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SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/12

Socialisation, Identity and Research Methods

Key messages

- High scoring answers included good use of sociological material.
- Improving observance of the examination's rubric in ***Section A***.
- There was a deficit in knowledge of how peer groups contribute to influencing class identity in **Question 3(a)** and understanding of reliability in **2(a)**.
- To achieve full marks in **Question 3(b)**, candidates need to directly evaluate the view, most candidates simply provided an alternative argument.
- In ***Section B***, **Question 4** there was a notable lack of balance between supporting and evaluating arguments.
- There was sound knowledge of sociological methods especially in **Question 5**.

General comments

The standard of responses overall was variable. In **Question 1** the majority of candidates were able to fully describe two types of interview. In **Question 2(a)** most candidates were able to identify two ways of achieving reliability in sociological research but few showed the depth of understanding required to develop their answers fully. In **Question 2(b)** there was evidence of a good knowledge base although overt and covert participant observations were sometimes confused. It is worth repeating that the marks for **Questions 2(a)** and **2(b)** are accumulated on a points-based approach and it is important to follow the rubric as shown in the mark scheme to achieve high marks for these questions. Overall, there was evidence of improved observance of the examination rubric for **Question 2**. In **Question 3(a)**, many candidates were aware of the role of peer groups as a socialising agent but not clear how it affected class identity. The range of points made in this question was narrow. In **Question 3(b)** responses were mostly valid but very few directly evaluated the proposition, instead simply asserting an alternative point of view.

In ***Section B*** there was a fairly even distribution of responses between questions. The strongest answers delivered balanced essays supported by sociological evidence. In **Question 4** most candidates were able to produce points supporting the view but many were less certain with arguments in evaluation leading to a number of unbalanced responses. **Question 5** produced many good responses and most candidates were able to show sound knowledge and understanding of the influence of practical factors on the choice of research method.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Nearly all candidates were able to identify two types of interview. The most typical examples were structured and unstructured although semi-structured and group also featured. Many candidates were able to develop these points successfully. Less effective answers tended to be developed in ways that could have been applicable to any type of interview. A reminder that candidates are only required to describe in this question, there is no need to explain or define.

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Question 2

(a) Many candidates produced good answers to this question. Popular ways included: the use of quantitative methods and/or a scientific approach as well as the lower involvement of researchers in the process. Successful responses clearly identified a reason, explained it, selected relevant sociological material, and then showed how the material supported the point. Less effective ones often identified and explained two ways but made weak selections of sociological material for the third available mark and were then unable to show how the selected material supported the identified way. Some approaches were too general and did not clearly identify separate ways. Reliability and validity were sometimes mixed up or used interchangeably. Overall, there appeared to be a deficit in understanding of the meaning of reliability.

(b) This question was well answered by candidates. Most were able to provide two limitations of covert participant observation. The most frequently identified limitations were that covert research is potentially unethical, the difficulties of recording data, and involvement of the researcher leading to invalid data. Some candidates did not focus on the term 'covert' and instead wrote about participant observation in general. Others provided unnecessary introductions rather than addressing the issue of limitations directly. Some responses confused overt and covert participant observation. The first two marks were achieved by most responses but development of why an identified point was a limitation was not always successful. Candidates may benefit from completing their answer by stating that 'this is a strength/limitation because' taking care to avoid repetition of their original point.

Question 3

(a) Few candidates produced strong answers to this question. Many outlined the role of the peer group as an agent of socialisation but did not link this to how peers are an important influence on class identity. Many responses cited relevant concepts such as peer pressure and social sanctions but did not apply these to class identity. Several successful answers showed how peers shape identity in the context of schools with reference made to research material such as Willis. Examples of links between peers and upper-class identity rarely featured in responses. Many candidates only made one point in their response and very few candidates reached the higher levels. To achieve full marks, candidates should provide two clear and developed points. If these points are made with good reference to concepts, theories and evidence that is directed towards the question a response can achieve 10 marks.

(b) Responses to this question were better than for **3(a)**. The most common approach was to suggest an alternative agent of socialisation as a more important influence, typically this was the family. Many candidates argued that the peer group is not an important influence on class identity as class itself is no longer a key source of identity. Few responses directly evaluated the proposition that the peer group is the most important influence, instead simply asserting an alternative point of view. Candidates should focus upon an argument against the view and might use the view described in the question as a prompt when making their concluding remarks. Several candidates continue to give more than one argument in their answers. In these cases, only the best one was rewarded.

Section B

Question 4

The strongest responses outlined the arguments that linked globalisation, immigration and increased consumerism to the question, but many did not apply these concepts to the question successfully. Hybridity featured in most responses along with concepts such as 'code switching'; generally, these arguments were supported by good use of research studies. There was a tendency to conflate these ideas with mixed race relationships, which is a related but different point. Candidates were more comfortable with arguments supporting the view than against it. The main opposing argument was typically shaped in terms of cultural resistance and defence but the range of points made in evaluation was quite limited leaving some responses unbalanced. Many answers dismissed the notion of ethnic identity and produced lengthy accounts of changing gender, class and age identities with no links made to the question. Such responses received limited marks.

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Question 5

Most responses correctly identified and outlined a range of practical factors that influence choice of methods. Candidates typically went on to evaluate in terms of the relative importance of other factors such as theory, ethics and researcher values. As such, most candidates produced balanced essays. Strong responses considered how funding sources such as government and companies may affect the validity of research findings; they also explored factors such as accessibility to the sample and/or the nature of the study group. A number of responses discussed topic choice and methods, but this approach was rarely linked back to the question and was not rewarded. Some candidates mistook ethical issues as a practical factor. Evaluation was nearly always by juxtaposition with very few candidates reaching conclusions based on their arguments.

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Paper 9699/22
The Family

Key messages

- Candidates should ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination – familiarisation through use of past exam papers/mark schemes would be beneficial.
- Candidates should focus responses on the context of **the family**, as this is the unit focus.
- Teachers need to do more to prepare candidates for the demands of **Question 2(b)**.
- Candidates should ensure essay responses for **Questions 4/5** engage in competing views, looking at different sides of the issue in the question and apply relevant sociological material.
- More successful responses applied relevant sociological theories, concepts, and research to demonstrate sociological knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers should provide learners with activities encouraging point development and explicit evaluation.

General comments

Overall, there was a range of candidate performance with some demonstrating very good comprehension of both the requirements of the questions, and the sociological knowledge and understanding to answer them effectively. Some responses relied on common sense/anecdotal evidence, and candidates that appeared unprepared for the demands of particular questions.

The more successful candidates responded to question prompts appropriately and produced responses that reflected the requirements of the question and applied relevant sociological material to support and develop their responses. Candidate responses that achieved lower marks tended not to answer the question set, and/or tended to be descriptive, lacking an application of relevant sociological material in providing evidence of analysis and assessment. These often relied more on common sense/general knowledge. The extended writing questions were excellent discriminators for students to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding. interpretation and application and analysis and evaluation. Few candidates explicitly evaluated the question, often relying on juxtaposition of opposing points. Unfortunately, some candidates failed to provide a response in **Questions 4/5** that addressed contrasting sides of the debate, providing one-sided responses.

The majority of candidates were able to name relevant sociological concepts/studies; less successful candidates did not ***apply*** these to develop their response, often relying on simply stating them or defining/describing them rather than applying them in a way that engages the question. Any rubric errors tended to occur within **Questions 1**, **2(a)** and **3(b)**, whereby candidates provided more points than were required.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates adopted a functionalist approach in answering this question. Commonly *primary socialisation* and *stabilisation of adult personalities*, with *economic provision and emotional care* also being quite popular. Most candidates were able to successfully identify two ways and describe them, there were some that only identified the way, failing to give the description and thus achieved half marks or less. For example, stating primary socialisation but describing how the child benefits from it. There was the occasional simplistic response such as *providing moral support* or *caring for each other*. Very occasionally answers focused on benefitting society rather than the members of the family, therefore irrelevant and not awardable.

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

Question 2

(a) The majority of candidates were able to provide at least one relevant reason with appropriate explanation, with the majority of those able to provide two.

Candidates should be encouraged to construct their responses in a clear and structured way:

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

Common valid responses included *decline of religious influence…change in social attitudes towards cohabitation…acts as a test for compatibility.* The more successful responses demonstrated two reasons, supported with the application of appropriate sociological material, commonly *secularisation, Beck/risk society, and Beaujouan & Ni Bhrolchain.* Many candidates did not apply any sociological material/evidence to support the reasons given, therefore could only be awarded half the marks available to them, at best.

Weaker responses were too vague, for example *cohabitation has become more accepted due to globalisation*… without identifying or explaining the significance of the impact of globalisation, *on increasing.* A small number of candidates provided critiques of cohabitation.

To improve, candidates need to support points using appropriate sociological material for example, concepts, studies, policies, relevant sociologists etc. and apply these in demonstrating the original point made. Introductions, conclusions, and definitions of cohabitation are not required.

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

(b) It is encouraging to see an improvement in the proportion of candidates understanding what is required of them in answering this question. The most popular response was that *they exaggerate the extent of family diversity*, with *exaggerating the role of choice/fail to recognise the importance of social structures in creating family* also quite common.

Some candidates criticised family diversity or particular family forms, rather than explaining the limitations of postmodernist views of family diversity. Where candidates also went wrong with this question, was simply stating what postmodernists believe, rather than providing limitations.

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

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

Question 3

(a) This question was reasonably well answered, with the common approach being to focus on *dual burden/triple shift.* There was also the very occasional use of *partnership penalty* and reference to *Oakley*. It was very pleasing to see a candidate use an example of contemporary research in Harkness's study on the impact of Covid lockdown.

Most candidates provided at least two points. Weaker responses only provided one, thus at most could only be awarded half the marks available to them.

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There were some examples of candidates discussing power distribution, and women's patriarchal oppression in the family which could have been made relevant *if* they had applied this to the context of women performing most of tasks in the family, but unfortunately did not do so and therefore became irrelevant.

Other irrelevant responses included those discussing how women should not be doing most of the housework, whilst a small number of candidates discussed women in work e.g., being paid less than men…having to work harder than men to be recognised. As such, were not awarded.

(b) Commonly, the concept of **'**New Man' was used, but not always with depth often relying on simple statements like… *because of new men, childcare and cleaning are now shared*… or … *the new man takes equal responsibility for household tasks*…without exploring why the change has come about, or what this 'new man is'/how it is different from traditional notions of masculinity. Other popular answers referred to the symmetrical family.

Weaker responses included those that simply discussed women entering into paid work, rather than discussing the impact of this on men's participation in housework/childcare.

Note: *a small number of candidates wasted time by providing more than one argument against the claim, using up time that could be useful elsewhere. Only the strongest point made is awarded whilst the others are discarded.*

Section B

Question 4

This question was considerably less popular than Question 5, and in general produced weaker responses. A significant number of candidates ignored the term structure in the question, and instead discussed roles or relationships within the family.

Weaker responses included general discussions of culture in one's life, based largely on common-sense or anecdotal evidence, such as discussing the importance of cultures, or passing down/celebration of culture, without addressing the question of family structure.

Question 5

Responses for Question 5 tended to be more successful than those for Question 4.

Good responses produced a strong Marxist argument supported through relevant evidence, with arguments against tending to apply functionalist and feminist-based evidence, especially through explicit evaluation as opposed to juxtaposition. Occasionally postmodernist material was also applied. There was a tendency for candidates to neglect the context of *main role*…rather, they simply provided alternative roles/functions.

Weaker responses included a critique of Marxism rather than addressing the specific question of whether or not the main role of the family is to serve ruling class interests. Other weak responses included those that made statements with no development/explanation – these points lack detail and application.

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

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Paper 9699/32
Education

Key messages

- Candidates were generally able to attempt all questions.
- Some candidates gave lengthy responses to lower mark questions.
- Supporting evidence is needed for **Questions 2** and **3**.
- Candidates should be clear when making points for and against an argument in essay writing.
- Essay evaluation was often juxtaposed rather than explicit.

General comments

The standard of responses overall was good. Most candidates were able to answer all questions. For **Question 1** most candidates were able to give two relevant points. For **Question 2** most candidates were able to identify two reasons, but some did not give relevant sociological material to support the reasons given. Centres should ensure candidates are aware of the points-based approach of the mark scheme. For **Question 3** candidates also needed to give supporting sociological evidence. For **Question 4** most candidates were able to give a range of points relating to education being an agent of social control. Many also gave counter arguments most popularly from Willis, functionalism or interactionist views. Centres should encourage candidates to show explicit evaluation rather than just juxtaposition of an opposing view.

Candidate responses to this paper showed a clear difference in their ability to access the skills of knowledge and understanding, interpretation and application, and analysis and evaluation. The extended writing questions were excellent discriminators of these skills. Most candidates appeared to manage their time appropriately. The mark scheme was clear and easy to apply and interpret.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates were able to identify two problems in measuring intelligence and most were able to show understanding of how that problem might affect measurement. Popular answers used cited the existence of different types of intelligence and linked this to relevant sociological material, which although not a requirement of the question, showed clear understanding. The problem of defining intelligence and the cultural bias of IQ or other intelligence tests were also used as accurate responses.

Most candidates were able to gain full marks. Only a small number identified just one problem or identified two relevant points but not show understanding of how this created a problem for measurement.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to identify two in-school factors that affect the educational performance of some ethnic groups. Good answers used teacher labelling, perception or racism and developed this with the use of appropriate material such as Gillborn and Youdell. For a second point many candidates referred to the curriculum with reference to the ethnocentric curriculum and its impact on performance. Some answers gave one negative and one positive impact of in-school factors on educational performance of ethnic groups. Positive affects used included positive teacher labelling, often in relation to Asian students. The existence of pro or anti-school subcultures and setting and streaming were also widely used in answers. A range of relevant sociological material was used in answers including Sewell, Wright, Mirza and Mac an Ghaill.

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Some candidates were able to identify in-school factors such as labelling but did not develop these in relation to ethnic groups but rather gave a general account of the impact of labelling that was not fully applied to the question. A very small number of candidates referred to external factors which did not score as they were not linked to internal processes in school.

Question 3

Most candidates were able to identify two arguments against the view that what happens in school is the main influence on educational attainment. A wide range of responses were seen using a variety of external factors such as material deprivation, cultural deprivation and cultural capital. Many candidates discussed the impact of material deprivation as a main influence on attainment. Good answers were able to give a range of ways in which this would impact on attainment with some relevant sociological material to support the points made.

Weaker responses cited material deprivation but gave only limited development in relation to this factor. A significant number of candidates referred to Bourdieu, Sugarman, Douglas and Howard to develop their points. Most candidates referred to external factors in relation to social class but there were responses that included reference to external factors in relation to gender and ethnicity. Some candidates gave an unnecessary introductory paragraph relating to in-school factors, this is not required as the answer needs only to refer to arguments against the view. A very small number of candidates did not score any marks as they only referred to internal processes in school.

Question 4

Most candidates were able to link the view that education is an agent of social control to Marxist views of education. Many candidates cited research evidence from Althusser, Bowles and Gintis and Bourdieu and discussed key concepts such as correspondence principle, cultural reproduction, ideological state apparatus, the myth of meritocracy and hidden curriculum. Good answers were also able to use functionalist and feminist views in support of the view. Good responses used key concepts such as patriarchy, social solidarity and secondary socialisation to develop points.

In weaker answers there was some confusion over which aspects of functionalist views might support the view and which might be against the view. A common issue was that students gave a general description of theory, particularly functionalism, without applying it to how the material supported or rejected the view that education is an agent of social control.

Most candidates were able to give some arguments against the view. Often this was using the existence of anti-school subcultures to show a lack of control or by using interactionism to link to negotiation rather than control. The best explicit evaluation often used Willis as an internal criticism of the Marxist view, by identifying how the ‘lads’ saw through the myth of meritocracy and resisted capitalisms attempts at social control. The other common specific evaluation points were from a functionalist perspective, considering how education leads to value consensus rather than social control. However, evaluation was often by juxtaposition, for many candidates, material on functionalism was often merely presented as an alternative view and was not used evaluatively. This also applied to most students who presented material on the social democratic, New Right and postmodernist perspectives.

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Paper 9699/42
Globalisation, Media, Religion

Key messages

- Most candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the issues raised by the questions.
- High quality answers included a sustained evaluation.
- Good responses also made use of relevant concepts and theories.
- Higher marks could be achieved by including more references to sociological studies.
- Low-scoring responses mostly lacked references to sociological explanations and evidence.

General comments

The standard of the scripts overall continues to be high. Good answers included detailed references to relevant sociological theories and studies. Some candidates also made effective use of relevant examples to support their answers. Responses in the middle of the mark range often made reasonable points in support of the view stated in the question, but did not consider possible counter arguments and contrary evidence. To gain high marks for AO3, it is essential to challenge and test the view expressed in the question. There were some lower-scoring answers that included material that was tangential to the question. There also continue to be a few candidates who rely on assertion and general knowledge as a basis for their answers. The marks awarded for responses that lack references to appropriate sociological material are inevitably low. It is important therefore that candidates are encouraged to use references to sociological sources in their answers. Some answers addressed the general topic of the question, did not focus on the issues raised by the specific wording.

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

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

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

Question 2

There were a few high scoring responses to this question that showed a good understanding of the consequences of global migration for rich countries. Good answers considered a range of cultural, economic, social, and psychological impacts of migration at the national level. Contrasts between the consequences for rich and poorer countries featured in the analysis in higher scoring answers. Some candidates included well-

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chosen references to studies of migrant workers to illustrate the impact of migration for different countries. There were some lower scoring responses that considered the consequences of migration for the individual rather than focusing on how it affects countries at the national level. A few candidates discussed only the consequences of migration for developing countries and ignored the focus of the question on the impact for rich countries.

Section B

Question 3

High scoring answers to this question demonstrated a good understanding of the mechanisms through which the media is controlled and the groups involved. Pluralist theory was often cited in support of the view that no single group controls the media. Arguments were also made about the influence of different audience groups on media content, particularly in relation to the creation of new media content. Evaluation often took the form of contrasting conflict theories of the media (Marxist and feminist) with the pluralist view. Owners were often identified as a group that has the power to control the media through mechanisms such as the power to hire and fire media employees, agenda setting and gatekeeping, the global scale of media assets today, and the power of owners to make policy decisions and set broad editorial guidelines. Some candidates also made useful references to research studies highlighting the power dynamics within the media that may result in particular groups, such as owners or government, exercising considerable control over content. Low scoring responses often lacked references to sociological material and offered only personal opinion about who is able to control media content.

Question 4

Good answers to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of how the media can have a direct and powerful influence on behaviour. High scoring responses included an account of theories supporting the view in the question, such as the hypodermic syringe model and the Marxist mass manipulation theory. Some candidates made good use of studies supporting the idea that the media has a powerful influence on behaviour.

Topics covered in these studies included the impact of watching violent scenes in films and the role of the media in creating moral panics. Examples from social media were also used to illustrate the influence of celebrities and opinion formers on social ideas and behaviour. Use of the media for propaganda purposes was also considered in many of the answers. Evaluation took the form of questioning the extent to which the media has an influence on behaviour. This was often supported with references to models of media effects that challenge the idea of audiences being passive and accepting of media influence. Some candidates used the digital optimist perspective to argue that in the case of the new media, audiences create much of the content rather than being passive recipients of material that is produced for them by media corporations and governments. There were some lower scoring answers that lacked focus on the issue of whether the media has a direct and powerful influence on behaviour, discussing instead issues about who controls the media.

Section C

Question 5

This question provided an opportunity to consider the role and social position of women within religious organisations. Good answers offered a sustained account of feminist views about the patriarchal nature of religion. This was often supported with evidence highlighting the subordinate position of women within religious organisations and the nature of patriarchy within a religious context. Evaluation was provided by contrasting the feminist perspectives with other theories that challenge the idea that religious organisations are patriarchal. Evidence of changing attitudes towards the position of females within some religious organisations was also used to question the feminist viewpoint. Some candidates made good use of contrasts between the way females are treated within different religions. New policies to support the position of women within particular religious organisations were also mentioned in some good analytical responses. There were some lower scoring answers that outlined different theories of religion without linking the material well to debates about how far religion is a source of patriarchy.

Question 6

This question provided an opportunity for candidates to discuss the view that people are less religious today than in the past. Good answers considered a range of reasons why there may have been a decline in religiosity in recent times. Evidence of declining belief was also provided as a support for the view in the

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question. The concept of secularisation often featured in good responses. Evaluation was provided by challenging the idea that people are less religious today. Some candidates referred to the possibility that many societies are experiencing a religious revival through the emergence of new religious movements. The concept of 'believing without belonging' was also explored in providing a rejoinder to the view expressed in the question.

A few candidates questioned the validity of evidence about the extent of religious belief in the past as a way of developing an analytical response to the question. There were some lower scoring answers that sought to make the question into one about the validity of the secularisation thesis in general rather than focusing on issues of religiosity specifically.

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