth here with sociological ideas ranging from institutional racism/resistance to labelling theory to deprivation and to some clever links with gang culture and educational inequalities. However, some responses focused on social class or gender, which was not likely to gain credit unless it explicitly referenced ethnicity within the discussion. Keeping focused on the theme in the question is key here. Evaluation in an **(e)** question will not be credited, however good it may be.

(f) A number of candidates did not attempt this essay question. It is best advice to try writing something as often a couple of marks can be achieved through evaluation points alone. Those candidates who did answer had different levels of success. Those confident in the concept of rehabilitation gave good responses which illustrated discrete uses of rehab (e.g. restorative justice, therapy, education, skills and training and addiction) as a mechanism to deal with crime. In evaluation, other approaches were considered such as incarceration, surveillance, capital/corporal punishment and military policing. Other responses were too narrow in focus and so tended to score in level two/three. As with the other essays on the examination paper, candidates made a good effort to conclude their arguments with some offering thoughtful summations on the basis of the evidence presented. Few developed and evaluative conclusions with a clear judgement formed were seen, however.

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Paper 0495/22
Family, Education and Crime

Key messages

- Candidate knowledge of the limitations of theoretical perspectives could be improved, perhaps by getting students to draw up 'for and against' tables during preparation and revision.
- In **part (a)(i)** and **(ii)** of the questions candidates did not always include two separate elements, which prevents full marks being awarded.
- In **part (b)** some responses presented long paragraphs which were unnecessary.
- Candidates did not always develop their points in the **(c)**, **(d)**, **(e)** and **(f)** questions.
- In the **(e)** and **(f)** questions, some of the responses lacked range and/or were not sociologically engaged to a sufficient degree and therefore could gain marks in the highest level.
- In **part (e)** there is no requirement to evaluate, nor to provide a conclusion; candidates should focus only on providing three developed (i.e. evidenced) points for the view in the question.
- Some responses in the **(f)** questions were not organised into paragraphs and in some areas appeared confused and underdeveloped, and/or descriptive, lacking clarity and synthesis. There were also some list-like and/or one-sided answers that could not score higher than level 2. Most candidates, nonetheless, provided a judgement, mainly as a conclusion to their answer, although developed conclusions were rare.
- Knowledge of key concepts could be improved. Candidates need a good working knowledge of key terms and concepts within the specification and the topics.
- Time management should be better considered. The **(a)** and **(b)** questions are worth just two marks, as such there is no need for candidates to write lengthy paragraphs.
- Read the question carefully – this caused issues with a number of questions. For example, if the question asks for limitations of a theory, answers that simply describe the theory are unlikely to be credited. Another example would be if the question asks for positive views, raising negative issues will not be credited.
- Sociological theories – candidates are expected to have a good working knowledge of the main theoretical approaches in Sociology for Family, Education and Crime. The key aspects, ideas, strengths and weaknesses of each theory in relation to each topic need to be covered.
- Using distinct paragraphs for each point made – it is good practice for candidates to separate answers into clear paragraphs, making it obvious where one point ends and another begins. For example, using discourse markers such as, 'First', 'Second', 'On the other hand', etc.
- The **(f)** question is the only one which requires evaluation, a number of candidates were evaluating in **(c), (d)** or **(e)** questions when this is not required. Such answers will never be credited.
- Candidates should develop their points further and demonstrate more sociological engagement, especially in the **(e)** and **(f)** parts of the questions.
- Candidates should avoid writing introductions and conclusions where they are not required. Introductions are never needed and conclusions only in the **(f)** questions.
- Generic, common-sense, list-like answers should be avoided.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read all questions carefully before starting to write and to make a short plan to best answer each essay question **(f)**; points should not be grouped together rather they should be separated and expanded on in turn.

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General comments

- ***Section A Family***, remained the most answered section, followed by ***Section B Education***, and then ***Section C Crime***.
- This was the first paper of the new specification to be sat in the November session.
- There were very few rubric errors seen this session.
- Generally, answers were well written, and candidates signposted their points using clear signal words, discourse markers and punctuation.
- The question that asked for 'limitations' (**2(e)**) caused some confusion, with candidates tending to write about Marxist views of education and not referencing any limitations/criticisms of the approach. This demonstrates the need for candidates to focus clearly on the specific demands of the question set and for the question style of 'limitations' to be explicitly addressed and taught within centres.
- Overall, there were some high-quality responses seen with candidates showing very good knowledge of the subject matter and successfully integrating sociological concepts and theory into their answers.
- In addition to sociological knowledge, many candidates used localised examples well as evidence for the arguments they were making.
- A few candidates did not number or incorrectly numbered their answers which causes difficulties for the examining team, and which runs the risk of candidates not receiving credit for what they have written. It is essential that this is improved.
- Candidates who performed well demonstrated a secure knowledge of sociological concepts and theories, with some reference to specific studies; answers were written in direct context of the question and there was good use of evidence to support answers. Some weaker answers to the essay questions were too short and lacking in evidence of knowledge, concepts and sociological studies. Responses need to include justified and developed conclusions, not just a re-stating of earlier points in a summative way.
- Time management was generally good, with a small number of candidates opting to answer the **(e)** and **(f)** questions first. Those candidates that did run out of time typically spent far too long on the lower tariff questions than the marks available would justify.

Comments on specific questions

Section A Family

Question 1

(a) (i) The vast majority of candidates were familiar with the term 'empty-shell marriage', citing a breakdown in the relationship/lack of partner intimacy yet still living together most commonly to gain two marks. Some candidates gave a definition of empty nest family instead and thus were unable to be credited. This demonstrates the need to focus carefully on the terms in the definition questions.

(ii) Most candidates gained some marks in their definition of 'gender role'. Successful answers described the term as behaviours or expectations that society has for males and females. Some candidates wrote a definition that repeated one or both of the terms in the question – gender and/or role. Many answers gained one mark (partial) by giving an appropriate example of a gender role, such as the male breadwinner or female housewife.

(b) A large number of candidates stated two ways in which family life is changing. The most frequently cited responses referred to the replacement of the extended family by the nuclear family, the increasing rate of divorce and cohabitation, as well as changing conjugal roles. A smaller number of responses did not explicitly refer to changes, for example stating only 'divorce rates' which was too vague. A few candidates presented overly long answers/descriptions in one or even two paragraphs instead of just stating two ways, paying close attention to the command words is thus highly recommended.

(c) Most candidates confidently described three types of family, apart from the nuclear family. It was perhaps the question that was answered best in the whole paper. Answers were usually concise but very accurate. Popular answers included the extended family (or versions of it), the reconstituted family or the lone-parent family. A small number of candidates did describe the nuclear family, showing they had not read the question properly. Other answers which did not

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achieve full marks invariably either misnamed a type of family or gave an incorrect description of the type named.

(d) This question asked for a description of three feminist criticisms of the nuclear family difficult. The most successful answers focused on issues such as the unequal division of labour in the household with the concepts of the dual burden and triple shift featuring prominently. Candidates also discussed male power over decision-making in the home and domestic violence perpetrated upon women and children by men. A few responses did not show an understanding of the feminist viewpoint; for example, discussing positive aspects of nuclear families or simply describing aspects of the nuclear family instead of focusing on its limitations for women.

(e) Although many candidates provided sufficient sociological knowledge to place their answers in Level two, few candidates scored in the top level, mainly because points were not fully developed in terms of providing explicit links to the question. A number of answers discussed why women chose not to have children at all, rather than later in life or made this link implicit and therefore such points could not be fully credited. Candidates most commonly referred to women having a better education and wanting careers and women having more freedom to choose their life paths and/or marry later as well as women preferring to be financially stable before opting for children. Some candidates gave strong sociological points, for example, identifying the impact of secularisation in society, easing the pressure to marry early and become mothers or the impact of feminism upon women, creating a desire for financial independence along with more freedom in their younger years. Many answers often resorted to common-sense points about women wanting to enjoy themselves, protect their body and beauty or wait to make sure their partner was reliable before thinking about children. The more successful responses presented clear links to women then choosing to have children later in life and the reasons for this. The weaker responses did not make the connection or were did not support knowledge with appropriate sociological material, or both.

(f) A range of responses were seen for this question. Most candidates used the functionalist approach (or concepts from it) to answer the question with examples of essential functions and then used the Marxist, feminist and changing functions for their arguments against. Many candidates discussed functions such as socialisation, care/support, reproduction and economics and used patriarchy, consumerism and reproduction of the workforce against. Arguments against the view commonly referred to dysfunctional families, often discussed in terms of the dark side of the family and violence, abuse and the neglect of children. Others drew upon Marxist theory arguing that the family basically serves the needs of capitalism and reproduces a willing docile workforce ripe for exploitation by the bourgeoisie. Another prominent approach was to show that the functions of the family such as socialisation of children and care of the elderly is now done by other social institutions such as schools and residential care homes for the elderly. Most candidates gave both sides of the debate with varying success in terms of conceptuality, evidence and development. Many candidates utilised a wide range of concepts within this answer. Evaluation was sometimes limited to criticisms of the family in general rather than focusing on the specifics of the question and identifying why the family might not be providing essential functions anymore. Most candidates attempted to sum up their arguments in a conclusion with the best conclusions reviewing, reflecting and coming to a reasoned judgement based on the evidence presented. The main discriminator in terms of the level awarded was the amount and quality of evidence used to support points made.

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Section B Education

Question 2

(a) (i) Many candidates did not gain full marks for this definition. The more successful answers used subjects and syllabus referring to the differences for males and females. Many partially defined the term by giving examples of gendered subjects such as science or maths for boys.

(ii) This question was not answered well. Candidates often did not define what a sub-culture was or allude to its collective group nature, thus gaining only partial marks. Creditable elements included the idea of a group of students or learners who agree with and follow the norms and values of the school. Some answers gave examples such as students attending extra lessons and forming study groups to work together. Many responses defined anti-school sub-cultures instead of pro-school.

(b) On the whole this question was not well answered, many responses demonstrated limited knowledge of what linguistic factors were and gave vague terms such as culture or hard work. For those candidates who successfully answered, the most commonly seen responses were, elaborated code, restricted code, ethnic minorities not understanding the host language and/or teachers' response to students using AAVE.

(c) Overall, this question drew a mixed response with some candidates correctly identifying and explaining features of the official curriculum such as it being prescribed by the government, having a number of set subjects, requiring standardised testing, being taught by teachers/experts in a formal setting/classroom, etc. Others, however, referred to features of the hidden curriculum such as learning norms and values, socialisation, etc. which could not be credited.

(d) In this question candidates were required to explain three ways education is meritocratic. It drew a generally positive response in terms of showing a good understanding of meritocracy in education. Commonly seen answers included the idea of education being free and universal, that schools practise equal opportunities in terms of social class, gender and ethnicity and that all students are taught the same content (national curriculum) and assessed in the same way via standardised testing. A few candidates made reference to compensatory education as a leveller and also the idea of setting and streaming to allow students to learn at their own pace and so flourish. Many answers linked these ideas to functionalism and the aim of enabling young people to experience social mobility. Similar to **part (c)** answers varied in length and sophistication, and it was quite possible to achieve full marks with a concise but clear explanation. Answers which scored fewer marks were usually quite vague and/or made fewer than the required number of points.

(e) This question proved to be one of the most challenging on the examination paper and very few responses achieved marks in level three. The question asked candidates to discuss the limitations of the Marxist view of education. Many candidates simply described aspects of the Marxist view rather than focusing on the *limitations* of it and thus were not answering the question. It is crucial that candidates are prepared for the demands of the strengths/limitations style of question so that they are able to tackle these confidently. In those answers that did address the question, the most popular limitations discussed often focused on the feminist criticism that Marxist views of education ignore the impact of patriarchy and the role of education in reproducing harmful gender stereotypes or that Marxists fail to recognise the positive role played by education in allowing young working-class people to gain skills that enable them to achieve social mobility. Another common point argued that Marxists fail to take the full impact of ethnicity into account, particularly institutional racism in schools seen through the ethnocentric curriculum and teacher labelling. A few candidates argued that the Marxist view of education is overly deterministic in that working class children passively absorb capitalist norms and values taught to them encouraging them to see failure as their own fault whereas, in reality, many working-class children are able to see through the ideology and resist and rebel in school perhaps by forming an anti-school subculture.

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(f) There were some good responses seen to this question and many candidates provided a debate to evaluate the view that material factors have the most influence on educational achievement. Arguments for material factors frequently discussed material deprivation and poverty, referring to a lack of a quiet space to study, poor diet and/or lack of resources needed for school such as books, laptops etc. On the evaluation (against) side, responses commonly mentioned cultural deprivation/lack of cultural capital/social class, linguistic factors, gender and students' motivation/hard work. The more successful responses made use of sociological theory and studies, most often Marxism/Bourdieu, etc. A few candidates provided only brief list-like answers, sometimes leaning towards one side to the detriment of the other and so not achieving a balanced response. Following the question prompts as guidance should help to alleviate this issue in the future. The weaker answers were often not organised into paragraphs, offering undeveloped or underdeveloped points as well as common-sense arguments. Still, many responses reached level three, and some got into level four, with valid conclusions being drawn. Ultimately, it was a well answered question.

Section C Crime, Deviance and Social Control

Question 3

(a) (i) Most responses scored one mark on this question, by stating how crimes were not reported to the police. However, the focus of the question was 'unrecorded crime', which few candidates defined correctly. Unrecorded crime is crime reported to the police but not recorded by them.

(ii) Only a few candidates presented comprehensive definitions of the term 'expressive crime', citing offences involving emotions such as anger, frustration, etc. and referring to them being unplanned. These were sometimes substantiated with well-chosen examples of such crimes, e.g. vandalism, jealous revenge acts. Most often responses offered either partial or incorrect definitions.

(b) This was a well answered question. A good number of candidates correctly stated two aims of punishment. Answers referred to deterrence, rehabilitation, prevention of the repetition of such crimes, justice being served, etc. Such conceptual terminology was not an expectation, and full marks could be achieved through phrases such as 'putting people off crime' or 'keeping the public safe'. However, large numbers of candidates were confident in their usage of the conceptual sociological terms.

(c) Strain theory did not seem to be well known about by candidates. Those candidates who did have the knowledge produced some excellent responses, linking into the American dream, the mismatch between societal goals and the means of achieving them and the various subcultural responses, e.g. retreatism, as outlined by Merton. Such answers were uncommon however with many candidates leaving this question blank.

(d) This question asked for three reasons why crimes are not always reported to the police. It proved to be an accessible question, and the vast majority of candidates scored well on it. Commonly seen reasons included the sensitivity of some crimes, trivial crimes, fear of retribution by the criminal and a mistrust of police who are likely to do nothing in certain communities. Low scoring answers often identified reasons but then did not offer any development of those given.

(e) Many candidates did not attempt this question. Some candidates interpreted moral panic as an offender committing a crime impulsively and then experiencing panic afterwards. Better responses demonstrated an understanding of the concept and discussed media exaggeration and labelling as factors from a moral panic that could lead to crime. The best answers often focused on Cohen's famous study of the mods and the rockers and outlined aspects of that work. For example, some discussed the exaggeration of the initial deviance by the media or police and subsequent escalation of conflict between the sub-cultures. Others discussed the idea of symbolisation and the depiction of folk devils which may then influence agencies such as the police who crack down on their targets more easily by having a certain 'look' to guide them. A number of answers focused on the idea of deviancy amplification and the fact that media coverage of the mods and rockers then encouraged more young people to travel to seaside towns to join in the fights.

(f) This essay question focused on the effectiveness of policing strategies in preventing crime. There were a number of high-level answers seen. On the 'for' side of the debate most candidates used the method of naming a police strategy, describing it and then elaborating on why it prevented crime and this worked well. For example, stop and search: police have a heavy police presence in

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certain areas linked with crime, they stop and search a number of individuals, looking for drugs or weapons. Word gets around that this is happening so others in the area are deterred from committing crime. Other strategies that were commonly discussed included community policing, use of surveillance, military style policing and police use of fines. In evaluation, candidates used a number of different approaches, all of which were equally valid. Some took their 'for' points and explained why this strategy did not work, e.g. stop and search fails to prevent crime as resentment of police presence builds and certain groups feel that they are being unfairly targeted, this resentment can then result in more crime occurring such as rioting. Another approach was to consider that there were better ways to prevent crime, such as through informal agencies or through harsher punishments. Very few candidates referenced Marxist or feminist criticisms of policing strategies. As with the other essays on the examination paper, candidates made a good effort to conclude their arguments with some offering thoughtful summations on the basis of the evidence presented. Very few developed conclusions that made a reasoned judgement on the question were seen.

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Paper 0495/23
Family, Education and Crime

Key messages

- Candidate knowledge of the limitations of theoretical perspectives could be improved, perhaps by getting students to draw up 'for and against' tables during preparation and revision. It is essential that candidates recognise this term when used in questions.
- In **part (a)(i)** and **(ii)** questions, candidates did not always include two separate elements to their response, which prevents full marks being awarded.
- In **part (b)** some responses presented long paragraphs which were unnecessary.
- Candidates did not always develop their points in the **(c)**, **(d)**, **(e)** and **(f)** questions.
- In the **(e)** and **(f)** questions, some of the responses lacked range and/or were not sociologically engaged to a sufficient degree and therefore could gain marks in the highest level.
- In **part (e)** there is no requirement to evaluate, nor to provide a conclusion; candidates should focus only on providing three developed (i.e. evidenced) points to support the view in the question.
- Some responses in the **(f)** questions were not organised into paragraphs and in some areas appeared confused and underdeveloped, and/or descriptive, lacking clarity and synthesis. There were also some list-like and/or one-sided answers that could not score higher than level 2. Most candidates, nonetheless, provided a judgement, mainly as a conclusion to their answer, although developed conclusions were rarely seen.
- Knowledge of key concepts could be improved. Candidates need a good working knowledge of key terms and concepts within the specification and the topics.
- Time management could be better considered by some candidates. The **(a)** and **(b)** questions are worth just two marks, as such there is no need for candidates to write lengthy paragraphs.
- Candidates should read all questions carefully – this caused issues with a number of questions. For example, if the question asks for limitations of a theory, answers that simply describe the theory are unlikely to be credited. Another example would be if the question asks for negative views (e.g. dysfunctional), raising positive issues will not be credited.
- Sociological theories – candidates are expected to have a good working knowledge of the main theoretical approaches in Sociology for Family, Education and Crime. The key aspects, ideas, strengths and limitations of each theory in relation to each topic need to be covered.
- Using distinct paragraphs for each point made – it is good practice for candidates to separate answers/points into clear paragraphs, making it obvious where one point ends and another begins. For example, using discourse markers such as, 'First', 'Second', 'On the other hand' etc would really help clarity and organisation.
- The **(f)** question is the only one which requires evaluation, a number of candidates were evaluating in **(c)**, **(d)** or **(e)** questions when this is not required. Such answers will never be credited.
- Candidates should develop their points further, substantiate with sociological evidence and demonstrate more sociological engagement, especially in the **(e)** and **(f)** parts of the questions.
- Candidates should avoid writing introductions and conclusions where they are not required. Introductions are never needed and conclusions only in the **(f)** questions.
- Generic, common-sense, list-like answers should be avoided.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read all questions carefully before starting to write and to make a short plan to best answer each essay question **(f)**; points should not be grouped together rather they should be separated and expanded on in turn.

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General comments

- ***Section A Family***, remained the most answered section, followed by ***Section B Education***, and then ***Section C Crime***.
- This was the first paper of the new specification to be sat in the November session.
- There were very few rubric errors seen this session.
- Generally, answers were well written, and candidates signposted their points using clear signal words, discourse markers and punctuation.
- Overall, there were some high-quality responses seen with candidates showing very good knowledge of the subject matter and successfully integrating sociological concepts and theory into their answers.
- In addition to sociological knowledge, many candidates used localised examples well as evidence for the arguments they were making.
- A few candidates did not number, or incorrectly numbered, their answers which caused difficulties for the examining team, and which runs the risk of candidates not receiving credit for what they have written. It is essential that this is improved.
- Candidates who performed well demonstrated a secure knowledge of sociological concepts and theories, with some reference to specific studies; answers were written in direct context of the question and there was good use of evidence to support answers. Some weaker answers to the essay questions were too short and lacking in evidence of knowledge, concepts and sociological studies. Responses need to include justified and developed conclusions, not just a re-stating of earlier points in a summative way.
- Time management was generally good, with a small number of candidates opting to answer the **(e)** and **(f)** questions first. Those candidates that did run out of time typically spent far too long on the lower tariff questions than the marks available would justify.

Comments on specific questions

Section A Family

Question 1

(a) (i) Candidates were asked to define the term 'industrialisation', two elements were needed for full marks to be awarded. The majority of candidates scored at least one mark by recognising the move to factory working, or by describing urbanisation. A number did achieve two marks by stating it was the move away from an agrarian society to an industrial one, with more people working in industries.

(ii) The majority of candidates achieved two marks on this question. Many stated it was the increase of old people in the population of a country, often providing examples/rationale to explain this trend. Many candidates included the relevant example of Japan to substantiate their points.

(b) This question was well answered with candidates choosing a variety of ways to show how the family is dysfunctional. The most commonly seen responses being domestic abuse, inadequate socialisation of children and inequality of roles within the family.

(c) There was a varied response to this question. There were some excellent answers seen which had a clear focus as to why cohabitation was increasing and a diverse range of points to explain. The most commonly seen reasons were, secularisation, individuals worrying about the rising divorce rate, using cohabitation as a trial marriage to see if a partner was suitable and the decline of pressure from extended kin. Some candidates did not demonstrate an understanding of cohabitation or thought it meant friends living together. Candidates who did not score full marks either gave a stated point or their explanation was too cursory/lacking in focus.

(d) This question regarding why many families now have joint conjugal roles was well answered, with a number of candidates achieving full marks. A variety of reasons were explored including, the rise of dual worker families, the increase in the cost of living, the increase in family diversity meaning the traditional roles no longer applied, the emergence of the 'new man' being more willing to help out within the home and the influence of feminism, with women no longer willing to accept traditional and subservient roles. A few responses gave reasons for segregated conjugal roles rather than joint conjugal roles and therefore were not credit worthy. This demonstrates the need to read the question carefully.

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(e) This question asked for reasons why the family is functional. A significant number of responses also included why it was not functional, discussing, for example, the dark side of the family, e.g. domestic abuse. The **(e)** question does not ask for evaluation and therefore such responses cannot be credited. Successful responses were typically based around functionalism, focusing on areas such as primary socialisation, reproduction, social control, the care of children and the elderly. Some candidates did use feminism and Marxism correctly, explaining why the family was functional for men or for capitalism. Many candidates made good use of key concepts here.

(f) The essay question focused on whether feminist views of the family are correct, as this is the evaluate question both sides of the debate needed to be considered to achieve Level three or four. Successful responses were sociological in focus, detailed and included studies/theories/key concepts which were used to good effect. Responses are clearer if points are introduced through the use of well-chosen discourse markers. The majority of responses demonstrated a good understanding of the feminist viewpoint, e.g. dual burden/triple shift, domestic abuse (Dobash and Dobash frequently used), many families are patriarchal, differential gender socialisation (Oakley), some women are still forced into marriages. On the evaluation side, candidates used a variety of approaches which were all equally valid. Some used other theoretical ideas to criticise feminists, for example functionalism, Marxism, the New Right and/or postmodernism. Others took feminist points and explained why they were now outdated, for example the emergence of joint conjugal roles, dual worker families, new legislation on equality, more protection for women with regard to domestic abuse, the fact that new types of families have now emerged and the traditional nuclear family which oppressed women being in decline.

Section B Education

Question 2

(a)(i) The majority of candidates demonstrated an understanding of the term role model, with many achieving the full two marks available. The idea that it was someone to look up to, an aspirational figure and someone to try to be like came through clearly. Some candidates used examples such as a parent or a celebrity – often a good way to achieve the second mark.

(ii) Many responses were not explicit in the definition of an 'international school' and as such were only able to achieve a one mark. For example, an answer might say it was private, or it was expensive, whilst these are often correct, they are very generic and could apply to other schools other than International ones. Specifically, international schools are an alternative to local schools in a country, which tend to offer a different curriculum, also learners are often from a different country.

(b) Candidates were asked to give two strengths of home schooling. This was a well answered questions, candidates clearly knew what was meant by the term and offered strengths such as there being less chance of pupils being bullied, easier than travelling long distances to school, parents could tailor the curriculum to their child's needs and greater flexibility.

(c) This question, asking candidates to explain how in-school factors could affect educational achievement, was well answered with a very wide range of factors being given. Candidates could consider the question positively, negatively or a combination of the two. The most commonly seen ideas were the class size, resources available in school, teacher labelling of students, the influence of pro/anti school sub-cultures, setting and streaming, the hidden curriculum and institutional racism within school. Responses related to at home factors such as a poor diet or inadequate housing did not achieve marks as this was not the focus of the question.

(d) This was an accessible question, asking about the roles of education. There were many factors that candidates could consider and similarly different ways of approaching the question. Some candidates took a theoretical approach, looking at the role of education from a functionalist, feminist and Marxist perspective. Others focused in on three functionalist roles, such as socialisation, social control, role allocation and/or the economic role. As in **part (c)**, the key to gaining higher marks was to clearly identify three roles and to fully explain each one.

(e) Some responses to this question on the limitations of faith schools were not overly successful because of two key reasons. First, a lack of specific knowledge on faith schools being given hence limitations stated were very generic, such as they are expensive and/or teachers label students. Second, the focus of the question is the *limitations* of faith schools. Many responses did not focus

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on the limitations and instead included information about faith schools in general. A smaller number of candidates did produce excellent responses, focusing on issues such as faith schools segregating different religious groups leading to a lack of community cohesion, they may reinforce the idea that their religion is superior, they may prioritise religious teaching over other aspects of the curriculum and they are often private, single-sex schools which may see girls as inferior.

(f) The essay question focused on whether social class has the most impact on an individual's experience of education. As this is the 'evaluate' question both sides of the debate needed to be considered to achieve Level three or four. The question was very accessible with a wide range of possible reasons on both sides that could be considered. On the 'for' side, candidates typically looked at the type of school attended by different social classes (e.g. private versus state), elaborated/restricted code, home factors such as lack of resources, poor diet, etc., cultural capital, teacher expectations of different social classes and immediate/deferred gratification. In evaluation, factors included, gender being more important than social class, ethnicity being more important, the functionalist view of meritocracy and the influence of the peer group, e.g. pro-school sub-cultures. There were good opportunities here for candidates to demonstrate their sociological understanding through explicit use of theory, concepts and studies and these were well used in the more successful answers.

Section C Crime, Deviance and Social Control

Question 3

(a)(i) The majority of candidates knew the term 'stereotyping' and most achieved at least one mark. Many explained it fully, recognising that it was usually a negative widespread view, typically over-simplified. Examples such as teenagers all being seen as deviant, the elderly being frail, etc. were also creditable for one mark. Pertinent examples cannot score two marks on their own but combined with a correct definition give access to the two marks available.

(ii) The majority of candidates achieved two marks on this question that asked for a definition of 'property crime'. Many used an example of property crime to supplement their answer, such as arson, vandalism or theft of a purse.

(b) Candidates needed to consider crimes that specifically targeted the elderly, so generic answers such as murder or hate crime were not credited as these do not specifically target the elderly. The majority of candidates stated specific crimes such as elder abuse, online fraud, identity theft and doorstep scams.

(c) This was an accessible question, asking for reasons why some youths join gangs. Most candidates accessed level two by giving reasons such as poverty/relative deprivation, rebellion/resistance, Katz's idea of looking for fun and excitement, lack of adequate socialisation, peer pressure and the existence of criminal role models. There was often a lack of explanation/development on some points which meant responses could not achieve three fully explained points. When developing the point made, candidates should try to keep in mind the specific focus of the question – so here to focus on young people and the lure of gangs.

(d) Candidates were asked to explain feminist views of crime. This allowed for a focus on criminals, victims or the more generic picture of crime. This was generally done well with a number of candidates achieving full marks. The majority of candidates gave at least one relevant point. Candidates often focused in on the fact that according to feminists men commit more crime than women due to hegemonic masculinity, females were subject to crimes of domestic violence and these were not often seen in official statistics, men were less socially controlled than women and thus could commit more crime through greater opportunities and the idea that women are invisible in crime, thus being less likely to appear in crime statistics.

(e) The key prompt word in this question was 'limitations' and was generally not answered well. There were some well-constructed responses seen that accessed the higher levels. Limitations that were successfully covered included, serious crime tending not to be a focus hence their usefulness being limited, despite the studies being confidential people may worry that this is not the case and so be wary about crimes they self-report and there may be issues with validity as responders may exaggerate/underplay their crimes. A number of responses focused on victim surveys or reports that were submitted to police rather than self-report studies. Self-report studies are one of the three

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key sociological measurements of crime. Candidates often focused on self-report studies in general, e.g. how they are used, their sampling, rather than having a focus on their limitations.

(f) Candidates generally presented stronger arguments for the 'against' side than the 'for' side of this question. The question was focused around whether status frustration is the best explanation for crime, so candidates needed a sound knowledge of the key crime theory in order to be successful. In some responses it was unclear if the reasons on the 'for' side actually linked to Cohen's theory as many used strain theory and/or Marxism in lieu of status frustration. Marks were awarded if the link between status and crime was shown. A good technique is to consider status frustration in terms of relevant social characteristics. So, for example, a point on social class, a point on gender and a point on ethnicity. This would have maintained specific focus on the question whilst also ensuring a lack of repetition. Evaluation was far better with candidates using a wide variety of alternative explanations for crime and discussing appropriately why these were a preferred explanation. Points included, the influence of police targeting in increasing crime, inadequate socialisation, material/relative deprivation, the culture of masculinity and the buzz of crime.

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