Principal examiner reports for teachers

Principal examiner reports for teachers summarise what candidates did well and what candidates needed to improve for this examination series only.

This report is to be used in conjunction with the question paper and mark scheme.

For guidance on teaching and learning we provide resources for many of our syllabuses.

Resource	Where to find it
Grade descriptions – Grade descriptions describe the level of performance typically demonstrated by candidates achieving the different grades awarded for a qualification.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Syllabus and specimen materials
Schemes of work – Schemes of work are designed to support you in your teaching and lesson planning.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Lesson planning – Guidance on how to plan a lesson.	Lesson planning
Resource plus – There may be additional resources such as teaching packs containing lesson plans, resources and worksheets and videos for aspects of your syllabus.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Teaching tools	Teaching Tools
Exemplar candidate responses	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Learner guide – A guide for students to help them understand what the course involves.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Community forums – Do you have a question or something to share? Our online forums are great way to keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community.	Community forum on the school support hub
Access to scripts for this series.	Access to scripts service
Results analysis is available for some syllabuses.	Results analysis
Test maker is available for some subjects.	Test maker

Other services from Cambridge International Education

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  - Focus on assessment
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SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/11

Socialisation, Identity and Methods of Research

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Some candidates showed effective use of a range of sociological material, including concepts, theories and research studies to support the points they made.
- Some responses had a clear focus on the specific question wording and fully addressed this.
- In the questions focusing on methods of research, accurate use of methods and concepts was a key feature of comprehensive responses.
- The most comprehensive responses developed their points on the higher tariff questions to fully demonstrate their understanding.

What candidates needed to improve

- Sociological material, in the form of theories, studies and concepts, is required in comprehensive responses. Many candidates needed to demonstrate their sociological knowledge and understanding more effectively by including supporting evidence, especially in the higher tariff questions.
- Responses needed to focus on the demands of the specific question set. Candidates needed to read and focus on the wording of each question and ensure their responses were relevant. More preparation, perhaps by practising past papers, may help candidates to achieve this.
- In socialisation and identity-based questions, candidates needed to challenge the influence of different agents of socialisation (family, media, peers, education, religion, workplace) with other agents of socialisation, and the importance of aspects of identity (class, age, gender, ethnicity) with other aspects of identity. Some candidates mixed these together, therefore selecting less appropriate points to challenge views.
- The accuracy of understanding and use of methodological concepts and methods needed to improve. For example, key concepts such as reliability and validity were often mixed up or conflated, and a clearer understanding of the nature of different methods, including different types of interviews and longitudinal studies, was needed.
- Candidates needed to adjust the length and detail provided to reflect the marks available for each question.
- In essay **Questions 4** and **5**, the term 'evaluate' indicates the need for a two-sided debate, yet some candidates presented one-sided, assertive responses to these questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Many responses clearly identified and briefly described two examples of media influence.
- Comprehensive responses often chose from gender, class, ethnic or age identity as their two points, allowing them an opportunity to clearly address the question.
- Influences of the media which were less focused on identity, such as desensitisation, imitation and fitting in, were commonly used and comprehensive if the influence was described.
- Some candidates wrote at considerable length about the media, which was not required by the marks available. Candidates should keep their responses to this question concise.

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Limited responses

- Some responses were too vague and did not recognise the question's focus on the media, referring instead to family or education. If peers were used, an attempt to link to the question was required.

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses clearly attempted to focus on topic choice and included two reasons.
- Comprehensive responses effectively used sociological material, including examples of researchers such as Oakley or Venkatesh to support reasons for topic choice linked to personal interest or experience, and theories such as feminism or Marxism, to support reasons for topic choice based on theoretical standpoints.
- Those candidates who chose practical issues such as cost or time were able to produce comprehensive responses if they linked these clearly to topic choice, rather than choice of method.

Limited responses

- Limited responses often focused on choice of methods rather than choice of topic, with some writing 'method' and others using the term 'topic', but referring to choosing methods such as experiments or observations, and the reasons for this choice.
- Some limited responses did not include sociological material to support their potentially relevant reasons.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses identified two clear strengths which each related to qualitative secondary data.
- Practical issues were often used, in relation to saving time or money, or the ease of accessing and analysing such data. The most comprehensive responses ensured that these were linked to qualitative data, rather than just any type of secondary data. They did this by using examples of qualitative secondary data to provide context to their points.
- Specific examples of qualitative secondary data, such as diaries, letters and photographs, provided the best context to build comprehensive strengths around. For example, referring to a diary from a particular time in history which could give an insight into the meanings and choices of an individual that could not be gained via primary research – such as Anne Frank's diary.

Limited responses

- Many responses did not fully address the question, focusing on qualitative data for one strength and secondary data for the second strength. Both strengths needed to be related to qualitative secondary data.
- Though most understood what secondary data is – data not produced by the researcher themselves – some candidates appeared to assume it was always previous research, or government data. Very few recognised that personal documents such as diaries, photographs or letters are good examples of qualitative secondary data and so missed an opportunity to consider the potential strengths of using such data.
- Some responses focused on lack of bias as a strength of using qualitative secondary data – this is not necessarily the case. It depends on what the data is and where it has come from, so this highlighted a misunderstanding held by some candidates.
- Some candidates misunderstood secondary data and primary data, arguing that secondary data is a second-hand account and primary data is a first-hand account, which is not the sociological use of these terms.

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Question 3

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses showed an understanding of the sociological meaning of cultural deprivation, explaining that those who are socialised with inappropriate or inadequate norms and values may become deviant. This was usually linked to primary socialisation and the family, but sometimes also linked to environment or neighbourhood, and focused on the working class or underclass.
- Some used functionalist ideas on the desirability of the nuclear family and New Right ideas about the inadequate socialisation provided by single-parent families. A focus on values, such as fatalism, immediate gratification and dependency, and how these may link to deviance, was a feature of more comprehensive responses.
- In comprehensive responses, the points raised included an explicit, rather than merely implied, link to deviance.
- A few responses included two detailed and relevant points which were well focused on the question and supported with sociological evidence.

Limited responses

- Many candidates did not show any understanding of what 'cultural deprivation' refers to in a sociological context.
- Some candidates tried to interpret the term in a literal sense and described someone who had their culture taken away from them or someone who does not belong to the mainstream culture, for example because of immigration. This interpretation was not accurate.
- Many confused cultural deprivation with under-socialisation, i.e. the lack of any socialisation at all, and wrote about feral children. This was not relevant for cultural deprivation.
- Other alternative explanations for deviance were also sometimes mixed up with cultural deprivation in limited responses, including marginalisation, resistance and labelling.
- Limited responses sometimes tried to use the term 'anomie' in this question, but used it as a noun, referring to a person becoming 'an anomie', thus showing a misunderstanding of the concept, and not effectively linking it to the question.
- Some also linked their responses to neo-Marxist views, using ideas such as a lack of cultural capital, which was not relevant.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates identified an alternative explanation for deviance, even if they had not fully understood cultural deprivation, and thus could still access this question.
- Comprehensive responses explained why their chosen alternative provides a better explanation for deviant behaviour than cultural deprivation. For example, those who focused on material deprivation as a better explanation may have argued that, though culture can be learned and changed at a later point (for example through education), lack of money and resources is very difficult to overcome and is more likely to push individuals towards deviance.
- The most comprehensive responses used sociological material, including Marxist ideas, labelling theory and strain theory, or other alternative explanations for deviance such as marginalisation or subculture, supported with evidence.

Limited responses

- Some candidates, who misunderstood the meaning of cultural deprivation in **Question 3a**, used ideas about inadequate socialisation or inappropriate norms and values in this question, thinking it was a challenge to cultural deprivation, when actually these ideas would have been better used in support of the view.
- Some candidates who provided a potentially relevant alternative explanation for deviance did not clearly explain why it may be a better explanation than cultural deprivation.
- Some limited responses attempted to challenge the idea that those with different cultures should be excluded, for example, claiming it is racist to do so. This reflected their misunderstanding of cultural deprivation in relation to **Question 3a**, and also did not challenge the view relating to explaining deviance.
- Only one argument against cultural deprivation is required for this question, and some otherwise comprehensive responses continued to present several other explanations for deviance when they had already met the criteria for the question, which was not a good use of their time.

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Section B

Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses engaged clearly with the influence of age in shaping identity, for example referring to the perception of different age groups, laws and rights related to age, and the representation of certain age groups, in particular children, young people and older people, in the media.
- Many candidates showed a clear understanding of the view presented and could use evidence to support both sides, creating a debate.
- Many candidates were able to write at length challenging the view, with the most comprehensive responses focusing on other aspects of identity which may have more significance than age, such as gender, social class and ethnicity. The most comprehensive evaluation included detailed evidence, which was then linked back to directly challenge the view in the question.

Limited responses

- Some responses did not demonstrate a clear understanding of, or focus on, age and identity. Many focused on primary socialisation happening as a child and inaccurately argued that this was relevant to age and identity. Some then wrote at length about feral children, presenting them as an example of the importance of age. This approach was not relevant to the demands of the question.
- Some responses were brief and unsupported, or based on very generalised or common-sense-based ideas. Candidates needed to support their arguments with evidence, especially in the higher tariff questions.
- When attempting evaluation, in limited responses, rather than using other aspects of identity (e.g. gender, social class or ethnicity) to contrast with age, some candidates tried to argue that family, education or other agents of socialisation were more important than age. It is more appropriate and coherent to contrast aspects of identity with each other, and agents of socialisation with each other, rather than taking a mixed approach like this.
- Some limited responses also attempted to evaluate using general ideas such as ‘socialisation’ or ‘culture’ being more important than age, which was not very clear, since expectations surrounding age are related to socialisation and culture.
- Some candidates did not present a debate. The term ‘evaluate’ requires a two-sided debate, and some candidates just presented one view, either for or against that in the question.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates showed an understanding of unstructured interviews and their potential strengths and limitations in sociological research.
- Most candidates referred to strengths relating to depth and comprehensive responses used sociological concepts such as validity, verstehen and rapport, fully explaining these concepts and why they are a strength of unstructured interviews.
- Many were able to make a link to interpretivism as the theoretical approach that would most value unstructured interviews, often referring to Weber and also feminist researchers such as Oakley, and explaining why such sociologists would find unstructured interviews useful.
- When challenging unstructured interviews, comprehensive responses referred to positivism and concerns about the lack of quantitative data, objectivity and reliability. Such responses developed their points, showing an understanding of the concepts used and why they were an issue for unstructured interviews, making them less useful.

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Limited responses

- Some responses lacked focus on sociological research, referring instead to the use of interviews in job interviews or podcasts. This sometimes led to inappropriate or irrelevant strengths or weaknesses being presented, such as focusing on whether an unstructured interview is the best way to test a job candidate's performance under pressure.
- Some responses focused on evaluating qualitative data more generally, losing focus on unstructured interviews, and others listed other methods and why they are useful, without using these to evaluate unstructured interviews.
- Some responses showed confusion as to the nature of unstructured interviews, for example, claiming that they contain both closed and open questions.
- The interviewer effect was often presented as a limitation of unstructured interviews, but in limited responses there was often no explanation of why this may particularly apply to unstructured interviews rather than structured interviews, which meant that the point was underdeveloped.
- The Hawthorne Effect was used in many responses, which is not really relevant to interviews. There was often an assumption that this was related to social desirability, which is not accurate.

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SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/12

Socialisation, Identity and Methods of Research

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Comprehensive responses had a clear focus on the specific question wording and the demands of each question.
- In the questions focusing on methods of research, accurate use of methodological approaches and concepts was a key feature of comprehensive responses. Additionally, a clear understanding of what different methods involve was evident.
- In questions that focused on socialisation and identity, effective selection and application of sociological studies and concepts was seen.
- Some candidates wrote very well-structured responses to the longer tariff questions, including clear evaluation where appropriate, and staying focused on the debate.

What candidates needed to improve

- Accurate interpretation of the questions was an issue affecting limited responses. Candidates needed to read and focus on the wording of each question and ensure their responses were relevant. This was evident in all questions.
- Candidates needed to challenge the influence of different agents of socialisation (family, media, peers, education, religion, workplace) with other agents of socialisation, and the importance of aspects of identity (class, age, gender, ethnicity) with other aspects of identity. Some candidates mixed these together, therefore selecting less appropriate points to challenge views in the socialisation and identity-based questions.
- The accuracy of understanding and use of methodological concepts and methods needed to improve in some responses. For example, key concepts such as reliability and validity were often mixed up or conflated, and a clearer understanding of the nature of different methods, including different types of interviews and longitudinal studies, was needed.
- Some candidates needed to adjust the length and detail provided to reflect the marks available for each question.
- In essay **Questions 4** and **5**, the term 'evaluate' requires a two-sided debate, and some candidates presented one-sided, assertive responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Many responses clearly identified two appropriate types of qualitative research methods.
- The most commonly described methods were unstructured interviews and participant observation. Some candidates also chose semi-structured or group interviews.
- Most candidates described these methods briefly, for example by saying what the method involved, or why it was qualitative.
- Some candidates wrote at considerable length, for example describing in detail research studies which had used the methods identified. This was not required by the question. Candidates should keep their responses to this question concise.

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Limited responses

- Some responses showed confusion regarding what qualitative methods are, with some referring to statistics or laboratory experiments, for example.
- Identifying more general types of method, such as 'interviews' or 'questionnaires' was a feature of limited responses. These can be either qualitative or quantitative and so were too vague, without a clear link to qualitative forms of these methods.

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses clearly identified at least one reason why structured interviews are high in reliability, recognising the requirement for repeatability/replication.
- Effective approaches included focusing on the standardised/closed nature of the questions, the lack of input or bias from the interviewer and the limited range of potential responses. These ideas were then explained and linked to sociological material such as standardisation, replication, quantitative and positivism to fully develop the response and link back to reliability.
- The most comprehensive responses were able to distinguish and develop two different ideas, usually those mentioned above, which were both clearly linked to reliability.

Limited responses

- Some responses did not clearly link the reasons given to reliability, instead just giving two strengths of structured interviews, so these responses needed more focus on the demands of the question. For example, some mentioned issues relating to representativeness and generalisability instead, or included practical strengths of structured interviews such as saving cost and time.
- Though correctly identifying potentially relevant reasons, many candidates did not include sociological material to support their points.
- Some responses mixed up reliability with representativeness or validity or showed a misunderstanding of structured interviews.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- One clear strength and one clear limitation were often identified and clearly linked to longitudinal studies.
- Many candidates showed a good understanding by identifying sample attrition as a limitation, a point which was often well explained and linked to a loss of representativeness.
- The appropriate strength most often seen was the ability to identify changes over time and avoid a 'snapshot' approach or issues with memory, enhancing validity.

Limited responses

- Candidates needed to show an understanding of longitudinal studies. There was a common misunderstanding shown, with many candidates appearing to think that it is just a term for any lengthy piece of research. This was often inaccurately linked to a long-term participant observation study. Some understanding of the periodic nature of a longitudinal study was needed to provide context to the strength and limitation identified.
- Some candidates appeared to assume that longitudinal studies are always qualitative, and so gave a strength and limitation related to the qualitative nature of the research. This is not necessarily the case. The focus needed to be on the long-term nature of the approach, revisiting at intervals. Therefore, any point about depth or detail needed to be contextualised with the idea of the long-term nature of the study.
- Some more limited responses referred to cost or time as a limitation but needed to explain this more clearly and link it to the longitudinal element of the study.

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Question 3

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- The most comprehensive responses used sociological material to explain the influence of education on age identity, often using Aries and the idea that age is socially constructed and that the spread of compulsory education created the distinct identity of a child.
- Some candidates applied ideas from Marxists or functionalists, relating to the hidden curriculum in schools, or ideas from interactionism about teacher labelling, and successfully applied these to age identity, in terms of how different age groups are treated in schools and the related expectations.
- Another approach was to focus on the school structure, with different classes or grades for different age groups, and different curriculum content and outcomes. Comprehensive responses then made a link back to consider how this may affect an individual's age identity.
- Responses which included two detailed points, supported with evidence, took an effective approach, though some included more than this.

Limited responses

- Some candidates spent time defining what is meant by education and what is meant by age identity, which was not directly relevant to the question, or inaccurate.
- Many candidates wrote in general terms about the influence of education, without linking this clearly to age identity. Some focused on gender identity or class identity instead, whilst others were very general and more related to secondary socialisation.
- There was a misunderstanding of the meaning of age identity, with some candidates just writing about what happens at different ages and linking this to primary or secondary socialisation, rather than focusing on the identity element.
- Some responses were based mainly on common-sense ideas without any link to sociological evidence. Candidates needed to include sociological evidence to support their points.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates identified a challenge to the view, with many explaining the more significant influence of another agent of socialisation on age identity, for example, family, peers or media.
- The most comprehensive responses fully addressed the question by showing clearly why their chosen agent may be more influential than education in shaping age identity.
- If using family as an alternative agent, comprehensive responses made clear that this is more influential on age identity than education since it is the primary agent of socialisation and will instil the individual's age identity from an early age, with the way a child is played with, dressed and spoken to, what they are allowed to do, and references to other age-related roles and statuses in the family, such as grandparents.

Limited responses

- Many candidates identified an alternative agent, sometimes in detail, without clearly showing why this may be more influential than education, and/or did not keep the focus on age identity, thus not fully addressing the question.
- Some candidates tried to argue that education is important in shaping gender or class identity instead. This was not an appropriate approach, since it did not challenge the view in the question: education could be the most important influence on any aspect of identity.
- Some responses used other aspects of identity to challenge the influence of education, for example, saying that gender or class is a more important influence on age identity than education. It would be more appropriate to compare education – an agent of socialisation – with other agents of socialisation.
- One detailed argument is required for this question. Some otherwise comprehensive responses went on to include several arguments, which could not gain any extra credit. Candidates must stick to the requirements of the question to utilise their time efficiently.

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Section B

Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates showed a clear understanding of the view presented relating to the influence of traditional social identities.
- The most comprehensive responses focused on a range of traditional social identities such as those based on gender, class, age and ethnicity, and how these remain significant. For example, traditional gender identities, with the male breadwinner and female caregiver, and traditional class identities, with a clear divide between upper-, middle- and working-class lifestyles and opportunities.
- Many responses utilised a range of sociological evidence to support these points, such as ideas from Parsons and Oakley in relation to traditional gender identities, and from Marxists in relation to traditional social class identities. Traditional ethnic identities were also frequently described, with supporting evidence from a range of studies, such as Bhatti and Mirza.
- Many candidates were able to write at length challenging the view, with the most appropriate evaluation points focusing on changes to traditional identities in a postmodern and globalised world, directly challenging each of the traditional identities previously described. Ideas such as hybrid ethnic identities, the blurring of social classes and changes to the expectations about, and opportunities available to, women and men were common themes.

Limited responses

- Some candidates described traditional identities as expectations which existed in the past and then moved on to focus on how things are different today – this approach did not include any evidence which actually supported the view that traditional identities are still the most important influence, and so did not create a debate.
- Some candidates misunderstood what was meant by 'traditional social identities', often assuming it only referred to gender or to social class, or sometimes to religion or family, which limited the range of ideas they could present. Such responses then tried to evaluate by saying that class or gender identities are also important, showing a misunderstanding of the question.
- Some responses were brief and unsupported, or based on very generalised ideas. Candidates needed to support their arguments with evidence, especially in the higher tariff questions.
- Some candidates did not present a debate. The term 'evaluate' requires a two-sided debate, and some candidates presented one view, either for or against that in the question.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates showed an understanding of the view relating to values and created a clear debate between interpretivists and their focus on subjectivity, which can lead to bias, thus supporting the view in the question, and positivism's focus on objectivity and value-freedom, used to challenge the view.
- Comprehensive responses included references to methodological approaches of interpretivism and positivism, and utilised thinkers such as Comte, Durkheim or Popper, to contrast with thinkers such as Weber, Kuhn, Oakley, Becker or Gouldner.
- There were other interpretations and approaches to this question which some candidates used, which were equally viable. For example, using positivism to support the view and criticise research that is not objective, and using writers such as Gouldner to argue that just because the researcher allows their values to influence research, this does not necessarily create bias.
- Some responses focused on the issue of researcher values in a more practical sense, rather than taking a theoretical approach. For example, considering how their values may influence choice of method, the writing of leading questions and interpretation of results, referring to ideas such as researcher imposition. Such responses often used examples of studies to illustrate this, such as Oakley's research on housewives and pregnant women or Venkatesh's research into gang life.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates misunderstood the debate presented in the question.
- Limited responses often focused on ways in which respondents' answers may be influenced, writing about the Hawthorne Effect or the interviewer effect, and linking these to social desirability. This was rarely made relevant to the focus of the question relating to the values of the sociologist.
- Some candidates wrote about quantitative research and contrasted it with qualitative research, or described the strengths and limitations of various methods, making no clear attempt to link this to the view in the question.

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SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/13

Socialisation, Identity and Methods of Research

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Most candidates seemed well-prepared for the demands of the different types of question.
- Comprehensive responses showed effective use of a wide range of sociological material, including concepts, theories and research studies to support the points they made.
- Comprehensive responses had a clear focus on the specific question wording and fully addressed this.
- In the questions focusing on methods of research, accurate use of methodological approaches and concepts was a key feature of comprehensive responses.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates needed to read and focus on the wording of each question and ensure their responses were relevant.
- Candidates needed to adjust the length and detail provided to reflect the marks available for each question. Some wrote at length on lower tariff questions and then ran out of time for the longer essay question.
- In the socialisation and identity-based questions, it is more appropriate to challenge the influence of different agents of socialisation (family, media, peers, education, religion, workplace) with other agents of socialisation, and the importance of aspects of identity (class, age, gender, ethnicity) with other aspects of identity. Some candidates mixed these together, thereby selecting less appropriate points to challenge views presented.
- In essay **Questions 4** and **5**, the term 'evaluate' requires a two-sided debate, which was often not provided.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Most responses clearly identified two different types of questionnaire and provided a brief but accurate description of each.
- The most common approach was to refer to open-ended or unstructured questionnaires and closed-ended or structured questionnaires, and to then briefly describe what each type involves. Some referred to postal questionnaires and online questionnaires, which were also appropriate types.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave responses such as 'polls' or 'surveys' – though these could take the form of questionnaires, they are not types of questionnaire and so were not relevant.
- Some responses focused on types of interview instead of types of questionnaire, and referred to structured and unstructured interviews, perhaps assuming that 'questionnaire' was a generic term for any questioning technique. 'Structured interviews' was acceptable, as a researcher-administered questionnaire (in contrast to a self-completion questionnaire), but unstructured interviews are not a type of questionnaire.

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Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses clearly identified two different features of the interpretivist approach and included accurate points which were supported with sociological material and well explained.
- The focus on depth and detail, validity, verstehen, qualitative data and subjectivity were the most common features identified. These were often supported with relevant research (such as Venkatesh or Willis), interpretivist thinkers (such as Weber), or additional concepts (such as using verstehen or rapport to support a point made about the importance of validity).
- The most comprehensive responses linked their sociological material to illustrate the feature identified and why it particularly applies to interpretivism. For example, explaining why Venkatesh's study, using observation and unstructured interviews over a long period, demonstrates the importance of in-depth information and/or verstehen for an interpretivist approach, to achieve valid insights into gang behaviour.

Limited responses

- Some responses did not identify two features which were clearly distinct – for example, repeating two points about depth, using slightly different wording. Candidates should be encouraged to determine the two points they will use before they start, so that they can keep them separate.
- Some candidates referred to reliability instead of validity or quantitative instead of qualitative. Some used the wrong word, but others demonstrated confusion about the interpretivist approach.
- Some responses merely described two different qualitative methods an interpretivist might use, which did not link to 'features' of their approach.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- One clear strength and one clear limitation were often identified and clearly linked to structured interviews.
- Each strength/limitation was clearly explained to show why it applies to structured interviews and why it is a strength or limitation, for example related to enhancing reliability or representativeness, or showing a lack of validity.
- The most commonly used strengths were related to reliability (focusing on the structured nature of the questions allowing for replication) and representativeness (focusing on the relatively quick and easy nature of structured interviews, which allows them to be carried out on a large scale).
- The most commonly used limitation was related to a lack of validity, focusing on the inability of participants to expand on their answers.

Limited responses

- Some responses showed a misunderstanding of what structured interviews are, leading to an inaccurate strength and limitation being presented.
- A common limitation presented was 'the interviewer effect' or 'social desirability'. Although this is a potential limitation, limited responses did not link it clearly to structured interviews, so the point raised could also have applied to unstructured or semi-structured interviews. A reference to the lack of a relaxed atmosphere or rapport, making the interviewer effect more likely would make this more comprehensive as a limitation of structured interviews.
- Some limited responses referred to the 'Hawthorne Effect' as a limitation. This was used inaccurately and the interviewer effect/social desirability was the point being made. The Hawthorne effect refers to the impact of the awareness of being researched or observed, rather than any form of social desirability.

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Question 3

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses effectively presented other agents, such as education, media or peers, which have a much greater influence on class identity, to argue that family has little influence on class identity.
- The most comprehensive responses used sociological material to support their argument that other agencies have a greater influence. For example, if using education, many responses referred to labelling, or to Bowles and Gintis's ideas about education preparing candidates for their place in a capitalist society.
- Another effective argument used in some responses was a postmodern view that class identity is now blurred and fragmented, and this is why the family has little influence, because individuals create their own identities.
- Responses which included two detailed points, supported with evidence, took an effective approach.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not focus on class identity, but focused on identity in a more general sense, and thus did not address the question.
- Some responses focused on values such as immediate or deferred gratification, cultural capital or speech codes, applying these to explain why education has a large impact on class identity. Such values, capital and speech codes come from family upbringing, and so this argument did not address the view in the question.
- Some misunderstood the question's wording of 'little influence' and focused instead on why the family has an influence on class identity, effectively getting the debate in **Questions 3(a)** and **3(b)** the wrong way round.
- Some responses included more than two detailed points, which was unnecessary and went beyond the requirements of the question.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates presented an argument that the family has a significant influence on class identity to challenge the view in the question.
- The most comprehensive responses used evidence to support their argument, such as Bernstein's ideas on speech codes, Sugarman's ideas about immediate vs deferred gratification or Bourdieu's ideas about capital. These significant class-related differences and their impact on class identity and later experiences in other agencies such as education were stressed to fully address the question.

Limited responses

- Some candidates who had misunderstood the debate, argued that other agencies are more influential than the family on class identity.
- Some referred to the importance of the family's influence on identity, but did not focus on class identity, thus not fully addressing the question.

Section B

Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates showed a clear understanding of the view presented.
- The most comprehensive responses focused on how the media significantly influences a range of different identities. For example, gender identity, using sociological material from McRobbie, Tuchman, Wolf and Gauntlett, and age identity, using sociological material from Palmer, Postman or Stan Cohen.
- Many candidates were able to write at length challenging the view, with the most appropriate evaluation points focusing on other agents of socialisation and how they may be more significant than media, such as family, peers, education or religion. The most comprehensive evaluations included detailed evidence, which was used to directly challenge the view in the question.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates relied on common-sense-based points relating to social media or celebrity culture and needed a clearer focus on the influence on identity.
- More limited responses tended to evaluate using general ideas such as 'socialisation' being more important, which is unclear, since media is an agent of socialisation.
- When attempting evaluation, rather than using other agents of socialisation to contrast with media, some candidates tried to argue that gender, age, social class or other aspects of identity were more important than media in shaping identity. It is more appropriate and coherent to contrast aspects of identity with each other, and agents of socialisation with each other, rather than taking a mixed approach.
- Some responses were brief and unsupported or based on very generalised ideas. Candidates needed to support their arguments with evidence, especially in the higher tariff questions.
- Some candidates did not present a debate. The term 'evaluate' requires a two-sided debate, and some candidates just presented one view, either for or against that in the question.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates showed an understanding of practical factors and were able to explain the influence of factors such as time, money and access in the choice of research methods.
- Comprehensive responses included sociological evidence to support points made. For example, if referring to time as a practical factor influencing choice of research methods, some candidates mentioned longitudinal studies or long-term observational studies as examples of research methods, which may not be practical if time is limited. Some gave specific examples, such as the 7 Up study (longitudinal) or Venkatesh's decade-long study on a gang (participant observation) to support their argument.
- Most candidates recognised the need for a debate and challenged the view by discussing the importance of theoretical factors in choice of method. Effective points were made about the macro or micro focus of positivists versus interpretivists, and the significant influence this has on their view of society and thus the type of data they wish to collect and the methods they would choose.

Limited responses

- Some responses focused on ethical or theoretical factors as if they were practical factors, or mixed them up, making it more difficult to present a clear debate.
- Some candidates presented brief and unsupported points related to time or money, without developing these to link to a choice of method. There was often no support from sociological evidence, such as specific methods or research studies which demonstrate these issues.
- Limited responses argued that some methods are practical and others are theoretical, and then tried to debate which were better, showing a misunderstanding of the relevant issues in this debate.

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Paper 9699/21
The Family

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Some candidates demonstrated a good comprehension of Marxist ideas of how the family supports the interests of capitalism, how gender socialisation takes place within the family, as well as the impact technology and social media are having on childhood, blurring the distinction with adulthood.
- Comprehensive responses developed points and applied relevant sociological material as evidence in support where required.
- Many candidates demonstrated appropriate time management and only provided the number of points required by the question.

What candidates needed to improve

- Some candidates needed to apply relevant sociological evidence (studies, policies, concepts) to support points where required, rather than relying on common sense or anecdotal evidence.
- In **Questions 3(a) and 3(b)** and **Questions 4** and **5**, candidates needed to develop points made, rather than relying on description, brief explanation or simplistic statements.
- In limited responses there was a lack of knowledge and understanding of the impact of social class on family diversity.
- In limited responses to **Questions 4** and **5**, meaningful evaluation was not provided and responses relied on juxtaposition.
- Some candidates needed to engage with the different sides of the debate, rather than provide a one-sided discussion for **Questions 4** and **5**.
- Some candidates needed to focus responses on the context within the question.
- Limited responses included unnecessary introductions and conclusions for ***Section A*** questions, which wasted examination time.
- Some candidates did not provide responses for all questions in ***Section A***.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates identified two clear ways the family promotes the interests of capitalism along with appropriate descriptions of these.
- Comprehensive responses commonly included, experiencing stricter controls, differences in socialisation (canalisation, manipulation) and, expectations to undertake chores. For example: Different chores (identified way) – girls are expected to help the mother with cooking and cleaning, whilst boys are expected to help the dad with more physical chores such as mowing the lawn and taking out the trash (description). Girls experience stricter controls (identified way) – they have curfews placed on them as parents are concerned about their safety more than boys and see them as in need of protection. (description).

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Limited responses

- Limited responses identified two ways without the relevant descriptions of these. For example, they are expected to do the cooking and cleaning and girls are socialised differently.
- Some candidates identified one way with a relevant description only.
- A few candidates' descriptions did not match the identified way or became a repetition of the identified way.
- A small number of candidates provided responses that were too vague or were irrelevant. For example, a girl will be reprimanded for doing something that would be laughed off if a boy did it.
- A few candidates needed to focus their responses on girls or boys (children), not women or men (adults) e.g. how women take on the triple shift and men do not.

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates identified two clear ways, whilst a small number of these subsequently explained and supported the identified ways with relevant sociological material. Commonly cited were consumerism, reproducing a future workforce and socialising children into ruling class ideology. For example:
  Serves as a unit of consumption…creating profits for the bourgeoisie…Marcuse and conspicuous consumption (as relevant sociological material)…people, in an effort to keep up with Joneses, purchase products they do not need as a symbol of success and wealth.
  Through socialisation…the family teaches children obedience and to accept hierarchy…
  Althusser and ideological state apparatus (as relevant sociological material)…meaning the family produces future workers who will be compliant in the workplace and not rise up against their bosses.

Limited responses

- A small number of candidates did not provide a response to this question.
- Many identified and explained ways which were not supported with relevant sociological material or evidence. For example, one way is that the family reproduces the next generation of workers…to replace the retired and dead so the workforce continues. This example could have been improved by citing relevant sociological material such as Marxism/Vogel, then applying this back to the original way identified, such as the family operates as a site of social reproduction where unpaid domestic labour raises children to be the next generation of workers at no cost to the bourgeoisie.
- Some responses needed to avoid simplistic and undeveloped responses and needed to ensure clarity, as sometimes they were too vague or unclear to be understood.
- A very small number of candidates needed to provide two different ways, as opposed to two different illustrations of how the family engages in consumerism; this is repetition.
- A few candidates needed to focus their response on the family, not on how the school promotes the interests of capitalism, e.g. through the hidden curriculum.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates were able to identify two limitations, most commonly that Marxists focus only on the negatives or fail to acknowledge the positives of the family, that their view is outdated, and that it is too economically deterministic, or it only focuses on the influence of capitalism on the family.
- Some candidates addressed appropriately why the identified limitation is a limitation.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not provide a response to this question.
- Most did not address what it is about the Marxist approach that leads them to have the identified limitation, whilst a small number did not address why it is a limitation.
- A small number of candidates needed to avoid critiques or negative consequences of the nuclear family, as this was not what the question required.

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Question 3

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates provided at least two relevant points, with some development of discussion that moved beyond simple statements. Points made commonly focused on the impact of declining religious influence, changing priorities of women, increased economic independence of women and the ease of being able to leave a cohabiting relationship compared with leaving a marriage.
- A small number of candidates cited and applied relevant sociological material e.g. secularisation, references to feminism/feminists. Very occasionally, Beck's 'risk society' and confluent love were referred to.

Limited responses

- Whilst some candidates were able to provide relevant points, they needed to demonstrate a sociological awareness and apply relevant evidence to support points made, rather than rely on common sense and anecdotal evidence.
- A small number of candidates needed to provide some explanation or development of the point made, rather than rely on simplistic statements such as cohabitation is now normalised and there is less pressure to get married.
- A very small number only provided one point, when they should have provided at least two.
- Some candidates needed to focus more on the context of cohabitation as more popular than marriage. Responses discussing cohabitation as a precursor to marriage demonstrated the popularity of marriage (wishing to make sure the partner is suitable, 'the one') and therefore more relevant to **Question 3(b)**.
- A small number of candidates needed to avoid making unsupported assertions such as, there is less stress involved than marriage… and cohabitation is easier than marriage.
- A very small number of candidates needed to focus on the context of cohabitation and marriage, rather than discussing other family types e.g. lone-parent, beanpole, as well as roommates and friends sharing.
- A very small number of candidates provided counter arguments to their points. These were a **Question 3(b)** requirement and therefore irrelevant to this question.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates demonstrated some understanding of how/why marriage remains more popular than cohabitation, most commonly citing how certain cultures (often influenced by religion) continue to place emphasis on marriage, often opposing cohabitation, whilst some cited how most cohabiting couples will marry eventually, and are going through cohabitation as a trial period to decide if they want to settle down with their partner.
- A very small number referred to relevant sociological material such as Chester.

Limited responses

- A small number of candidates did not provide a response to this question.
- Some candidates needed to develop their response beyond such simple statements as some societies do not accept families that do not include marriage, and marriage is still the best option to show you love someone.
- A small number of candidates needed to focus on demonstrating how marriage is more popular than cohabitation, rather than on how functionalists or the New Right see the nuclear family as important, as well as making assertions about the negative consequences of being in a cohabiting relationship.
- Candidates needed to avoid vague comments such as the nuclear family is still dominant.

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Section B

Question 4

More candidates opted for this question over **Question 5**.

Comprehensive responses

- Most responses examined both sides of the debate, whilst some applied relevant sociological evidence in support e.g. Postman, child centredness, Aries, examples of policies.

  In comprehensive responses, relevant supporting arguments commonly referred to:
  - How the impact of increased access to social media is exposing children to adult-themed content, which is causing the distinction to blur.
  - How children are increasingly engaging in adult activities and adults are increasingly engaging in child activities, such as dressing like each other.
  - How children take on responsibilities and stress normally associated with adults, e.g. caring, financially supporting the family.

  In comprehensive responses, arguments against commonly referred to:
  - The presence of laws preventing children from engaging in adult activities or age restrictions on accessing adult content.
  - How family and society have become more child-centred as they are seen as vulnerable and in need of protection or dependent, unlike adulthood.
  - The use of clothes, toys and media distinctly for children.

Limited Responses

- Many candidates relied on common sense or anecdotal evidence, rather than supporting points made with relevant sociological material or evidence.
- A very small number of candidates needed to focus on the context of the question, rather than simply discussing how childhood used to be, without relating to the question of whether or not this demonstrates that the distinction between adulthood and childhood has become less clear.
- A very small number of candidates discussed how childhood should be.
- A few candidates only addressed one side of the debate.
- In limited responses, arguments against relied on juxtaposition rather than explicit evaluation.

Question 5

Fewer candidates opted for this question over **Question 4**.

Comprehensive responses

- A few candidates demonstrated some comprehension of the debate, with the occasional reference to relevant sociological evidence in support e.g. Rappoports, Murray, cultural capital.

In comprehensive responses, supporting arguments commonly referred to:
- The impact of economic factors on family structure, with a few examples relating to family dynamics.
- Divorce in relation to class.

In comprehensive responses, arguments against commonly referred to:
- Ethnicity and culture and its impact.
- The impact of policies and welfare.

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Limited responses

- Most discussions were limited to structure only, with very few acknowledging the diversity of roles within the family.
- Most relied on common sense rather than a demonstration of sociological awareness and application of sociological material or evidence.
- Many relied on simplistic statements such as, the upper class have more money, so can afford to have more children, whilst the lower class cannot and the middle class can afford to send their kids to a good school.
- In limited responses, arguments against relied on juxtaposition of points rather than meaningful evaluation.
- A small number of candidates only addressed one side of the debate.
- Some candidates needed to avoid assertive, unsupported statements such as, there is less domestic violence in middle-class families.

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Paper 9699/22
The Family

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Many candidates demonstrated a good comprehension of why divorce has increased, the role or functions of the family from a functionalist perspective, as well as the debate surrounding inequality within the family.
- Comprehensive responses selected and applied relevant sociological material to evidence and support points.
- A very small number of candidates engaged in a meaningful evaluation within **Questions 4** and **5**.
- Many candidates demonstrated appropriate time management.
- Comprehensive responses only provided the number of points required in **Questions 1** and **3(b)**.

What candidates needed to improve

- Some candidates needed to apply relevant sociological evidence (studies, policies, concepts) to support points, rather than relying on common sense or anecdotal evidence.
- In **Questions 3(a)** and **3(b)** and **Questions 4** and **5**, candidates need to develop points made, rather than relying on description or brief explanation.
- Limited responses did not show knowledge and understanding of parenthood.
- Some candidates over-relied on very dated studies or evidence.
- Some candidates needed to provide a meaningful evaluation within **Questions 4** and **5**, rather than relying on juxtaposition of different views.
- Limited responses did not focus on the context within the question.
- Limited responses included unnecessary introductions and conclusions for ***Section A*** questions, which wasted examination time.
- A very small number of candidates did not provide responses for all questions in ***Section A*****,** particularly for **Question 3(b)**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates identified two clear changes along with appropriate descriptions of these. Responses commonly included secularisation, growth in women's economic independence, changing social attitudes and, changes to divorce laws. For example:
  Growth in women's economic independence (identified change) – women no longer rely on their husbands for financial support, so will divorce him if she is unhappy as she can financially support herself (description).
  Changes in divorce laws (identified change) – Divorce Reform Act (1969) made divorce more accessible, as it introduced irretrievable breakdown as the sole reason for divorce (description).

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Limited responses

- Limited responses identified two changes without the relevant descriptions of these. For example:
  - Changes to divorce laws.
  - Society does not see marriage as sacred as it used to.
- Some responses identified one change with relevant description only.
- A small number of candidates simply stated reasons why people get divorced, e.g. extra-marital affairs.
- A few descriptions did not match the identified change or became a repetition of the identified change.
- A small number of candidates provided responses that were too vague or were irrelevant. For example, stating why people do not get married or why they prefer to cohabit.

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates identified two clear ways which were subsequently explained and supported with relevant functionalist sociological material, most commonly citing the ideas of Parsons and Murdock. For example: Ensures social solidarity…the family teaches children how to behave in accordance with society's norms and values...primary socialisation (as relevant sociological material)…having a collective understanding of expected behaviours ensures a value consensus and therefore social harmony.
  Stabilises adult personalities…the family acts as a stress-release system for adults… (Parsons warm bath theory as relevant sociological material)…meaning that they can continue to carry out their respective roles, ensuring that society continues to function smoothly.

Limited responses

- Limited responses identified and explained ways that were not supported with relevant sociological material or evidence. For example: One way is the family teaches children appropriate behaviours. Children internalise society's norms and values. This example could have been improved by applying relevant sociological material such as Parsons/primary socialisation, then applying this back to the original way identified such as, children internalise society's value system and appropriate behaviours, which helps to reduce deviancy and prevents social dysfunction.
- Some responses needed to avoid simplistic and undeveloped explanations and needed to ensure clarity. For example, the family provides guidance to children.
- A small number of candidates needed to focus their response on how the family benefits society, not how the family benefits its members.
- A small number of candidates needed to ensure responses related to functionalism (as the question states according to functionalists), rather than citing Marxism (e.g. Althusser and the family as an ideological state apparatus), or Marxist critiques of functionalism, which were irrelevant.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- A small number of candidates were able to identify a relevant strength and limitation, most commonly, that they acknowledge the positive role the family performs for society and that they fail to recognise the dark side of the family. Other occasional valid strengths included recognition of the important role the family has in benefiting its members, whilst other occasional valid limitations included the view that their approach to the family is outdated.
- A few candidates were able to provide the further elements required: what it is about functionalism that leads them to have this strength or limitation and why it is a strength or limitation. For example, a strength is they recognise the beneficial role the family plays for society. They have this as a strength because they examine the various functions the family performs through a positive lens, unlike conflict theories. This is a strength as it helps us to understand how the family ensures a collective value consensus and social solidarity.
  A limitation is that they have an overly rose-tinted view of the nuclear family. They have this limitation because they believe the nuclear family acts as the most basic and efficient building block of society. This is a limitation because it provides an idealised view of the nuclear family that neglects to recognise it can be dysfunctional e.g. it can contain domestic abuse and the oppression of women.

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Limited responses

- Candidates were more successful in recognising a valid limitation of functionalist views of the family. A common error in attempting to identify a strength was for candidates to provide positives of the nuclear family, which is irrelevant as it is not what the question required.
- A very small number of candidates incorrectly provided two limitations.
- Many did not address or fulfil the requirements of what it is about the functionalist approach that led them to have the identified strength or limitation, and why it is a strength or limitation.
- A small number of candidates needed to focus on discussing functionalism, rather than Marxism or what feminists think about the nuclear family.

Question 3

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates provided at least two relevant points, with some development of discussion that moved beyond simple statements. Points made commonly focused on the development of new men, with some applying the more relevant concepts of new fathers and super dads and, changes in masculinities and the impact these have had in creating a more engaging fatherhood. Relevant discussions of motherhood focused on how mothers are increasingly adopting an instrumental role, occasionally acknowledging how this is limiting a mother's ability to engage fully in childcare and how motherhood has become more intensive. Sometimes, such points were contextualised around the growth of child-centredness in approaches to parenting.
- A small number of candidates showed a comprehensive understanding of the context, providing two sociologically supported or evidenced, well focused and developed points that engaged the issue directly.

Limited responses

- Whilst some candidates were able to provide relevant points, they needed to demonstrate a sociological awareness and apply relevant evidence to support points made.
- A small number of candidates needed to provide some explanation or development of the point made, rather than rely on statements such as fathers are now more involved in child caring.
- A very small number only provided one point, when they should have provided at least two.
- Some candidates needed to focus on the context of parenthood, rather than gender roles in general terms, e.g. discussing how new men are more involved in housework, or how more women are in paid employment; there is no context of parenthood here.
- A small number of candidates needed to avoid making unsupported assertions such as, parents now let their children do whatever they want… and globalisation has led to changes in parenthood…without demonstrating how.
- A few candidates needed to ensure they focused on addressing how parenthood had changed, rather than simply describing how parenthood was in the past.
- A small number of candidates provided irrelevant discussions of how childhood has changed, rather than parenthood.
- A very small number of candidates provided counter arguments to their points. These were a requirement of **Question 3(b)** and therefore irrelevant.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates demonstrated a reasonable understanding of how parenthood is not different today, commonly citing how certain cultures continue to approach parenthood more traditionally, with the mother as the primary caretaker and the father as the wage-earning disciplinarian, as well as how parents continue to adopt stereotypical gender socialisation of their children.
- Some candidates supported points with relevant sociological material, commonly Oakley and gender socialisation, expressive role, Parsons and primary socialisation.

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Limited responses

- A small number of candidates did not provide a response to this question.
- Some candidates discussed gender roles of men and women as opposed to the specific context of parenthood. For example, men continue to be the main breadwinner, whilst women continue to undertake most housework.
- A small number of candidates needed to focus on how parenthood has not changed, rather than childhood; such discussions were irrelevant.
- Some candidates needed to develop their point and move beyond simple statements such as, parents continue to care for children and, parents still socialise children.
- Candidates needed to avoid vague comments such as, the nuclear family is still dominant, therefore parenthood has not changed.
- A very small number of candidates gave criticisms of their point made. This was not a requirement.

Section B

There were examples of candidates answering both questions.

Question 4

Fewer candidates chose this question over **Question 5**.

Comprehensive responses

- A very small number of candidates appropriately examined both sides of this debate. They examined arguments supporting the view that grandparents played an important role in the family and discussed how they did not.
- Relevant supporting arguments commonly included:
  - Provide free childcare, meaning parents do not have to worry about finding suitable minders or do not have to worry about the financial costs, which is particularly important for supporting lone parents, meaning they can focus on employment.
  - Provide primary socialisation to grandchildren when parents are absent.
  - Act as an important bridge to the past.
  - Provide financial support.

  Arguments against (where relevant) referred to:
  - Absent grandparents due to divorce or privatised nuclear families are not able to play an important role requiring a physical presence e.g. childcare.
  - No longer in paid employment may mean financial hardship for some grandparents, who are therefore less able to play an important role in financial provision.
  - Some grandparents are too infirm to play an important role involving physical labour.

Limited Responses

- Most candidates discussed how grandparents were a burden (increased sandwich carers) or how they may create conflict due to differing value systems. Such points did not address that they do not play an important role, but rather illustrated a negative impact of them.
- Most candidates relied on common sense and anecdotal evidence, rather than supporting points made with relevant sociological material or evidence.
- A small number of candidates needed to focus their response on the context of the family, rather than society, e.g. discussing ageism or how the elderly increase the dependency ratio, meaning a burden on taxpayers.

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Question 5

More candidates chose this question over **Question 4**.

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates demonstrated a good comprehension of the debate and the relevant sociological evidence to support points made.
- Some candidates' discussions went beyond men and women, to include male and female children.
- Supporting arguments commonly were:
  - Radical feminist views on how the family remains a patriarchal institution, resulting in the oppression and exploitation of women and often manifesting in domestic violence.
  - How women continue to undertake the majority of housework and childcare.
  - How men dominate important decision-making.
  - How gender socialisation takes place, preparing children for their respective socially expected expressive or instrumental roles.

  Arguments against commonly referred to:
  - Development of 'new men' in creating equality, e.g. more engaged in domestic work and childcare
  - The impact of women increasingly undertaking paid employment.
  - The rise of the symmetrical family or joint conjugal roles.
  - The rise in family diversity, including families that do not follow traditional gender scripts.
  - Changes in fatherhood resulting in fathers engaging more directly in day-to-day childcare.
  - A small number of candidates developed points, unpacking the argument made rather than relying on description or simple explanation, applying relevant sociological evidence that engaged the question directly.
  - A few candidates engaged in meaningful evaluation as opposed to a simple juxtaposition of points.

Limited responses

- Points were not always explained or well developed or well supported with evidence, relying more on common sense, e.g. men are now doing more housework and childcare therefore it does not all fall to women to do…and women are now breadwinners as well as the men and therefore contribute financially to the family.
- Limited responses were commonly the result of candidates discussing how women were burdened and not linking to how this demonstrates inequality.
- Some candidates needed to focus on what is happening within the family, not what theoretical perspectives suggest should be happening. For example, stating that functionalists believe women should have the expressive role and men the instrumental role…or that feminists believe women should not be limited to the expressive role…is not the same as saying that an unequal division of roles does, or does not, exist within the family.
- A very small number of candidates needed to focus on the context of the family, rather than inequality in schools, workplace, or patriarchy in society, without linking back to the family for relevance.
- In limited responses, arguments against relied on juxtaposition of points rather than meaningful evaluation.

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SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/23
The Family

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Many candidates demonstrated a reasonable comprehension of functionalism, Marxism and, to some extent, the various strands of feminism.
- Many recognised the impact of ethnicity, gender and social class on the experiences of children in the family.
- Comprehensive responses selected and applied relevant sociological material to evidence and support points where required.
- In ***Section B***, the vast majority of candidates examined both sides of the debate.
- A very small number of candidates engaged in meaningful evaluation within **Questions 4** and **5**.
- Many candidates demonstrated appropriate time management and provided only the number of points required in **Questions 1** and **3(b)**.
- Limited responses included unnecessary introductions and conclusions for ***Section A*** questions, which wasted examination time.

What candidates needed to improve

- Some candidates needed to apply relevant sociological evidence (studies, policies, concepts) to support points, rather than relying on common-sense or anecdotal evidence.
- Some responses showed limited knowledge and understanding of postmodernist views of family diversity.
- Limited responses did not provide meaningful evaluation within **Questions 4** or **5** and relied on juxtaposition of different views.
- Some candidates needed to focus responses on the context of the actual question.
- A very small number of candidates did not provide responses for all questions in ***Section A***, particularly for **Questions 2(b)** and **3(b)**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates identified two clear ways, along with appropriate descriptions of these. Responses commonly included increased divorce rates, men taking on more of the domestic or expressive role, dual-income families and greater decision-making power for women. For example, has led to an increase in the number of divorces (way) – women are increasingly financially independent and therefore no longer rely on their husbands, so will divorce him if she is unhappy as she can financially support herself (description). More involvement of men in housework (way) – as women are working, they cannot perform all the domestic work themselves, so the men perform more cleaning, cooking, caring for the children to ensure women are not overly burdened (description).

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Limited responses

- Limited responses identified two ways without the relevant descriptions of these. For example:
  - The Equal Pay Act led women to enter the workforce which enabled them to be financially independent.
  - The family becomes less patriarchal.
- Limited responses identified one way with a relevant description only.
- A small number of candidates provided ways that were too vague. For example, the family members can all get a sense of satisfaction from working.

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of reasons for the increase in family diversity, with common responses including the impact of changes in social policy, changing social attitudes (often linked to secularisation) and women's financial independence.
- Some identified two clear reasons, which were subsequently explained and supported with relevant sociological material. For example: Changing social attitudes has meant less negative stigma towards different family types. As people now face less pressure to marry and form a nuclear family, they are more willing to adopt more diverse family types…secularisation (as relevant sociological material)…as religious influence on the family and therefore, the stigmatisation towards lone-parent and same-sex families for example weakens, people are free to adopt alternative family types free from stigma or social disapproval.
  Changing priorities of women…they no longer view marriage and the nuclear family as a priority…(Sue Sharpe as relevant sociological material)…women are increasingly focusing on their careers and ambitions, creating family types that allow them the freedom to pursue these e.g. singlehood, lone parenthood, DINKs etc.

Limited responses

- Whilst some candidates identified and explained two relevant reasons, they did not support these with sociological material or evidence. For example: One reason is due to the improved position of women. Women are now breadwinners and do not need to be supported by a man. This example could have been improved by applying relevant sociological material, such as a policy or initiative that has improved women's opportunities to become breadwinners, e.g. Equality Act 2010 (UK), Women's Relational Empowerment (WED) Initiatives (Mauritius) and linking this to how it has improved women's position…by creating opportunities for them to become financially independent and therefore, providing them with the freedom to create family types that reflect their own needs and ambitions rather than conforming to a social norm of marriage and children.
- A few responses were simplistic and undeveloped. For example: Women go out and earn for themselves so do not rely on anyone else.
- A small number of candidates needed to provide reasons for the growth in family diversity; citing the growth of a diverse family type is not a reason.
- Occasionally, attempted reasons were too vague, e.g. people can now choose.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- A small number of candidates were able to identify two relevant strengths, such as their recognition of the influence of agency in creating family life (that is, they identify the reasons behind the growth in diverse family types) and the relevance of the approach to analysing the family in contemporary societies, unlike deterministic structuralist approaches.
- Occasionally, the idea that they do not judge any family type as right or wrong was given.

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Limited responses

- A very small number of candidates did not provide a response to this question.
- Some candidates provided only one valid strength.
- Many responses did not address or fulfil the remaining requirement of explaining what it is about the postmodernist approach that leads them to have the identified strength and why it is a strength.
- Some lacked clarity in what they were saying.
- Many responses needed to address the element of what it is about the approach that leads it to have the identified strength.
- Some responses needed to ensure they focused on postmodernist views of family diversity, rather than discussing consequences of living in a postmodern society for example, people have more choice to live in whatever family they wish…or positives of living in a diverse form of family type, for example women experience less patriarchy. Such responses were irrelevant.

Question 3

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates provided at least two relevant points, with some development of discussion that moved beyond simple statements. Some of these were appropriately supported with references to, for example, Bhatti, Ghuman, the impact of filial piety.
- A small number of candidates showed a comprehensive understanding of the context, providing two sociologically supported or evidenced, well-focused and developed points that engaged the issue directly. Arguments commonly included a focus on Asian families, citing Song (Chinese familial expectations of children helping in family businesses) and Chua (cultural or familial expectations of children including high expectations and control). Occasionally, supported comparisons were made to Western contexts to develop the discussion.

Limited responses

- Whilst some candidates were able to provide relevant points, they needed to demonstrate greater sociological awareness and apply relevant evidence to support their discussion.
- A small number of candidates needed to provide some development of the point made, rather than rely on simple statements such as, different ethnicities have different norms and values which affect the lives of children in the family.
- A very small number of candidates only provided one point, when they should have provided at least two.
- A very small number of candidates tended to rely on assertions such as western parents do not put pressure on their children or are not strict on their children and let them do whatever they want.
- A few candidates needed to ensure they focused on the context of family; schooling, e.g. hidden curriculum and teacher labelling, or wider societal issues such as racism and bullying, were all irrelevant, unless the candidate was able to link these back to the context of family to demonstrate relevance.
- A very small number of candidates provided counter arguments to their points. These were not a requirement of the question.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates demonstrated a reasonable understanding of how/why ethnicity is not the most significant factor affecting the experiences of children in the family, most commonly citing gender (Oakley and gendered socialisation) and social class (impact of cultural/material deprivation, approaches to raising children) as more significant influences.
- A very small number of candidates demonstrated why gender/class is more significant, rather than simply presenting them as alternative influences. For example, demonstrating that irrespective of ethnicity and social class, girls experience greater restrictions placed upon their freedoms in the family.

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Limited responses

- A small number of candidates did not provide a response to this question.
- Some candidates needed to develop their point and move beyond simple statements such as, parents influence gender identity through canalisation and manipulation and many working-class parents are dual earners; therefore the children spend a lot of time with grandparents.
- A small number did not focus on the context of family, e.g. technology or media, mostly discussing the disappearance of childhood. A few candidates who did cite technology or media, did provide some link to the context of family by discussing it having a greater impact on the role of primary socialisation than parents, particularly as parenting is increasingly involving the use of devices (*digital parenting*) allowing greater access to harmful content. Other examples included education and the hidden curriculum, which was irrelevant.

Section B

Question 4

More candidates chose this question over **Question 5**.

Comprehensive responses

- Some responses were not limited to men and women and included an analysis of child and parent and male and female child relationships. A very small number were able to provide a relevant discussion of grandparents.
- Relevant supporting arguments commonly included:
  - The impact of women increasingly gaining economic independence or the growth of the 'new man', in creating greater symmetry of conjugal roles and greater decision-making power for women or in reducing the influence of patriarchy.
  - Changes to fatherhood or growth in 'new fathers' or changes in masculinities, creating greater equality in carrying out day-to-day parenting responsibilities.
  - The impact of increased child-centredness, in creating more democratic parenting.
  - Improved access to education for girls, creating equality of status with boys.
- Occasional reference was made to the greater involvement of grandparents in, and importance to, child-rearing or caring and how this has created greater equality through the status of the parenting role with the child's parents.
- Arguments against commonly referred to:
  - How despite greater economic participation, women still undertake the majority of housework or childcaring or emotional work.
  - Men's increased participation in fatherhood largely involves the fun activities, whilst the day-to-day tasks remain the mother's responsibility.
  - Child-centredness is largely a western experience and many societies or cultures operate 'age patriarchy'.
  - Many cultures still see girls as inferior to boys and as such are socialised in ways that produce gender inequality.
- Some candidates developed points well, unpacking the point made rather than relying on description or simple explanation, applying relevant sociological evidence that engaged the question directly.
- A small number of candidates provided meaningful evaluation rather than relying on juxtaposition. For example, in response to a supporting argument on the impact of new men and changing cultural norms towards fatherhood creating equality e.g. we must acknowledge that the progressive attitudes of fathers as seen in the concept of new men, are limited to Weestern middle-class families, who are more receptive to the breakdown of patriarchal norms than those in less industrialised societies. Hence, to some extent, the relationship between men and women remains unequal in many societies.

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Limited Responses

- Most discussions focused only on men and women, with child and parent male and female child relationships discussed occasionally. Grandparent discussions overall, tended to focus on their importance or contribution, not linking to how this demonstrated equality.
- Some candidates needed to demonstrate the relevance to equality in relationships, of changes in the lives of children.
- Some points relied on simple, unsubstantiated statements or brief descriptions.
- A small number of candidates only examined one side of the debate.

Question 5

Fewer candidates chose this question over **Question 4**.

Comprehensive responses

- A small number of responses contained clearly focused, supported and developed points, that explicitly addressed whether or not functionalists offered the best understanding of the role of the family.
- Whilst many interpreted roles to be functions, a large proportion of these engaged the question well.
- Commonly acknowledged supporting arguments included:
  - How the family is beneficial for its individual members in the carrying out various functions identified by Murdock and Parsons.
  - How the family benefits society in ensuring a shared value system or in reducing deviance.
  - The importance of carrying out the expressive and instrumental roles.
- Arguments against commonly referred to:
  - The role of the family in supporting and perpetuating patriarchy e.g. through gendered socialisation, domestic violence.
  - Its role in supporting and perpetuating capitalism, e.g. through acting as an ideological state apparatus or as a safety valve.
- A small number of candidates developed points, unpacking the argument made rather than relying on description or simple explanation, applying relevant sociological evidence that engaged the question directly.
- A few candidates engaged in meaningful evaluation as opposed to a simple juxtaposition of points.

Limited responses

- Most candidates examined functions the family carries out from a functionalist perspective (e.g. primary socialisation, stabilisation of adult personalities), as opposed to an examination of the bigger picture of roles, e.g. in ensuring social solidarity, value consensus, its interconnectedness with other social institutions (organic analogy). Roles came more into focus when discussing perpetuating patriarchy or capitalism.
- Many candidates needed to focus more on the context of best understanding; the majority simply discussed roles or functions the family carries out from different perspectives.
- More focus was needed on providing counter arguments to functionalist views on the roles carried out, and less on simply criticising functionalist views of the family. For example, functionalists neglect the dark side of the family…without linking this to roles. For example, this could be linked to the role of the family in perpetuating patriarchy through domestic violence.
- In limited responses, arguments against tended be a juxtaposition of points rather than meaningful evaluation.

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SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/31
Education

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Comprehensive responses engaged directly with the command words of each question and used accurate sociological concepts and presented well-structured answers.
- Candidates included appropriate examples from relevant studies and demonstrated their ability to apply sociological knowledge and theories to support their arguments.
- Most candidates attempted all questions and managed their time appropriately.
- Most candidates acknowledged the mark allocation for each question and wrote appropriate length answers.
- When answering the essay question, some candidates were able to present a clear debate between the view in the question and other perspectives that would offer a critique.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates needed to be conscious of the different expectations of the command words in questions and make more explicit links between the information they provide and the question asked.
- Candidates needed to demonstrate a strong and accurate grasp of the relevant sociological concepts, studies and theories, explaining and applying them rather than only stating them.
- Candidates needed to extend explanations through analysis rather than relying on descriptive writing.
- Candidates needed to strengthen responses by incorporating appropriate sociological concepts, evidence and examples rather than relying on non-sociological accounts.
- Candidates need to be familiar with a range of up-to-date studies across the whole syllabus and be able to show variations between different societies.
- A few candidates needed to be more careful in their time-management, being more concise on the lower mark allocation questions to leave adequate time for the essay question.
- Candidates needed to produce a brief plan for the essay question and bullet point three or four points on either side of the debate which can be developed. This plan could also make clear links between the points on either side to give more explicit evaluation.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates gave two examples of ways that IQ tests could discriminate against some ethnic groups, such as cultural bias, language barriers and unfamiliar test procedures.
- Comprehensive answers gave a clear explanation for each of the points given, such as referring to different cultural knowledge, linguistic codes and definitions of intelligence.

Limited responses

- Some candidates made a general reference to discrimination in education without identifying how this related to IQ tests.
- A small number of candidates referred to class-based inequalities related to IQ tests rather than how they might discriminate against some ethnic groups.
- Many candidates gave partial responses by giving a relevant characteristic of IQ tests, such as referring to different language codes, without explaining how this might discriminate against some ethnic groups.

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Question 2

Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates were able to identify two ways in which the curriculum can affect girls' educational attainment. Common responses related to gender-specific schemes, gendered guidance in subject choice and methods of assessment. Less common responses related to gendered imagery in textbooks and teacher expectations.
- Some candidates were able to provide relevant sociological material to support the point, such as GIST, the feminisation of education and Mitsos and Brown.

Limited responses

- Some candidates explained a 'way' that the curriculum can affect girls' educational attainment without supporting this with relevant material, for instance by not giving actual studies or examples to illustrate stereotypical gendered guidance in subject choice.
- Generally, candidates needed to explicitly explain how the material presented supports the 'way' identified. For instance, by referring to the feminisation of education and linking this clearly to how the curriculum affected girls' achievement.
- Some candidates had a limited view of what the curriculum is and focused on wider issues affecting girls' attainment. Such responses typically only presented one 'way'.
- A few candidates discussed factors relating to boys' achievement and therefore did not focus on the question. For example, some candidates outlined how the curriculum related to boys without reference to how it affected girls' attainment.
- A few candidates gave generic responses on teacher labelling in relation to social class (Becker), rather than focusing specifically on gender differences related to the curriculum.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates were able to identify two arguments. Comprehensive answers explained how inequalities in either external or internal factors relating to social class directly affected children's educational attainment.
- Some candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of relevant studies and sociological concepts. The most common example of this was a discussion of material deprivation (Smith and Noble), cultural capital (Bourdieu), language codes (Bernstein) and teacher labelling (Becker). Less common responses related to class-based pupil subcultures (Willis) and working-class subculture (Sugarman).
- A few candidates were able to discuss the interplay between internal and external factors, such as the impact of family income on internal factors such as teacher labelling.

Limited responses

- Some candidates were restricted to a common-sense descriptive account without offering any supporting sociological material.
- Some candidates presented a more generic discussion on the Marxist account of the role of education rather than on how social class may affect a pupil's educational attainment or experience of education in general.
- A few candidates drifted into a discussion of factors relating to ethnicity without referring to social class.
- Some candidates gave more than two arguments against the view or needed greater clarity in the presentation of their two arguments.
- A small minority of candidates wasted time by writing an 'introduction', which was often limited to a rewording of the question.
- A few candidates did not interpret the question correctly and discussed arguments in favour of the view.

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Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- Well-balanced essays included a strong case for the view that the purpose of education is to provide economic benefits for society, as well as arguments and evidence to the contrary.
- Most candidates were applied functionalist accounts of Durkheim, Parsons and Davis and Moore including material and concepts such as specialist skills, universalistic versus particularistic values, meritocracy and role allocation.
- Many candidates applied Marxist arguments of Bowles and Gintis, Althusser and Bourdieu to evaluate the functionalist view.
- Some candidates were able to apply feminist criticisms of functionalist arguments and were able to identify other functions that education may have, such as ensuring value consensus.
- In comprehensive responses, there was a clear debate and some reasoned conclusions as to the strongest view in terms of whether the purpose of the education system is to provide economic benefits for society.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not fully engage with the requirements of the question. For example, by confusing Marxist and functionalist explanations or presenting them interchangeably.
- Few candidates were able to outline the social democratic or New Right approaches in support of the view.
- Some candidates presented accounts which were often reliant on non-sociological material or were mainly one-sided with little or no evaluation.
- Some candidates limited their evaluation to only one alternative approach, typically the Marxist view, while others juxtaposed a list of alternative explanations such as feminist and New Right perspectives.
- Some candidates required greater clarity in relation to applying sociological material. For example, Marxist concepts such as the ideological state apparatus were used to evaluate the functionalist perspective in general, rather than against the view stated in the question.
- A few candidates started with an opposing view to that in the question, suggesting they were producing a pre-prepared debate rather than using their knowledge to respond to the essay set.
- Some candidates either did not leave enough time or did not consider it important to include a conclusion which addressed the question asked.

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SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/32
Education

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Comprehensive responses engaged directly with the command words of each question, used accurate sociological concepts and presented well-structured answers.
- Many candidates included appropriate examples from relevant studies and demonstrated their ability to apply sociological knowledge and theories to support their arguments.
- Most candidates attempted all questions and managed their time appropriately.
- Most candidates acknowledged the mark allocation for each question and wrote answers of appropriate length.
- When answering the essay question, most candidates were able to present a clear debate between the view in the question and other perspectives that would offer a critique.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates needed to be conscious of the different expectations of the command words in questions and make more explicit links between the information they provide and the question asked.
- Candidates needed to demonstrate a strong and accurate grasp of the relevant sociological concepts, studies and theories, explaining and applying them rather than only stating them.
- Candidates needed to extend explanations through analysis rather than relying on descriptive writing.
- Candidates needed to strengthen responses by incorporating appropriate sociological concepts, evidence and examples rather than relying on non-sociological accounts.
- Candidates need to be familiar with a range of up-to-date studies across the whole syllabus and be able to show variations between different societies.
- A few candidates needed to be more careful in their time-management, being more concise on the lower mark allocation questions to leave adequate time for the essay question.
- Candidates needed to produce a brief plan for the essay question and bullet point three or four points on either side of the debate which can be developed. This plan could also make clear links between the points on either side to give more explicit evaluation.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates gave two examples of ways schools could prepare some pupils for working-class jobs, such as vocational education, schools teaching pupils to follow rules and schools teaching pupils to submit to authority.
- Comprehensive answers made a clear link to how the point specifically related to the characteristics of working-class jobs, such as vocational courses or occupations that related to manual labour.

Limited responses

- Some candidates made a general reference to concepts such as the hidden curriculum or meritocracy, without identifying how this related to preparing pupils for working-class jobs.
- Many candidates gave partial responses by giving a characteristic of how education prepares pupils for employment, such as respecting authority, without explaining how this related to working-class jobs.

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Question 2

Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates were able to identify two reasons why schools may be unsuccessful in teaching the norms of society to all pupils. Common responses related to anti-school subcultures, conflicts with working-class culture and norms in ethnic communities. Less commonly, responses related to cultural diversity and primary socialisation.
- Some candidates were able to provide relevant sociological material to support the point, such as Willis and, to a lesser extent, the ethnocentric curriculum and the middle-class school habitus.

Limited responses

- Some candidates explained a reason why schools may be unsuccessful in teaching the norms of society to all pupils, without supporting this with relevant material. For instance, by not giving actual studies or examples to explain how schools may conflict with working-class culture.
- Many candidates were unable to provide a developed second point beyond anti-school subcultures.
- Generally, candidates needed to explicitly explain how the material supports the reason identified. For instance, by referring to the ethnocentric curriculum and linking this clearly to teaching the norms of society.
- Many candidates discussed reasons relating to achievement such as language codes, rather than focusing specifically on the teaching of social norms.
- A few candidates presented a more generic discussion on the Marxist account of the role of education, such as how education is an ideological state apparatus, rather than focusing on the issue of teaching social norms.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates were able to identify two arguments. Comprehensive answers explained how in-school or out-of-school factors directly affected the educational attainment of pupils from different ethnic groups.
- The most common responses related to teacher labelling, the ethnocentric curriculum and cultural background. Less commonly, responses related to institutional racism, material deprivation and streaming and setting.
- Many candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of relevant studies such as Gillborn and Youdell, Chua, Sewell, Wright and Mirza.

Limited responses

- Some candidates were restricted to a common-sense descriptive account, without offering any supporting material.
- Some candidates provided limited responses by discussing generic points, such as material deprivation or restricted language codes, without clearly linking these to how they impact a specific ethnic group.
- Some candidates drifted into a discussion of factors relating to social class and, to a lesser extent, gender, and so did not focus on the question.
- Many candidates gave more than two arguments against the view or needed greater clarity in the presentation of their two arguments.
- A small minority of candidates wasted time by writing an ‘introduction’, which was often limited to a rewording of the question.
- A few candidates did not interpret the question correctly and discussed arguments in favour of the view.

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Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- Well-balanced essays included a strong case for the Marxist view that education systems legitimise social inequality as well as arguments and evidence to the contrary.
- Most candidates answered in terms of outlining Marxist arguments from Bowles and Gintis, Althusser and, to a lesser extent, Bourdieu, for example by showing how education legitimises social inequality through the myth of meritocracy and how the education system acts as an ideological state apparatus.
- Many candidates applied functionalist criticisms of Marxist arguments and were able to identify other functions that education may have, such as ensuring value consensus. Most candidates were also able to apply feminist arguments and Willis' study on the 'lads' to evaluate the Marxist view.
- Some candidates were able to evaluate the Marxist view by referring to the social democratic perspective and how educational policies have led to greater equality of opportunity in education.
- In comprehensive answers, there was a clear debate and some reasoned conclusions as to the strongest view about whether education systems legitimise social inequality or promote equal opportunities.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not fully engage with the requirements of the question, for example, by confusing Marxist and functionalist explanations or presenting them interchangeably.
- Some candidates presented accounts which were mainly one-sided with little or no evaluation.
- Many candidates gave limited accounts as they did not address the legitimation element of the question and only focused on inequality.
- Many candidates limited their evaluation to only one alternative approach, typically the functionalist view, while others juxtaposed a list of alternative explanations such as social democratic and New Right perspectives.
- Some responses required greater clarity in relation to applying sociological material. For example, functionalist concepts such as meritocracy and role allocation were used to evaluate the Marxist perspective in general, rather than against the view stated in the question.
- A few candidates started with an opposing view to that in the question, suggesting they were producing a pre-prepared debate rather than using their knowledge to respond to the essay set.
- Some candidates either did not leave enough time or did not consider it important to include a conclusion which addressed the question asked.

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SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/33
Education

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Comprehensive responses engaged directly with the command words of each question, used accurate sociological concepts and presented well-structured answers.
- Many candidates included appropriate examples from relevant studies and demonstrated their ability to apply sociological knowledge and theories to support their arguments.
- Most candidates attempted all questions and managed their time appropriately.
- Most candidates acknowledged the mark allocation for each question and wrote answers of an appropriate length.
- When answering the essay question, most candidates were able to present a clear debate between the view in the question and other perspectives that would offer a critique.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates needed to be conscious of the different expectations of the command words in questions and make more explicit links between the information they provide and the question asked.
- Candidates needed to demonstrate a strong and accurate grasp of the relevant sociological concepts, studies and theories, explaining and applying them rather than only stating them.
- Candidates needed to extend explanations through analysis rather than relying on descriptive writing.
- Candidates needed to strengthen responses by incorporating appropriate sociological concepts, evidence and examples rather than relying on non-sociological accounts.
- Candidates need to be familiar with a range of up-to-date studies across the whole syllabus and be able to show variations between different societies.
- A few candidates needed to be more careful in their time-management, being more concise on the lower mark allocation questions to leave adequate time for the essay question.
- Candidates needed to produce a brief plan for the essay question and bullet point three or four points on either side of the debate which can be developed. This plan could also make clear links between the points on either side to give more explicit evaluation.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates gave two examples of appropriate characteristics associated with streaming, such as teacher expectations or labelling, fewer resources in lower streams and anti-school subcultures.
- Comprehensive answers made a clear link to how each point given related to a negative impact on a pupil's education, such as referring to achievement, self-esteem and motivation.

Limited responses

- Some candidates made a general reference to concepts such as self-fulfilling prophecy without identifying how this related to streaming.
- Other candidates gave partial responses by giving a characteristic of streaming, such as teacher expectations, without explaining how this had a negative impact on a pupil's education.
- A small number of candidates were unclear about what streaming meant. For example, some confused it with setting or discussed notions of streaming unrelated to education, such as digital media.
- A small number of candidates did not differentiate between the impact of being in a high or low stream.

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Question 2

Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates were able to identify two reasons why boys might achieve less at school than girls. Common responses related to the crisis of masculinity, male subcultures and methods of assessment. Less common responses related to the lack of role models and teacher expectations.
- Most candidates were able to provide relevant sociological material to support the point, such as hegemonic masculinity, Willis, and Mitsos and Brown.

Limited responses

- Some candidates explained a reason why boys might achieve less at school than girls without supporting this with relevant material. For instance, by not giving actual studies or examples to explain the feminisation of education.
- Generally, candidates needed to explicitly explain how the material supports the reason identified. For instance, by referring to the feminisation of education and linking this clearly to why boys might achieve less.
- A few candidates discussed reasons why girls are achieving more than boys and therefore did not focus on the question. For example, some candidates outlined how teachers labelled girls positively without reference to how they labelled boys.
- A few candidates gave generic responses featuring the self-fulfilling prophecy supported by Becker, Rosenthal and Jacobson, rather than focussing specifically on gender differences.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates were able to identify two arguments. Comprehensive answers explained how inequalities in family income directly affected a child's educational attainment.
- The most common responses related to material deprivation such as a lack of access to educational resources, private schools and tuition, and the impact of poor housing and diet. Less common responses related to the type of school lower-income families were more likely to attend and the 'hidden costs' of education.
- A few candidates were able to discuss the impact of family income on internal factors, such as teacher labelling and streaming.
- Many candidates demonstrated knowledge of relevant studies and sociological concepts, such as material deprivation, Smith and Noble, and Waldfogel and Washbrook.

Limited responses

- Some candidates presented a common-sense descriptive account without offering any supporting material.
- A few candidates touched on potentially relevant areas, such as the marketisation of education, without demonstrating an understanding of associated concepts, for example 'parentocracy' and how this might be affected by family income.
- Many candidates drifted into a discussion of cultural factors without referencing family income. The most common example of this was a discussion of cultural capital (Bourdieu) and, to a lesser extent, parental aspirations (Douglas), working-class subculture (Sugarman) and language codes (Bernstein).
- Many candidates gave more than two arguments against the view or needed greater clarity in the presentation of their two arguments.
- A small minority of candidates wasted time by writing an 'introduction', which was often limited to a rewording of the question.
- A few candidates did not interpret the question correctly and discussed arguments in favour of the view.

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Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- Well-balanced essays included a strong case for the view that the education system provides both the skills and attitudes required by the workforce, as well as arguments and evidence that it does not prepare young people for the world of work.
- Most candidates applied functionalist accounts of Durkheim, Parsons and Davis and Moore, including material and concepts such as specialist skills, universalistic versus particularistic values, meritocracy and role allocation.
- Some candidates showed a deeper understanding of theory and were able to apply Marxist arguments of Bowles and Gintis, Althusser and Bourdieu to the question. For example, by showing how education provides the skills and attitudes needed by capitalist society, including concepts such as the hidden curriculum, correspondence principle and the ideological state apparatus.
- Many candidates applied Marxist and feminist criticisms of functionalist arguments and were able to identify other functions that education may have, such as ensuring value consensus.
- In comprehensive answers, there was a clear debate and some reasoned conclusions as to the strongest view in terms of both skills and attitudes being inculcated in future members of the workforce by the education system.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not engage fully with the requirements of the question, for example, by confusing Marxist and functionalist explanations or presenting them interchangeably.
- Some candidates presented accounts which were one-sided with little or no evaluation.
- Some candidates limited their evaluation to only one alternative approach, typically the Marxist view, while others juxtaposed a list of alternative explanations such as postmodernism and New Right perspectives.
- Some candidates required greater clarity in relation to applying sociological material, for example, Marxist concepts such as the correspondence principle were used to evaluate the functionalist perspective in general, rather than against the view stated in the question.
- Very few candidates were able to apply more sophisticated evaluation points, such as reference to the postmodernist view that the one-size-fits-all approach used by schools fails to provide the skills required by the workforce in a post-Fordist economy.
- A few candidates started with an opposing view to that in the question, suggesting they were producing a pre-prepared debate rather than using their knowledge to respond to the essay set.
- Some candidates either did not leave enough time or did not consider it important to include a conclusion which addressed the question asked.

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SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/41
Globalisation, Media, Religion

Key messages

What candidates did well
- Candidates were able to answer the required number of questions.
- Candidates showed some knowledge of the topics studied.
- In some cases, relevant sociological material was used to support arguments.
- Candidates gave both sides of debates in essay questions.

What candidates needed to improve
- In many cases, descriptive responses were given rather than analytical ones. Candidates often relied on anecdotal evidence rather than sociological studies.
- Evaluation in essays was often juxtaposed rather than explicit. Many candidates gave a one-sided structure in which one side was presented and then the other without making clear how the sides agreed or disagreed with the view in the question. This made the response only implicitly linked.
- Candidates should demonstrate debate in their answers rather than just giving one side of an argument and then the other.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Comprehensive responses
- Comprehensive responses included knowledge and understanding of the theoretical debate surrounding the impact of globalisation on inequality, such as modernisation theory versus dependency theory.
- Some candidates used clear examples of countries that may have benefitted from globalisation and those that may not e.g. developing countries versus BRIC countries.
- Some candidates considered different aspects of globalisation such as political, cultural or economic.

Limited responses
- In limited responses, there was no focus on ‘less inequality’; instead, candidates discussed inequality in general in relation to globalisation.
- Some candidates gave general responses on globalisation without any reference to inequality.
- Some candidates gave general examples of globalisation rather than a focus on specific examples linked to inequality.

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Question 2

Comprehensive responses
- In comprehensive responses, there was a clear discussion of the way in which global migration causes hybrid identities, often developed using examples e.g. 'Brasian'.
- Some candidates included debates around whether global migration leads to hybrid identities by considering cultural defence and fundamentalist beliefs.
- Some candidates discussed whether discrimination and prejudice against migrants prevented the adoption of hybrid identities.
- Some responses considered the limitations of hybrid identity and its possible link to westernisation and cultural imperialism.
- In some responses, there was development of the debate between cultural convergence versus cultural divergence.

Limited responses
- Limited responses focused on migration with limited application to the growth of hybrid identities.
- These responses included a discussion on hybrid identities in relation to globalisation without reference to global migration.
- Some answers showed a limited understanding of what is meant by hybrid identity by discussing subcultures or mixing rather than hybridity.

Section B

Question 3

Comprehensive responses
- In comprehensive responses, there was a theoretical debate on the role of the media including Marxist versus pluralist views.
- Some candidates demonstrated a clear knowledge of a range of Marxist views of the media including mass manipulation and the media as an ideological state apparatus. There was often debate between these different views.
- Some candidates included a comparison of traditional and new media in relation to their ability/desire to promote ruling-class ideology.
- Some responses included a range of alternative views of the media such as the pluralist view showing the importance of serving a wide range of groups and the postmodern view that audiences are more active.
- Some responses took a feminist view to illustrate different ways the media may promote ruling-class ideology, patriarchy versus capitalism.

Limited responses
- In limited responses, there was consideration of different views of the media such as Marxist and pluralist on ownership and control without appropriate development and specific reference to the question.
- Some responses were limited in range, with answers only showing a limited Marxist versus pluralist debate without full explanation.
- Some general answers that discussed representation in the media were seen.
- Limited responses were often one-sided and only supported the view.

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Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- In comprehensive responses, there was consideration of the debate between the view of the plurality of the new media versus the control of new media by a limited range of conglomerates, which limits audience influence.
- Some responses made use of contemporary examples of media platforms (TikTok, Instagram and YouTube) and discussed influencers.
- In some responses there was a clear understanding of the difference between traditional media and new media and how this may impact the audience's ability to influence content e.g. prosumers and citizen journalists.
- Some responses used debates between digital optimists and digital pessimists to develop the answer.
- Some candidates referred to the debate between audience influence and the power of algorithms in new media.
- Some responses also discussed how the continued existence of censorship and legislation may limit content.

Limited responses

- In some responses, there was a limited focus on the audiences' influences over media content. Discussion in these responses focused on the impact on audiences.
- Limited responses were descriptive accounts of social media with limited application to the audience influence over content.
- Some responses were one-sided accounts with limited consideration of the debate. Often, responses only considered points that supported the view.
- Some responses focused on a range of simplistic examples without sociological analysis.

Section C

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- In comprehensive responses, there was clear knowledge of perspectives that see religion as a conservative force that acts as a barrier to social change e.g. functionalism, Marxism and feminism.
- These responses used a range of examples of ways in which religion can be seen as a catalyst for social change that showed evaluation of the view in the question e.g., Weber's work on Calvinism, Liberation theology.
- Some responses considered how the move to scientific thinking and secularisation may give evidence against the view that religion is a barrier to social change.

Limited responses

- In some responses there was a limited range of examples either in support of or against the view in the question.
- Limited responses had no focus on the question, such as discussions of what religion supports rather than how it is a barrier to social change e.g. religion supporting traditional gender roles without making an explicit link to the issue of social change.
- Some responses used secularisation as a point against the view in the question without linking this to social change.
- Some responses used material on religion in general without application to the question such as gender differences in religious participation.

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Question 6

Comprehensive responses

- In comprehensive responses, there was consideration of the changes to the way religious beliefs are expressed such as postmodern views of pick-and-mix. These responses also considered believing without belonging to show that religion may not require attendance at church or other institution.
- Some responses included a range of examples of religions that have seen an increase in membership such as Islam.
- Some candidates considered the rise of fundamentalism as a reaction to modernity or postmodern society.
- The rise of NRMs and NAMs as evidence for the increase in the number of people with religious belief was discussed in some responses. Discussion included why these may be more popular, linking this to flexibility and individualism in modern society. There was further evaluation shown by considering whether these forms of belief some traditional forms of religion that have declined.
- Some candidates evaluated through the consideration and evidence of secularisation.

Limited responses

- In limited responses, there was consideration of the role of religion through perspectives that were not fully focused on the question.
- Some responses discussed the definition of religion that did not engage with the change to religious beliefs today.
- Some candidates made general points about religion remaining or declining without evidence or examples to support the points made.
- Some responses included a limited range of relevant points, only one or two on each side of the debate.
- Limited responses were often one-sided answers that focused on either the decline of religion or the increase, but not both.

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Paper 9699/42
Globalisation, Media, Religion

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Many responses showed awareness of relevant concepts, theories and examples.
- Stronger responses were characterised by clear engagement with the demands of the question, effective use of sociological studies, and balanced evaluation.
- Most candidates attempted the required number of questions.

What candidates needed to improve

- A recurring issue across several questions was a tendency toward generalised commentary rather than sustained sociological analysis.
- Limited responses often showed a lack of depth, inability to apply sociological material, or did not fully address the specific wording of the question.
- Some candidates presented only 'for' arguments in their answers, ignoring the antithetical element that is required in essay questions for Paper 4. Therefore, the essays did not show the 'against' arguments in relation to the statements in the questions.
- Similarly, some scripts were too generic and without sociological relevance. These answers did not show the application of sociological material from an academic point of view and did not demonstrate knowledge of relevant sociological concepts, theories or research evidence.
- In a minority of cases, candidates did not follow the rubric. Some answered only one question, others attempted more than two essays.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- The role of colonisation in explaining poverty in developing countries was mostly explained through Marxist, neo-Marxist and other theories.
- Dependency Theory and World Systems Theory were used by some candidates to highlight the historical exploitation of developing nations.
- Detailed responses touched on neo-colonialism/imperialism as the new wave through which some superpowers are still exerting control over other countries and contributing to their poverty.
- Modernisation theory, the work of Paul Collier, internal factors such as corruption, and other perspectives were used in comprehensive responses to provide an explicit evaluation or counterargument to the claim.
- Some answers did mention other reasons for the poverty of developing countries including corruption and failure of structural and institutional reforms.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates outlined how colonial masters siphoned the resources of their colonists without supporting their responses with relevant theories and concepts. Responses often remained overly historical or descriptive, without the sociological synthesis required to show how colonial infrastructures perpetuated long-term economic dependency.
- Some candidates reduced the question to an analysis of transnational corporations. Such responses only evaluated the pros and cons of transnational corporations, without linking them to colonialism and the main claim.
- A significant number of candidates struggled to explicitly link the historical mechanisms of colonisation directly to contemporary systemic poverty.
- Some answers focused only on poverty, giving general accounts for poverty in developing countries without any link to colonialism.

Question 2

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates effectively articulated the positive structural and cultural impacts of global migration, frequently citing remittances, demographic balancing, and cultural hybridisation.
- Comprehensive responses drew on a range of sociological research evidence to validate their claims, including some specific examples such as migration for education. Evaluation was shown by developing a counterargument linked to the negatives of migration such as racism, stereotypical representation and a lack of social mobility.
- Some candidates were able to use contemporary examples to highlight either positive or negative consequences of migration such as employment opportunities or the rise of populism and nationalism in response to global migration.
- Some candidates were able to discuss different types of migration such as rural-to-urban migration or the migration of women in global care chains. These showed insight and were supported with relevant examples and studies.

Limited responses

- Some responses deviated from focussing on the migrants and instead discussed the benefits and challenges for their home countries.
- Candidates were typically more confident in presenting arguments against the statement, often using sociological evidence more successfully in this part of their evaluation. Arguments supporting the statement were less detailed and without theoretical grounding.
- The use of empirical evidence, sociological studies and statistical materials was sometimes limited. Many candidates relied on generalised assertions rather than anchoring their arguments in robust sociological data.
- A few candidates also offered general responses that addressed the positive and negative aspects of globalisation in general, without a specific focus on global migration.

Section B

Question 3

Comprehensive responses

- The ‘for’ side of the debate was tackled with confidence by some candidates, featuring references to traditional representations of gender, ethnicity and social class, alongside concepts like the ‘male gaze’ or moral panics.
- Comprehensive responses showed a range of material, including reference to Cohen’s moral panic and folk devils, studies by Glasgow University Media Group, among others, to explain explicitly how young people, older people, women and ethnic minorities, especially black people and the working class are negatively stereotyped by the media, both through content presentation and involvement/representation.
- Comprehensive responses evaluated the claim by looking at the role of the new media in granting individuals access to participate, citizen journalism, the pluralist argument, and regulatory constraints.

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Limited responses
- Some candidates limited their discussion to gender by looking at just how the media negatively stereotypes women.
- Limited responses did not produce the evaluative arguments for this question. Except for stating that the new media grants people access to participate in the media space, such answers struggled to discuss other points that could counter the claim.
- Some answers did not show that many of these representations have improved over time and with the onset of new media, the traditional representations are being challenged.
- Some candidates discussed general media effects or media effects models without linking it to media representations of some social groups.

Question 4

Comprehensive responses
- Comprehensive responses used appropriate sociological studies and cited evidence to support the statement and to show evaluation.
- Some candidates were able to highlight the theories, authors, and concepts to support their points for and against the view in the question, e.g. the Hypodermic Syringe Model, Bandura's Bobo doll study, Two-Step Flow, Uses and Gratifications and Cultural Effects.
- In comprehensive responses, arguments were often balanced, tightly structured and supported by robust contemporary examples.

Limited responses
- Some responses showed confusion due to a limited understanding of the elements of direct and indirect influence, as some candidates interpreted the question as asking whether the media has any influence at all.
- Limited responses showed confusion between direct and indirect media effects, particularly in relation to long-term influences.
- In some responses, theories like cultivation theory and cultural theory were confused to mean direct influence.
- In limited responses, debate was not sustained and answers tended to focus on just one side of the question.

Section C

Question 5

Comprehensive responses
- Comprehensive answers showed a great deal of understanding of the question and use of supporting material both for and against the view in the question.
- Relevant theories, studies and concepts were applied to answer this question, including the work of Daly, De Beauvoir and Holm. These were evaluated with the work of religious feminists and Marxists to suggest that religion contributes to class inequality rather than gender inequality.
- Some responses considered the emergence of the new religious movements, which were presented as significant for the emancipation of women within religious dogma and practice.
- Comprehensive responses balanced the 'for' and 'against' dimensions of the debate well, showing balanced, evaluative responses.

Limited responses
- Limited responses showed confusion in their evaluation; feminist views were evaluated with references to Functionalist and Marxist views as if the question was on the role of religion.
- In some responses, evaluation was weak and responses were one-sided, focusing on the oppression of women by religion.
- In some cases, there was no counterargument.
- Some points on the role of women in religion were descriptive and did not make clear why the position of women in religion may contribute to wider social inequality.

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Question 6

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses showed a range of knowledge and understanding identifying the role of religion, the expansions, new religious movements, secularisation, science and rationalisation.
- Many high-quality responses demonstrated a strong understanding, with well-developed arguments supported by appropriate sociological material. Counter-arguments were similarly well explained and grounded in theory.
- Comprehensive responses balanced the 'for' and 'against' dimensions of the debate well, showing balanced evaluative responses.
- Some responses included discussion of fundamentalist movements around the world and what they show about the continued importance of religion in modern society. Often a range of Christian and Muslim examples were given to highlight this view.
- Some candidates provided a clear discussion of the overall decline of religion because of rationalisation and secularisation to show evaluation of the view in the question.

Limited responses

- In limited responses, the question was treated as if it were on the role of religion, especially when providing evidence on the relevance/continued influence of religion. Theoretical points were made without links to the view in the question.
- There was some confusion with the Marxist view of religion as an ideological state apparatus by Althusser and Karl Marx's idea of religion as the opium of the masses. Some candidates struggled to explain how these points make religious organisations relevant or not.
- Some responses indicated how religion was oppressive towards women yet also indicated that women dominated religious organisations in terms of participation. These showed limited application to the question.

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SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/43
Globalisation, Media, Religion

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Comprehensive responses applied and linked relevant sociological materials to the view in the question either for or against.
- Some candidates used specific theorists and studies to support their points across all questions.
- In comprehensive responses, candidates showed clear knowledge of the topics studied and many wrote fluently and at length.
- Some candidates wrote appropriate length answers and were able to answer the required number of questions.
- In many cases, a clear debate was presented between the view in the question and other views that would offer a critique. In comprehensive responses, there was a clear debate and some reasoned conclusions as to the strongest view.

What candidates needed to improve

- Limited responses gave a generic answer on the subject rather than focusing precisely on the view in the question.
- Some candidates made generalisations and did not ensure that all points were specifically rooted in the question context.
- Some candidates did not extend their explanations through analysis rather than relying mainly on descriptive writing.
- Candidates need to incorporate appropriate theory as well as sociological concepts, evidence and examples in their responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses provided a balanced discussion of whether all countries benefit from globalisation.
- The majority of candidates approached the question as a debate between modernisation and dependency theories in terms of economic development.
- Comprehensive responses included all dimensions of globalisation such as economic, cultural or political advantages and disadvantages.
- In comprehensive responses, there tended to be a well-informed use of relevant concepts such as hybridisation, globalisation, Disneyfication, Coca-colonialisation, neoliberalism and neo-colonialism.
- Migration was a key feature of most answers, including both the positive and negative consequences for both the emigrants and the host population. Benefits included remittances, technological upskilling, while negative consequences included brain drain, etc.
- Some candidates took a nuanced approach, highlighting how developing and developed countries may both benefit and lose out to different degrees.
- In some responses, there was excellent use of examples and detailed knowledge of the circumstances of specific countries.

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Limited responses

- Limited responses were unclear about what the question was asking, giving generic answers on the impact of globalisation rather than focussing on benefits.
- In some responses, theoretical discussion was negligible, with answers relying on examples.
- Some candidates gave a narrow range of benefits or otherwise, focussing on either economic or cultural factors.

Question 2

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses showed theoretical debate on the benefits of aid, such as between modernisation theory and dependency theory. This was often supported with specific examples or situations where aid would be beneficial or problematic.
- Additional debate was shown by some candidates who considered different types of aid programmes and how some may be more beneficial than others in overcoming poverty, such as international versus local projects.
- Comprehensive responses included detailed knowledge of specific examples, outlining a range of benefits such as economic, health and environmental benefits. Use of specific programmes such as Water Aid was also included.
- In comprehensive responses, limitations regarding the effectiveness of aid programmes tended to focus on tied aid or the way in which aid may have short term benefits or requirements that benefit the provider, creating dependency. Some highlighted resistance to accepting aid for fear of western interference. The failure of corrupt governments to utilise aid as intended was cited with examples in some responses.

Limited responses

- Some responses were limited in both breadth and depth, presenting only one or two points for or against the view in the question.
- Limited responses mixed up the theories, sometimes quite randomly, e.g. citing Functionalist views with Marxist writers and ideas.
- Limited responses were one-sided or one-dimensional without debate of the view in the question.
- Some responses had a limited focus on aid with a greater consideration of global poverty, giving a general account.

Section B

Question 3

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses discussed the power of media owners to resist control as well as the recognition that governments rely on positive support and may water down media regulation as a result.
- Some responses showed a sound theoretical basis which explored the relationship between government and the ruling class, citing writers such as Miliband and Althusser.
- Comprehensive responses compared and contrasted the situation in authoritarian and democratic regimes to show differences in the role of governments in controlling the media.
- Some candidates included the power of new media to evade government control and provided examples of how such media is often used to challenge various governments worldwide e.g. through citizen journalism. This was evaluated by considering the ability of governments to use surveillance and the ability to monitor new media.
- The ability of governments to use regulation of traditional media companies who also own new media was sometimes discussed.

Limited responses

- Limited responses were common sense descriptive accounts without any supporting material. These focused on the wide-ranging nature of the media as a reason for the lack of control.
- Confused accounts highlighting the power of audiences to resist media messages without reference to government were common.
- Limited responses conflated government interests as synonymous with ruling class interests without explanation.
- Some candidates went into apparent pre-prepared answers about media ownership or media effects.

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Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- There were well-supported points in comprehensive responses, with examples of how media content (and representation) is patriarchal. Examples and relevant studies were provided from a range of feminist media theories, Mulvey/male gaze, Wolfe on the beauty myth, Tuchman/symbolic annihilation, Connel on hegemonic masculinity. Other writers included Fergusen/cult of femininity, Gauntlett and MacRobbie.
- New media was generally discussed within the context of challenging patriarchy through digital feminism such as Laura Bates or #Metoo. Some highlighted the continuing output from media influencers which focuses on diet and beauty products.
- Some relevant pluralist arguments were provided regarding womens' growing status, spending power and empowerment and the need for media to meet their expectations with more positive and visible content.
- A few responses discussed the growing influence of female producers of media content.

Limited responses

- Limited responses tended to be very descriptive and non-theoretical, providing examples from past and present media artifacts to highlight hegemonic masculinity or femininity and challenges to traditional stereotypes. Most common were Die Hard or James Bond films, or TV shows such as Baywatch and Love Island. The film Barbie was often discussed as an example of female direction and feminist content.
- Limited responses tended to discuss only one or two studies, usually Mulvey.
- Some veered off into general discussion of changes in gender roles as evidenced by theorists such as Young and Wilmott and how such symmetrical families feature or not, in popular media.
- In limited responses, challenges to the view tended to feature new media and how women are now prosumers etc.

Section C

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses included a range of theoretical evidence including Functionalist, Marxist, neo-Marxist, feminist, Weberian and postmodern accounts, which were well supported by writers such as Durkheim, Parsons, Malinowski, Marx, Althusser, Gramsci, Armstrong, El Sadaawi, de Beauvoir, Holms, Watson, Weber, Lyon, Hervieu-Léger,
- In these responses, functionalist arguments were used in arguments both for and against the view in the question e.g. religion creates order and stability in various ways, so society is ordered and under control. Or religion is not a form of social control; it improves peoples' experiences in various ways such as by being a source of social solidarity and consensus.
- Marxism and feminism were the main theories presented in comprehensive responses to highlight social control and were used to explain control in relation to class control or the control of women through patriarchy.
- Arguments against the view were mainly accounts of examples of religion being instrumental in social change, such as of Liberation Theology or the American Civil Rights movements. Many used Weber's work on Calvinism and social change as a key evaluation point with detailed accounts.
- Postmodernism was often well discussed, showing how religion has become more privatised, making it less subject to control or a matter of choice. Some candidates linked this perspective to individualism and consumerism.
- Secularisation was often cited as evidence of declining influence and therefore less control.
- Some candidates discussed the feminisation of religion particularly New Age movements and New religious movements as evidence against the claim that religion exerts patriarchal control.

Limited responses

- Limited responses included a narrow range of perspectives or limited detail and concepts.
- Some answers were one-sided, citing descriptive ways in which religion may control individuals.
- Some answers confused perspectives and their views on religion maintaining control.

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Question 6

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses were able to highlight the extent of secularisation in mainly Western societies citing rationalisation, declining membership and attendance, less moral influence of religion e.g. abortion, single parenthood, divorce, cohabitation, fewer religious ceremonies (hatching, matching, dispatching) and increased individualism.
- A few highlighted the impact of globalisation on religious practice in non-western countries and growing feminist rejection of religion as a source of patriarchy.
- In comprehensive responses, arguments against the view included high levels of religiosity in the US, Bellah on civil religion, Fundamentalism, rise of Pentecostalism, rise of Internet-based participation, privatisation/vicarious religion – Believing without belonging – Grace Davie, Marxist views which contend that religion still acts as an opiate justifying inequality, and feminist views on how religion globally continues to oppress women, growth of new religious movements and new age movements.
- A few candidates highlighted the continuing importance of religion to immigrant groups living in the West e.g. Bruce on cultural defence, transition and identity.
- Many presented contemporary examples of mainly anti-secularist arguments such as the Evangelical or Christian New Right in America and their support of Donald Trump, continued religious conflict in India, the Middle East (Israel and Palestine), South Asia (Kashmir, India, and Pakistan), and parts of Africa.
- Some interrogated the problems of measuring religiosity e.g. in the past, more people may have experienced ‘belonging without believing’ for social reasons or respectability.

Limited responses

- In many cases, arguments for both sides of the debate were limited in depth and range.
- Limited accounts tended to be descriptive, generic or assertive. For example, young people are less religious in the west as old people fear death and young people have too many distractions in their lives to bother with religion.

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