SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/11

Paper 1

Key Messages

Candidates need to understand sociology as a whole body of knowledge and make links between the various units they have studied. Where candidates are able to make these links they demonstrate a better grasp of substantive themes and sociological theories and they are better able to support their answers by drawing on their wider sociological knowledge with greater effect.

Many candidates show an excellent grasp of key terms, some need to improve their understanding of key terms. Candidates also need to understand that when defining key terms they must use different words and not just repeat the word in the question. They cannot define 'observing' with the word observation or 'post' with posting. This does not demonstrate clear understanding of the term.

General Comments

Over generalisation tends to be a problem for many candidates. Candidates need to understand that time and cost are relative issues in sociological research and discussion of time and cost must be comparative. Other examples of common generalisations were that all experiments are unethical, all poverty has been eliminated and all democracies are fully representative. To improve, candidates need to move away from over simplistic generalisations and reflect diversity in their responses.

Candidates need to understand that bullet point lists of 'for' and 'against' points which are neither explained nor evaluated are not appropriate for question **(d)** answers.

There are certain key concepts which candidates continue to confuse, valid and reliable are used inter-changeably or both used as a catch-all strength or limitation. Participant/non-participant and overt/covert observations, sex/gender, qualitative and quantitative were also poorly understood by many. To improve, candidates need to have a solid grounding in key concepts.

Candidates need to understand that they need to address the 'To what extent…' part of the question. Generally candidates can improve if they pay closer attention to the wording of the questions and have a better understanding of the key command words.

Centres are asked to discourage candidates from answering questions in random places on the question paper and to ensure that when answers are continued that this is clearly indicated. Candidates need to indicate very clearly where the rest of their answer is and to which question the response applies.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

(a)(i) Candidates need to understand that they must define the terms in the question. To improve their answers candidates need to move away from repeating the words in the question. Many candidates stated that the answer was questionnaires in the post which did not show any understanding of the term.

(ii) This question was generally answered well although candidates could improve if they ensured they did not confuse participant and non-participant observation or confuse non-participant observation with either covert or overt observation. Some candidates believed this was observation without being there but failed to explain how this might be achieved.

(iii) This question was generally answered well although some candidates continue to confuse quantitative and qualitative methods.

(b) Generally this question was not well done. Some candidates understood that experiments would be more closely linked to the positivist tradition but few were able to give clear explanations of why they were not used. Some candidates talked about the dangers of being in a lab or it being too expensive to buy the equipment whilst other candidates did appreciate the argument that sociology needs to focus on real world interaction and other social activities that could not be measured in a lab. A few candidates made links to their knowledge from other units and did consider media violence experiments. Some focused on ethical issues but discussions of ethics were generally underdeveloped, candidates usually restricting themselves to saying it is unethical to experiment without giving any clear indication why this would be the case.

(c) This was generally well answered; candidates were able to identify issues with low response rate, problems caused by low literacy levels, and issues linked to validity.

(d) There were many excellent answers to this question. Many candidates did need a better understanding of the different methods of observation. Various methods were often confused.

(e) Generally this was answered well, most candidates identified either structured or unstructured interviews as an alternative way of asking questions, others understood that questions could be asked during overt participant observation. Many failed to grasp that other methods like social surveys and postal questionnaires were still questionnaires and therefore not valid responses.

(f) Candidates needed a much better understanding of what positivist methods meant. Others chose to talk only about one method that positivists might use. Many believed positivist methods were some type of observation. There were some excellent answers that discussed the positivist focus on establishing social facts, objectivity and collecting quantitative data.

Question 2

(a) Most candidates answered this question well. A few confused sex and gender and some gave a common sense definition.

(b) Many candidates struggled to distinguish roles from other social activities. Many candidates described the role of women as a primary breadwinner but forgot to use the term 'breadwinner'.

(c) Many candidates lacked a clear understanding of social identity, many confused it with social status. Others made links to the socialisation process and gender socialisation. Generally candidates accepted that social identity was fixed and focused on gender characteristics, some also focused on other ascribed characteristics and argued identity was fixed, some looked at social mobility and argued it was not fixed, few candidates considered both for a balanced response.

(d) Many candidates showed very limited understanding of the concept of social identity.

Question 3

(a) Candidates needed to understand that role conflict is not simply having too much work or too many jobs to do nor does it involve arguments or conflict between two groups of people.

(b) Many candidates again confused role conflict with simply being busy. Others could improve their answers by remembering to state the nature of the role conflict.

(c) Following on from **3(a)** and **(b)** candidates focused on how gender roles have changed and ignored wider social roles. Alternatively they discussed changing conjugal roles. Many candidates could have improved their responses if they had gone beyond 'women can now work', as they ignored both the argument about what should be defined as work and the fact that historically women in the lower ranks of society always did work.

(d)   Many candidates were able to answer the questions in terms of the functionalist/consensus model but there was a tendency to agree with the question. Candidates generally failed to engage with the 'to what extent' part of the question.

Question 4

(a)   Candidates needed to understand that slavery does not necessarily involve people being abused or mistreated. Candidates could have improved their answers by focusing on the status of slaves as property.

(b)   Many candidates ignored the question and described social class even though they were specifically instructed not to do so. There was a tendency to focus on caste and feudalism rather than more modern social divisions; age, gender and ethnicity, which were referred to infrequently. Some candidates offered ethnicity and race as two examples seeking to use the same knowledge twice.

(c)   This question was frequently answered well; candidates were able to suggest many supported reasons why inequalities in wealth and income exist. Frequently candidates talked about the tax system and tax avoidance by the wealthy. They also considered the welfare system and poverty traps for the less wealthy. Many candidates successfully framed their answer within the Marxist perspective and wealth in terms of an individual's relationship to the means of production.

(d)   There was a tendency for candidates to agree with the question without considering the impact of other types of social division. Some candidates talked about how social class was the most important because caste and feudalism had disappeared. Encouragingly many candidates did show an understanding that historic social divisions like caste and estate still had an impact on social status and were therefore relevant social divisions even today.

Question 5

(a)   Generally this was answered well; candidates were able to relate the term to reliance on government welfare provision. Candidates can improve if they are discouraged from defining words in terms of their common usage. Many candidates defined dependency culture as a situation where people depended on family and friends or where a culture depended on another dominant foreign culture.

(b)   This question was generally well answered; most candidates identify both absolute and relative poverty followed by a clear description. Candidates could have improved if they had ensured they clearly named the terms relative and absolute poverty rather than just describing them. Many candidates clearly understood the definition but did not use the term in their answers.

(c)   Many excellent answers contained clear and detailed sociological knowledge and terminology; others needed a better understanding of the key concept of dependency culture. Many candidates chose to simply discuss poverty whilst others talked generally about benefits making the poor lazy. To improve, candidates needed to explain the arguments of the new right as well as discussing issues like minimum wage and the inability of people on benefits to break out of the poverty trap.

(d)   There were many good answers to this question that considered a diverse range of measures including welfare, taxation policy, foreign aid, charity and the impact of free state education. Many candidates could have improved by not generalising about poverty in modern industrialised societies; it was common for candidates to comment that poverty has been eliminated in rich western societies. Where the question was answered in the context of absolute poverty versus relative poverty, candidates produced some excellent answers.

Question 6

(a)   Generally candidates had a clear understanding of what the term dictatorship meant and frequently gave relevant examples of dictatorial regimes.

(b)   Many excellent definitions of charismatic authority were seen, candidates giving both clear definition and supporting examples which ranged from Hitler to Ghandi. Candidates needed to improve their understanding of legal rational authority, authority based on the position or post someone holds, candidates named President Obama as an example of both charismatic and legal rational authority. The fact that many charismatic leaders may also hold an office of state which also gives them legal rational authority may have been the source of some of the confusion. Candidates need to understand that individual statesmen may fit into both categories but the types of authority remain distinct.

(c)   Some candidates gave a good range of methods that can be used to gain power including winning party nominations, gaining funding and using the media. Many candidates could have improved their responses by mentioning winning elections and by not over generalising about democratic system without specific reference to a state. Candidates needed to understand that some democracies are more corrupt than others and they should have challenged the consensus view of democratic systems.

(d)   There were some excellent answers to this question which drew on recent events like the 'Arab Spring' to demonstrate how the powers of an authoritarian regime could be limited. Candidates need to have a clear understanding of the difference between authority and authoritarian. Candidates also needed to understand that elections are not generally a feature of authoritarian regimes and that where they are a feature they are not fair and free. Candidates who answered this well were able to place discussions of 'elections' in a specific context linked to an authoritarian regime. Candidates could also have improved their responses by demonstrating how authoritarian regimes ultimately use coercion to stay in power.

Question 7

(a)   There were few answers to this question but candidates needed a better understanding of proportional representation.

(b)   There were few answers to this question. Many candidates showed clear understanding of the strengths of the first past the post system. Candidates needed to better understand the limitations of the first past the post system.

(c)   There were few answers to this question. Candidates needed to discuss methods such as coups, revolutions, rigged and corrupt elections, inheritance.

(d)   There were few answers to this question. Candidates needed to understand that representative democracies differ from simple democracies and that in both systems, while the will of the majority may be represented; there is always a minority who are not represented. A few excellent answers understood this and discussed why various social groups may feel disenfranchised by the system. Candidates also needed to understand democracy in the context of pluralist, Marxist and elite theory.

SOCIOLOGY

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Paper 0495/12

Paper 1

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SOCIOLOGY

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Many candidates show an excellent grasp of key terms, some need to improve their understanding of key terms. Candidates also need to understand that when defining key terms they must use different words and not just repeat the word in the question. They cannot define 'life histories' with the words history of life or 'agencies of socialisation' with the words the agencies that socialise you. This does not demonstrate clear understanding of the term.

General Comments

Candidates need to improve their understanding of social diversity; frequently candidates stereotype social groups and make sweeping generalisations. For example, it was common for candidates to suggest all working class children are poorly socialised.

There are certain key concepts which candidates continue to confuse, valid and reliable are used inter-changeably or both used as a catch-all strength or limitation. Participant/non-participant, overt/covert observations and formal/informal continue to be confused and the term socialisation continues to be regarded as going out with friends. To improve, candidates need to have a solid grounding in key concepts.

Time and cost continue to be used as catch-all strengths and limitations for all methods. Candidates need to understand that time and costs are relative and must be discussed comparatively.

Candidates need to understand that they need to address the 'To what extent…' part of the question. Generally candidates can improve if they pay closer attention to the wording of the questions and have a better understanding of the key command words.

Centres are asked to discourage candidates from answering questions in random places on the question paper and to ensure that when answers are continued that this is clearly indicated. Candidates need to indicate very clearly where the rest of their answer is and to which question the response applies.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) (i)   Many candidates showed only limited awareness of what secondary data was.

(ii)   Generally candidates were aware of what official statistics were. Candidates confused official with original/real/final results.

(iii)   Many candidates were unable to identify what 'life histories' were. Many said they were histories of your life but this gained them no credit as they were repeating the question without showing any knowledge.

(b) Generally this was not well answered; candidates' answers were often limited to generalisations about not knowing who wrote them or not having access to the documents. Candidates need to understand that these types of documents are generally unrepresentative, often subjective and difficult to interpret.

(c) There were some strong answers to this question many candidates were able to identify using one method to counteract the weaknesses of another as a reason. Many candidates could have improved their response if they had realised what they were being asked about here was essentially 'triangulation', being asked for two reasons seemed to confuse candidates.

(d) This was generally well answered; candidates most frequently identifying ethical issues as a weakness and validity as strength. Some candidates still need to understand the difference between overt/covert and participant/non-participant observation.

(e) This was generally well answered; most candidates being able to identify structured and unstructured interviews. Relatively few candidates mentioned group interviews, focus group interviews or semi-structured interviews.

(f) Candidates need a better understanding of the term interpretivist. Many candidates either just guessed or failed to respond to this question at all. There was a lot of confusion about the difference between valid and reliable in answers to this question.

Section B

Question 2

(a) This was generally well answered; most candidates understanding that this is how men and women are expected to behave in given social situations.

(b) Most candidates identified the role of 'breadwinner' as associated with men, surprisingly few identified father as a male role, there were some answers which talked about 'being outside' or 'playing sport' as a male role. Candidates need to understand that this is not gender specific in all societies and needed further clarification.

(c) Generally not well answered; candidates frequently described the disadvantages of being working class over being middle class rather than addressing the question. Candidates often assumed that working class children would suffer poor or no socialisation; candidates need to understand that this is not necessarily the case and their answers could have been improved by discussing the different norms and values of working and middle class families. There were some excellent answers which described socialisation into sub-cultures, cultures of poverty and deferred as opposed to instant gratification. Candidates continue to confuse socialisation with socialising i.e. going out with friends.

(d) Generally well answered, although many answers lacked evaluation and simply agreed with the statement without considering the impact of class. Many candidates were able to explain why women were disadvantaged in society, candidates frequently engaging with feminist theory and concepts like 'reserve army of labour', 'glass ceiling', 'dual burden' and 'triple shift' to support their arguments. Some candidates were also able to evaluate the impact of class on women's life chances engaging with Marxist theory to do this. Some were also able to put forward the Marxist feminist theory.

Question 3

(a) Generally well answered; some candidates listed the agencies of socialisation rather than defining them as agencies where individuals learn the norms and values of society.

(b) Candidates were often unable to distinguish between formal and informal agencies of social control. Candidates commonly confused agencies of secondary socialisation with agencies of formal social control. Candidates need to understand that not all agencies of secondary socialisation offer formal control.

(c) Candidates were often unclear on the difference between formal and informal sanctions. To improve their responses candidates need to improve their understanding of the terms formal and informal.

(d) There were some excellent answers to this question although many answers lacked evaluation and simply agreed with the statement without considering the importance of informal social control. Many candidates were able to discuss the role of formal agencies in controlling behaviour through coercion. Many answers were limited to discussions of law and police. Candidates needed to understand that formal control does not always work. Some candidates effectively made links to other units of study to help them discuss the extent to which formal control ensures conformity.

Section C

Question 4

(a) This was generally well answered although some candidates did confuse class and status.

(b) This was generally very well answered; the most frequent responses were gender and ethnicity, a few candidates also suggested 'royalty'.

(c) Generally this was well answered; candidates described various possible ways of achieving higher status most commonly referring to education. Candidates need to understand that even with good education, other difficulties with achieving higher status, like lack of connections, may provide a barrier to changing a person's social status.

(d) There were a few excellent answers to this question which considered a wide range of ascribed characteristics that may be more important than achieved status. Many answers lacked evaluation and simply agreed with the statement, asserting that if you work hard at school you can achieve higher status, without considering that ascribed status may be more important than achieved. Where candidates did consider ascribed characteristics they focused on gender discrimination. There were very few links to modern industrial societies. To improve their answers candidates needed to consider a range of ascribed characteristics and how they impact on the life chances in modern industrial societies.

Question 5

(a) Candidates were able to either define ethnic or minority, few candidates effectively defined both terms.

(b) Answers to this question focused on lack of opportunity in education or employment, few candidates identified segregation or apartheid.

(c) Most candidates were able to identify examples of anti-discrimination legislation. There were few examples where candidates considered wider ranging efforts like policies of integration, positive discrimination and multi-cultural education.

(d) There were few good answers to this question, many responses lacked depth. Candidates focused on a single barrier to mobility like poverty or poor education. Candidates generally assumed there was no opportunity for ethnic minorities to be upwardly mobile. Candidates need to understand that ethnic minorities are not a homogenous group. In some societies, some ethnic minority groups are more upwardly mobile than others and in other societies, notably South Africa, it is the white minority who are advantaged. Candidates could also have improved their responses by showing an awareness that ethnicity as a single ascribed factor alone may have less impact than other factors like gender or class origin.

Section D

Questions 6 and 7

There were too few responses to these questions to make appropriate comments.

SOCIOLOGY

Key Messages

- Candidates should spend time reading the questions in order to understand exactly what is required
- Candidates need to be able to clearly define and understand sociological concepts. It would be helpful to provide candidates with clear definitions in one or two sentences of the concepts listed in the glossary.
- Candidates should be aware of the main sociological perspectives on all topics, in particular the Marxist, feminist, functionalist and pluralist views. Some topics such as the media have perspectives which are particular to them.
- Finally, many of the questions relate to **modern industrial societies** so candidates need to check this. However, if relevant, marks will still be awarded for references to other cultures.

General Comments

The most popular questions were **Question 1**, **2**, **4** and **5**. The least popular questions were **Questions 3** and **8**.

In order to gain high marks candidates need to be aware of differing sociological perspectives and to present both sides of the argument in **(d)** questions. For example in **Question 2d** 'How far is marriage still valued in modern industrial societies?' candidates need to produce sociological evidence that shows marriage is valued and evidence that that it is not valued and then make a judgement. Candidates who had been given detailed information about the changing nature of society scored high marks. Using previous questions and mark schemes is a good way to practise the necessary skills.

There were some excellent answers when candidates had sufficient evidence to support the statements they made and understood the requirements of the question. **(a)** questions require a clear definition; **(b)** questions require identification and description for two examples; **(c)** questions require an explanation **why** and **(d)** questions require some evaluation in order to gain high marks i.e. candidates are expected to argue points for and against and make a judgement. It will help candidates if they learn to recognise the key words at the beginning of each part of a question: **(a) What is meant by the term**...? **(b) Describe two examples/reasons**......**(c) Explain why**.....**(d) How far**...? or **To what extent**...?

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A: The Family

Question 1

(a)   The acceptance of *roles* in the definition enabled candidates to gain marks here. However, one mark was lost if candidates individualised their answer to *role* of each member of the family. *Function* was not clearly understood which caused problems in other parts of the question.

(b)   There was a lack of clarity on *functions*. Some candidates identified the *breadwinner* and *housekeeper* in traditional societies without defining the function i.e. economic support, but some credit was awarded for this. A few candidates outlined *expressive* and *instrumental* functions of the family. This was credited as an acceptable interpretation of the question. Some candidates described functions without identifying them. One mark in this question is for identification and one mark for description/development of each function. There was also some misunderstanding of *traditional societies*. Many of the answers could equally have applied to modern industrial societies.

(c)   Some candidates omitted to answer the *changed* part of the answer. The best answers outlined how some functions had been partly taken over by the state, e.g. education, but that there remained important functions for the family, e.g. *primary socialisation.* There was a lack of clarity in the answers of some candidates on the difference between *traditional* and *modern industrial* societies. Some candidates limited their answer to the change in *conjugal roles* and the *position of women.* Other candidates spent too long in describing functions in traditional societies rather than pointing out changes.

(d)   This question proved difficult for candidates and most produced lists of different types of families with some explanation. Only the best candidates were able to evaluate i.e. that the nuclear family is still the main type of family and/or many types of families perform the same functions as the nuclear family and are considered as such e.g. co-habitees – most follow the nuclear family structure. Also, there are still some extended families in certain ethnic minority groups. Symmetrical families were also discussed. A few candidates mentioned types such as polygamous families which are inappropriate in modern industrial societies.

Question 2

(a)   The concept of *civil partnership* was not generally known. The two main elements required in the definition are *legal* and *same sex.* The term was confused with *marriage, civil marriage* and *co-habitation.*

(b)   This question was reasonably well-answered. Some candidates gave explanations rather than clearly identifying reasons such as *marriage of families,* links to *status and business, economic* or *traditional, cultural and religious reasons.*

(c)   The main mistake in answering this question was to discuss *marriage* rather than *arranged marriages.* There was some duplication between the answer to this question and the answer to **Question 2(d)**. Answers included the *changing role* and *independence of women*, *decline of the extended family, weakening of wider kin, privatised family, influence of the media,* and idea of *love* marriage. A few candidates were side-tracked into discussing the decline of marriage.

(d)   There was more space for evaluation in this question with some good answers why marriage is less valued today and the rate of remarriage to show that it is valued. Candidates discussed concentration on careers, economic independence of women, loss of stigma of co-habitation, secularisation, cost of weddings, fear of divorce and alternatively rate of remarriage of divorced people leading to reconstituted families and the number of co-habitees who eventually marry.

Section B: Education

Question 3

(a)   Few candidates gained full marks. The definition required knowledge of a school *funded* or *partly funded* by a religious organisation and guided by its principles.

(b)   This question was accessible to most candidates who answered this question: *state funded* and *private schools* were the most common answers.

(c)   This question proved difficult for candidates who may not have been aware of some of the issues such as influence of religious belief on the curriculum e.g. creationalism, competition for places leading to people not being truthful about their faith and possible divisiveness in a multi-cultural society.

(d)   The most successful answers discussed *different schools for different needs and abilities.* The main focus in evaluation was the difference between private and state funded schools and the impact on future career possibilities.

Question 4

(a) Many candidates confused *meritocratic society* with *equality* and *equality of opportunity* as in the introductory quote. The definition required an understanding of status and wealth linked to ability and achievement.

(b) This question was well-answered and had a range of possible correct answers, e.g. *class, gender, ethnicity, labelling, streaming, teacher stereotyping* and *access to different schools.*

(c) This question was generally well-answered. Candidates showed awareness of the advantages of the middle-class, e.g. middle-class nature of the school, cultural capital, home background, elaborated code, money to pay for teachers, deferred gratification. Some candidates compared the middle-class with the upper-class candidates 'who did not have to work as they were rich anyway'.

(d) Candidates recognised that the system was set up for equality i.e. same curriculum and free access, but that differences for candidates because of class, ethnicity and gender meant it did not provide equality of opportunity. There were some one-sided answers – usually on inequality of the system.

Section C: Crime, Deviance and Social Control

Question 5

(a) This question was well answered by the majority of the candidates but some candidates who had not come across the term guessed which resulted in some strange answers such as shadowy criminals. Answers that said *unrecorded/unreported* to police or not in official statistics were accepted.

(b) Crimes committed by and to females were accepted in this answer. The word 'typically' caused problems as it narrowed acceptable answers, *shoplifting* and *prostitution* the most common but others such as carrying drugs accepted.

(c) Lack of precise knowledge led candidates to generalise in their answers. Best answers discussed the *increased freedom of women leading to increased opportunities. Lone parents in need of money* was prominent in answers. *Less parental control* and *changes in socialisation* and reduction in the *chivalry* factor – *opportunities for white collar crime, different attitudes to women and the idea of equality under the law.*

(d) Most candidates concluded that women are treated more leniently for most crimes but more harshly for others such as offences against children. *Chivalry factor* and *police stereotypes* leading to *targeting of males*, and similar points as in **Question 5(c)**, including *equal treatment under the law*. Difficult for most candidates to produce evidence to justify points made here.

Question 6

(a) Well-answered by candidates although the distinction between *youth culture* and *youth sub-culture* could have been more clearly defined in the questions.

(b) The example used here, Mods and Rockers, is a youth sub-culture. Answers included Punks, Hippies, Goths, and Emos amongst others. Some candidates failed to identify specific groups, whilst others had difficulty describing the named group.

(c) Candidates tended to generalise rather than explain specific examples. Answers showed a lack of understanding of the *period between childhood and adulthood* and *increasing affluence*. *Media creation of youth culture* and *status frustration* was also discussed. Some candidates described youth culture/sub-cultures rather than answering the why part.

(d) Candidates tended to describe youth culture and influence of the media without considering other influences on identity of young people. The best answers indicated other influences – mainly *family* and *peer groups* – but most did not.

Section D: Media

Question 7

(a)   It was not necessary to mention the media in the answer to gain two marks. Most candidates mentioned *exaggeration* and *stereotyping.*

(b)   Candidates did not have the knowledge to identify and describe actual incidents and many described an imaginary scenario. Credit was given for descriptions of moral panic without knowledge of specific incidents as long as they made sense and related to actual incidents.

Most common answers featured terrorists and hooligans. Candidates sometimes repeated the same description for which credit was only given once. Some borrowed Mods and Rockers from **Question 6(b)**.

(c)   Some candidates described *stereotypes* and did not answer the **why** part of the question. However some good answers described the *powerlessness of the groups stereotyped*, *scapegoating by owners, agenda setting, news value* and *need to sell.*

(d)   Most answers focused on how the media described women and only the best candidates referred to other influences – usually *family* and *peer group* but also some mentioned women being aware of media perspectives. Few mentioned size 0 which is a popular term in the UK press but there were references to *role models* who are slim.

Question 8

(a)   Generally one mark answers – usually examples such as radio helped to gain that mark; lack of knowledge of one-way communication and lack of range. There was some misunderstanding of traditional media, e.g. carrier pigeons, smoke signals and horns.

(b)   Most listed *Internet* as one example, and television, which was incorrect without the prefix *digital*, was also common.

(c)   Only a minority of candidates were aware of the t*wo-way communication nature of the new media e.g. interactivity and accessibility.* Only the strongest candidates could clearly distinguish between the two media.

(d)   This question did not get the desired response and democratic participation was interpreted too narrowly. Candidates understood it as using the new media for elections, political campaigning and voting, not the *global communication of information* as intended.

SOCIOLOGY

Key Messages

- Candidates should spend time reading the questions in order to understand exactly what is required
- Candidates need to be able to clearly define and understand sociological concepts. It would be helpful to provide candidates with clear definitions in one or two sentences of the concepts listed in the glossary.
- Candidates should be aware of the main sociological perspectives on all topics, in particular the Marxist, feminist, functionalist and pluralist views. Some topics such as the media have perspectives which are particular to them.
- Finally, many of the questions relate to **modern industrial societies** so candidates need to check this. However, if relevant, marks will still be awarded for references to other cultures.

General Comments

The most popular questions were **Question 1**, **2**, **4** and **5**. The least popular questions were **Questions 3** and **8**.

In order to gain high marks candidates need to be aware of differing sociological perspectives and to present both sides of the argument in **(d)** questions. For example in **Question 2d** 'How far is marriage still valued in modern industrial societies?' candidates need to produce sociological evidence that shows marriage is valued and evidence that that it is not valued and then make a judgement. Candidates who had been given detailed information about the changing nature of society scored high marks. Using previous questions and mark schemes is a good way to practise the necessary skills.

There were some excellent answers when candidates had sufficient evidence to support the statements they made and understood the requirements of the question. **(a)** questions require a clear definition; **(b)** questions require identification and description for two examples; **(c)** questions require an explanation **why** and **(d)** questions require some evaluation in order to gain high marks i.e. candidates are expected to argue points for and against and make a judgement. It will help candidates if they learn to recognise the key words at the beginning of each part of a question: **(a) What is meant by the term**...? **(b) Describe two examples/reasons**......**(c) Explain why**.....**(d) How far**...? or **To what extent**...?

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A: The Family

Question 1

(a)   The acceptance of *roles* in the definition enabled candidates to gain marks here. However, one mark was lost if candidates individualised their answer to *role* of each member of the family. *Function* was not clearly understood which caused problems in other parts of the question.

(b)   There was a lack of clarity on *functions*. Some candidates identified the *breadwinner* and *housekeeper* in traditional societies without defining the function i.e. economic support, but some credit was awarded for this. A few candidates outlined *expressive* and *instrumental* functions of the family. This was credited as an acceptable interpretation of the question. Some candidates described functions without identifying them. One mark in this question is for identification and one mark for description/development of each function. There was also some misunderstanding of *traditional societies.* Many of the answers could equally have applied to modern industrial societies.

(c) Some candidates omitted to answer the *changed* part of the answer. The best answers outlined how some functions had been partly taken over by the state, e.g. education, but that there remained important functions for the family, e.g. *primary socialisation.* There was a lack of clarity in the answers of some candidates on the difference between *traditional* and *modern industrial* societies. Some candidates limited their answer to the change in *conjugal roles* and the *position of women.* Other candidates spent too long in describing functions in traditional societies rather than pointing out changes.

(d) This question proved difficult for candidates and most produced lists of different types of families with some explanation. Only the best candidates were able to evaluate i.e. that the nuclear family is still the main type of family and/or many types of families perform the same functions as the nuclear family and are considered as such e.g. co-habitees – most follow the nuclear family structure. Also, there are still some extended families in certain ethnic minority groups. Symmetrical families were also discussed. A few candidates mentioned types such as polygamous families which are inappropriate in modern industrial societies.

Question 2

(a) The concept of *civil partnership* was not generally known. The two main elements required in the definition are *legal* and *same sex.* The term was confused with *marriage, civil marriage* and *co-habitation.*

(b) This question was reasonably well-answered. Some candidates gave explanations rather than clearly identifying reasons such as *marriage of families,* links to *status and business, economic* or *traditional, cultural and religious reasons.*

(c) The main mistake in answering this question was to discuss *marriage* rather than *arranged marriages.* There was some duplication between the answer to this question and the answer to **Question 2(d)**. Answers included the *changing role* and *independence of women*, *decline of the extended family, weakening of wider kin, privatised family, influence of the media,* and idea of *love* marriage. A few candidates were side-tracked into discussing the decline of marriage.

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General Comments

The most popular questions were **Question 1** and **Question 2** and the least popular questions were **Question 7** and **Question 8**. The other questions: **Question 3**, **Question 4**, **Question 5** and **Question 6** had a similar proportion of responses. Therefore, the most popular subjects were Family, Education and Crime, Deviance and Social Control. Only a small minority of candidates answered **Question 8**. Of these most showed a lack of understanding of the terms *new media, popular* and *high culture.* There were some examples of outstanding answers by well-prepared candidates.

In order to gain high marks, candidates need to be aware of differing sociological perspectives and to present both sides of the argument in **(d)** questions. For example in **Question 1(d)** '*To what extent is ethnicity the main factor influencing the structure of the family?*' candidates need to acknowledge the influence of ethnicity on the structure of the family e.g. the fact that certain ethnic minorities favour extended families, but also produce evidence that other factors influence the structure of the family too e.g. *class, education, legal changes i.e. divorce legislation, religion, life expectancy, the availability and legality of contraception.* Candidates did not need to discuss all these alternative answers – two or three well explained would satisfy the mark criteria. They should then make a brief judgement of what they think is the main factor influencing the structure of the family. Candidates who had been given detailed information about the changing nature of society scored high marks. Using previous questions and mark schemes is a good way to practise the necessary skills.

There were some excellent answers when candidates had sufficient evidence to support the statements they made and understood the requirements of the question. **(a)** questions require a clear definition; **(b)** questions require identification and description for two examples; **(c)** questions require an explanation why and **(d)** questions require some evaluation in order to gain high marks, i.e. candidates are expected to argue points for and against and make a judgement. It will help candidates if they learn to recognise the key words at the beginning of each part of a question: **(a)** What is meant by the term...? **(b)** Describe two examples/reasons... **(c)** Explain why... **(d)** How far...? or To what extent...?

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A: The Family

Question 1

(a) Generally well-understood as *having different norms and values to the majority population.* However some candidates only answered the *minority* part (i.e. = a small section of the population) which only gained limited credit.

(b)   *Finance* and *childcare* were the most popular responses as well as the *tradition* or *culture* of the particular society or ethnic minority group.

(c)   Some good answers outlined the problems for women of the *dual burden*, *triple shift* and *dark side* of the family i.e. *domestic violence* and *child abuse*.

(d)   The term *structure* was not understood by some candidates so they were unsure how to answer. There was a tendency to describe ethnic minority families and not answer the question. Most answers did not clearly relate *structure* and family types such as the *extended family*. Candidates did not usually discuss other influences on family structure or absorption into British culture of second and third generation ethnic minority families. However, there were a few outstanding answers in which candidates listed several other factors such as *class, education, legal changes, religion, life expectancy* and *contraception.*

Question 2

(a)   Most candidates understood this term and were able to give a complete definition i.e. *shared norms and values.*

(b)   Candidates had difficulty in identifying reasons such as *criminal subcultures* and *poor role models* to answer this question. The position of *lone parents* was frequently mentioned.

(c)   Candidates tended to give general answers about positive and negative sanctions without specific examples. However, those who did referred to *grounding* and *being sent to room*. Knowledge of methods used in primary socialisation and gender socialisation such as *verbal appellations* and *approval/disapproval* could have been discussed here.

(d)   The term *dysfunctional* was not always correctly understood and *lone parents* were frequently mentioned. Other relevant factors discussed by the best candidates were *poverty*, the *dark side of the family* and *inequalities in power*.

Section B: Education

Question 3

(a)   The term *selective education* was misunderstood by some candidates and interpreted as *choosing different subjects*.

(b)   If candidates had misunderstood *selective* in **(a)** they continued to talk about different subjects in this question – usually differences between girls and boys, upper and lower classes. However, there were good answers identifying benefits such as *working at the same level* and *attaining high standards of achievement*.

(c)   *Free access* and the *same curriculum* were the most popular answers with *scholarships* and *bursaries* – usually connected to state-funded education. Some candidates also mentioned *compensatory education* and the *National Curriculum*.

(d)   Candidates focused on the *division* part of the question and discussed alternative *Marxist/feminist* and *functionalist* views. The best answers also discussed the other factors causing division in society i.e. *gender, ethnicity and class.*

Question 4

(a)   The term *formal education* was well understood as that provided by *institutions such as schools and colleges.*

(b)   The main problem in this question was identifying two sufficiently different ways. The acquisition of *skills* and *knowledge* were the most common responses. Some candidates did not justify the way i.e. *educational qualifications in order to get a better job,* so were not awarded full marks.

(c)   There was some repetition of the answers in **(b)** but the best candidates also discussed influence of the *hidden curriculum* e.g. *obeying authority; getting used to being bored; punctuality*.

(d) This question produced a discussion on the different perspectives of *Marxist* and *functionalist* theories: the *lack of achievement of the working-class* and the *benefits of meritocratic education*. Also, other factors influencing social mobility were referred to, such as *private education*, *class*, *gende*r, *ethnic minority differences.*

Section C: Crime, Deviance and Social Control

Question 5

(a) This term was understood as acting *against the norms and values of society* on a long-term basis.

(b) Most candidates identified two reasons such as the *fear of threats if does not* and *need to do it to join and be accepted.*

(c) *Police stereotyping* and *targeting* were discussed as well as the fact that young people have *more time*, *less commitments*, *more opportunity* and *more likely to be influenced by their peer group.*

(d) As in other questions relating to poor socialisation *lone parents* again featured here, but there was a good understanding of the influence of other factors such as *poverty, police targeting* and *status frustration.*

Question 6

(a) Good understanding of this term i.e. *against norms and values of a particular society.*

(b) Candidates usually had difficulty identifying specific examples to answer this question. They often made up examples referring to people appearing without clothes – some of which were acceptable. Examples could be *laughing at a funeral* or *urinating in a public place.* Some textbooks have two lists of deviant behaviour: deviance which is legal and deviance which is illegal. This is something which can be taught and learnt.

(c) The well-prepared candidates understood this question and produced good answers. As mentioned in the previous comment, candidates can learn specific examples of deviance relative to time, place and situation. This question referred to *time* and *place* so correct responses included *homosexuality, smoking, drinking alcohol and mixed race marriage.*

(d) There was some misunderstanding of *conflict approaches* in this question. Candidates interpreted it as *conflict* – not *Marxist conflict theory.* However, marks were still gained as candidates had good knowledge of other factors such as *socialisation* and *status frustration* and this was credited as well as answers relating to *time, place* and *culture,* as listed in the mark scheme.

Section D: Media

Question 7

(a) Most candidates understood this term and gained some credit for explanation of *expected behaviour*.

(b) Candidates usually outlined the *housewife/breadwinner* roles

(c) Candidates tended to describe what the media do in representing stereotypical images and how they do it rather than why they do it. This is probably because candidates can *identify* stereotypes and may not have considered the 'why'. This is something that should be taught as part of the purpose of *secondary socialisation i.e. to enforce conformity to expected societal norms* and *part of gender socialisation*.

(d) The best candidates identified the different perspectives on the influence of the media such as the hypodermic syringe model and the uses and gratifications model. They also understood that, although the media has influence, individuals are aware of that and there are other often stronger influences on behaviour such as family, religion and the peer group.

Question 8

(a) The term *popular culture* was not understood by the majority of the few candidates who answered this question. This term and the definition of the other terms such as *high* and *low culture* should be clearly differentiated and explained with examples in the teaching of this topic.

(b) This question required a clear understanding of the differences between *popular culture* and *high culture*, i.e. *high culture* is apart from the mainstream culture, usually *aimed at the intellectual elites and of literary/artistic* value whereas *popular culture* is aimed at a *mass audience* with *more short-term products*. There are clear definitions of both these terms in the mark scheme.

(c) Candidates tended to talk about the media in answering this question rather than discussing the way the media had **increased** the spread of *popular culture*. The term *new media* was usually interpreted as the Internet, although the social media networks, mobile phones and other digital devices could have been mentioned.

(d) This question required a good knowledge of *popular culture* and other influences besides the media. Candidates could refer to the way popular culture such as music, fashion and celebrity news is conveyed to a mass audience through all types of media, including examples of the new media. Alternatively arguments are that it has also conveyed examples of *high culture* e.g. art, music and theatre. There are also other influences such as family, class and peer group. The *Marxist view of popular culture* as an instrument of the dominant powerful social class and other media perspectives would also be relevant in answering this question.