

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/11
Socialisation, Identity and Methods of Research

Key features

- High scoring answers typically included good use of applied empirical support.
- Sound knowledge and understanding of positivism and interpretivism apparent in methods questions.
- Some accounts of changes to male identity were overly simplistic.
- Greater observance of the new examination's rubric needed in **Section A**.
- In **Section B** there was a notable deficit in knowledge and understanding of sociological explanations of deviance.
- Evaluation was primarily delivered via juxtaposition.

General comments

The standard of responses overall was reasonably good with some candidates displaying good knowledge and understanding and engagement with sociological issues. In **Section A Questions 2(a)** and **2(b)** candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge base but responses could have been improved by adhering more closely to the wording of each question. Both questions had the common element of requiring candidates to explain two identified points (characteristics and strengths). Many responses gave more than two or did not focus attention explicitly on making an identification and developing an explanation via specific points. The mark scheme makes clear how the points for these questions are accumulated on a points-based approach.

In **Question 3** many candidates demonstrated knowledge of male identity but the application of sociological material to the question was often fairly simplistic/not focused on the question. In **Section B** candidates overwhelmingly opted to answer **Question 5**. Knowledge and understanding of this question was fairly sound, whereas in **Question 4** it was weaker. The marks awarded for the essays in **Section B** are weighted in favour of evaluation but this element was sometimes lacking. It is a good idea to try and integrate evaluation into responses so that it is sustained rather juxtaposed.

Section A

Question 1

Describe two informal social sanctions (4)

This question was generally well answered. The majority of candidates demonstrated an understanding of informal social sanctions and were able to provide reasonable developments. Some good responses pointed out that sanctions can be positive or negative and gave one example of each.

Question 2

(a) Explain two practical factors that can influence choice of research method. (8)

Nearly all responses identified at least one practical factor and most were able to cite two. Time and money were the most popular examples. Strong responses demonstrated understanding by referring to specific sociological methods but only a few drew on relevant research studies to develop explanations. Some responses successfully linked the sociological material back to how practical factors influence choice of method, but many just restated the practical factor. A number of responses identified and explained ethical or theoretical concerns. These answers were not rewarded. Many responses took a scattergun approach and did not explicitly identify and explain

two characteristics as required by the question. This often led to a sound demonstration of general knowledge of the topic area but not always attaining many marks because responses did not address the question directly. For this question a response needs to: identify a characteristic, explain it, select relevant sociological material and then show how the selected material supports the point. A response that does not follow this approach is unlikely to achieve high marks.

(b) Explain two limitations of using an overt approach to participant observation. (6)

Most candidates showed reasonable knowledge of overt participant observation and were able to identify two limitations, but this did not always translate into responses that fully explained two limitations of this method. Popular limitations included the Hawthorne effect, bias and issues of validity or access issues. There was quite a narrow range of empirical research cited, most notably Venkatesh. Similar to 2(a) candidates invariably did not identify two clearly distinguished limitations, instead ranging over a number of points. Many gained two marks per point made by identifying a limitation and explaining it, but a significant number of candidates did not go on to secure the third mark by explaining 'why' an identified point is, in fact, a limitation. There was also a tendency to mix points together and sometimes use the same material to support both points/limitations.

Question 3

(a) 'Male identity is changing.' Explain this view. (10)

Strong responses referred to a range of relevant concepts (e.g. crisis for masculinity, toxic masculinity, and hegemonic masculinity) and were able to cite writers such as Mac an Ghaill and Connell. There were some references to alternative gender and LGBTQ identities. Many responses provided lengthy historical descriptions of gender roles often with insufficient focus on male identities. There was a tendency toward fairly simplistic accounts of the emergence of the 'new man'. To achieve full marks candidates need only provide two clear and developed points. If these points are made with good reference to concepts, theories and evidence that are directed towards the question a response can achieve 10 marks.

(b) 'Male identity is changing.' Using sociological material, give one argument against this view. (6)

Candidates that did well in 3a generally performed well on this question too. A wide range of responses included, global perspectives on traditional masculinities, persistence of hegemonic masculinities in the family and continuing male dominance in the workplace. Some candidates cited feminist accounts on domestic violence, women's 'triple shift' and exaggerated progress regarding the domestic labour debate. Many responses gave more than one argument in their answer. In these cases, only one was rewarded.

Section B

Question 4

Evaluate cultural explanations of deviance. (26)

Only a small number of candidates attempted this question, and responses tended to be weaker. Some candidates who talked about relative notions of deviance between cultures and socialisation generally were able to gain some marks, but there were no responses that engaged with how sociologists explain deviance and non-conformity in the context of socialisation. Evaluation was generally not present in responses.

Question 5

Evaluate the view that quantitative research methods have more strengths than limitations. (26)

Strong responses were able to fully explore the conceptual breadth of the topic citing concepts such as positivism and the scientific method, verstehen, methodological pluralism as well as ethical issues of confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent. The limitation of low response rates and impact on representativeness was well illustrated by many. There was a common error of confusing the terms validity and reliability with the latter cited as a strength of qualitative approaches or the former a strength of quantitative ones. Reliability as repeatability was well explained in stronger responses. A number of

responses usefully outlined the theoretical backdrop to this question (positivist v interpretivist approaches) but sometimes this meant that they lost a direct focus on the question.

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Key features

- High scoring answers typically included good use of applied empirical support.
- Sound knowledge and understanding of positivism and interpretivism in methods questions.
- Deficit in knowledge of the meaning of hybrid identity.
- Greater observance of the new examination's rubric needed in **Section A**.
- In **section B** essay responses could be improved with greater application of supporting material to support points.
- Evaluation was primarily delivered via juxtaposition.

General comments

The standard of responses overall was fairly good. However, in **Section A** candidates notably struggled with **Question 3** in terms of knowledge and understanding. In **Questions 2(a)** and **2(b)** candidates demonstrated a good knowledge base but responses could have been improved by adhering more closely to the wording of each question. Both questions had the common element of requiring candidates to explain two identified points (characteristics and strengths). Many responses gave more than two or did not focus attention explicitly on making an identification and developing an explanation via specific points. The mark scheme makes clear how the points for these questions are accumulated on a points-based approach.

In **Question 3** there was a clear deficit in knowledge of the meaning of hybrid identity. In **Section B** most candidates opted for **Question 4**. Knowledge and understanding were generally sound for both questions although the evaluative content in responses was typically juxtaposed. The marks awarded for the essays in **Section B** are weighted in favour of evaluation, but this element was often lacking in answers.

Section A

Question 1

Describe two sampling techniques (4)

This question was generally well answered. The majority of candidates demonstrated an understanding of a range of sampling techniques. The most popular choices were random, systematic, volunteer and snowball sampling. Those that did not score full marks tended to define random sampling by stating that participants are chosen randomly, so were too vague as there was no notion of everyone in the sampling frame having an equal chance of selection.

Question 2

(a) Explain two ethical issues associated with sociological research. (8)

Nearly all responses identified at least one ethical issue and most were able to cite two. Many correctly referred to relevant research such as Venkatesh or to methods such as participant observation. However, few were able to successfully link the sociological material back to the ethical issue, many just restated this shows the ethical issue. A minority incorrectly referred to practical issues such as cost and time and some discussed reliability and validity. Many responses took a scattergun approach and did not explicitly identify and explain two characteristics as required by the question. This often led to responses demonstrating sound general knowledge of the topic area but not always attaining many marks because they did not address the question

directly. For this question candidates need to: identify a characteristic, explain it, select relevant sociological material and then show how the selected material supports the point. A response that does not follow this approach is unlikely to achieve many marks.

(b) Explain one strength and one limitation of official statistics. (6)

Most candidates displayed reasonable knowledge of official statistics but this did not always translate into responses that fully explained a strength and limitation of this method. Popular strengths included ease of access/existing data saving the researcher time as a strength. Many selected government bias as a limitation. Some answers discussed the problem of collection of official statistics rather than the use of them in research. Most candidates gained two marks per point made by identifying a strength/limitation and explaining it, but a significant number of candidates did not go on to secure the third mark by explaining 'why' an identified point is, in fact, a strength/limitation.

Question 3

(a) 'Ethnic identity is changing, with new hybrid identities emerging.' Explain this view. (10)

The majority of candidates struggled with this question with few offering fully valid responses. Some focused on changing ethnic identities with little or no reference to hybridity. Better answers referred to globalisation, immigration and increased consumerism. Many referred to mixed relationships/mixed race children rather than ethnic hybridity. Some also referred to globalisation and/or migration, but often with little development or application to the question. A number of responses referred to changing gender identities and/or transgender identities. To achieve full marks candidates need only provide two clear and developed points. If these points are made with good reference to concepts, theories and evidence that are directed towards the question a response can achieve 10 marks.

(b) 'Ethnic identity is changing, with new hybrid identities emerging.' Using sociological material, give one argument against this view. (6)

The response to this question very often depended on the response made in 3a. The stronger responses referred to cultural resistance/defence. Many referred to the strength of ethnic identity in traditional societies and/or made links to religion through Muslim identities. Many responses also gave more than one argument in their answer. In these cases, only one was rewarded.

Section B

Question 4

Evaluate the view that human behaviour is shaped entirely by the process of socialisation. (26)

Stronger responses referred to nature vs nurture, and used a range of theoretical approaches to shape their essay. Functionalism, Marxism and interactionism on one side vs sociobiology, social psychology etc. on the other. Mead and Cooley were often used to good effect. Many candidates used gender in their answers referring to Oakley and Parsons. The majority of responses referred to feral children to some degree though they did not always draw out the relevance to the question. Weaker responses provided detailed descriptions of the agents of socialisation with little application to the question or evidence to support the points made. Often, evaluation was delivered through juxtaposition. It is a good idea to work on integrating evaluation into responses so that it is sustained. A number of responses offered sound arguments in support of the view but did not consider arguments against. This approach significantly limited the marks they were able to attain as the essay questions are weighted in favour of evaluation.

Question 5

Evaluate the use of qualitative interview methods in sociological research. (26)

The majority of candidates were able to correctly identify unstructured, group and semi-structured interviews in their response. Stronger responses focused their attention directly on these in shaping their answer but many did not go beyond description. References to validity were lacking. A number of candidates usefully outlined the theoretical backdrop to this question (qualitative v quantitative, interpretivist v positivist approaches) but very often this meant that they lost a direct focus on the question. Many incorrectly referred

to the Hawthorne effect, when discussing social desirability or interviewer effect. It is recommended that methodological terms/concepts are used in responses when asked to evaluate a method or methods.

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Paper 9699/13

Socialisation, Identity and Methods of Research

Key features

- High scoring answers usually included sound use of applied empirical support.
- Sound knowledge and understanding of positivism and interpretivism in methods questions.
- Deficit in knowledge of how family contributes to the process of socialising class identity.
- Greater observance of the new examination's rubric needed in **Section A**.
- In **section B** evaluation was primarily delivered via juxtaposition.

General comments

The standard of responses overall was fairly strong. However, in **Section A** candidates notably struggled with **Question 3** in terms of knowledge and understanding. In **Questions 2(a)** and **2(b)** candidates demonstrated a good knowledge base but responses could have been improved by adhering more closely to the wording of each question. Both questions had the common element of requiring candidates to explain two identified points (characteristics and strengths). Many responses gave more than two or did not focus attention explicitly on making an identification and developing an explanation via specific points. The mark scheme makes clear how the points for these questions are accumulated on a points-based approach.

In **Question 3** there was a clear deficit in knowledge of how the family influences the formation of class identity. In **Section B** more candidates chose **Question 5** than **4**. Knowledge and understanding were generally strong for both questions although the evaluative content in responses was typically juxtaposed and could be improved upon. The marks awarded for the essays in **Section B** are weighted in favour of evaluation, but this element was often lacking in answers. It is a good idea to work on integrating evaluation into responses so that it is sustained.

Section A

Question 1

Describe two social roles associated with young people (4)

There was some misunderstanding as to the meaning of the term social role which undermined a number of responses. Overwhelmingly, candidates selected children as an example but the development on this point tended to be simplistic rather than a sociological description of the social expectations attached to this role. Responses to this question need only be brief though candidates often wrote at some length.

Question 2

(a) Explain two characteristics of the positivist approach to sociological research. (8)

Most candidates showed a reasonable understanding of the positivist view. Good answers made careful links between positivist concepts and methods of research with quantitative methods and scientific method amongst the most popular. Strong responses were able to successfully link sociological material back to the positivist characteristic though many simply recycled the original point. Less effective answers tended to outline positivism but with few or implicit links to sociological research. There was evidence of confusion between the meaning of the key terms: reliability and validity. Many responses took a scattergun approach and did not explicitly identify and explain two characteristics as required by the question. This often led to a sound demonstration of general knowledge of the topic area but not always attaining many marks

because the question was not addressed directly. For this question candidates need to: identify a characteristic, explain it, select relevant sociological material and then show how the selected material supports the point. A response that does not follow this approach is unlikely to achieve many marks.

(b) Explain two strengths of structured interviews as a research method (6)

Most candidates displayed reasonable knowledge of structured interviews, but this did not always translate into responses that fully explained two strengths of this method. Popular strengths included high reliability and less chance of interviewer bias. Most candidates gained two marks per point made by identifying a strength and explaining it, but a number of responses did not go on to secure the third mark by explaining 'why' an identified point is, in fact, a strength.

Question 3

(a) 'The family is the most important influence on social class identity.' Explain this view. (10)

Most responses to this question tended to be weak. The majority of responses focused on the role played by family as an agent of socialisation but did not explicitly link this knowledge to how the family influences the formation of class identity. Sometimes class identity was absent from responses. Many responses included relevant concepts e.g. the possession and use of cultural and social capital but often this knowledge was not successfully applied to the question. Many responses wrote extensively about theoretical approaches to class and socialisation in broad terms. Most answers described the general role played by the family rather than focusing explicitly on class identity. Other responses discussed the impact of education on class identity. To achieve full marks candidates need only provide two clear and developed points. If these points are made with good reference to concepts, theories and evidence that are directed towards the question a response can achieve 10 marks.

(b) 'The family is the most important influence on social class identity.' Using sociological material, give one argument against this view. (6)

As with 3(a) most responses to this question tended to be weak. The majority of responses described an alternative agent of socialisation and asserted its importance. Many responses did not explicitly refer to class identity or family. For this question candidates need to outline an argument against the proposition rather than simply state the role of some or all of the agents of socialisation. To achieve high marks a response needs to be sharply focused on the concept of social class identity and family. Links may be made to other agents but the relevance of the argument to family must be made clear. Many responses also gave more than one argument in their answer. In these cases, only one was rewarded.

Section B

Question 4

Evaluate the view that social identities are changing due to increased choice. (26)

Responses to this question varied quite a lot. There were a number of stronger answers that showed well informed knowledge of the view, which was linked by most candidates to the postmodern approach. Many candidates were able to apply this knowledge to the notion of social identity effectively. This led to some high-level discussions of the extent to which identities such as gender, class, ethnicity and age may now be less subject to conventional norms. In less strong responses evaluation of the proposition in the question was often lacking, assertive or delivered by juxtaposition to other theoretical approaches. Not many responses produced direct evaluation that fully focused on the question. It is a good idea to work on integrating evaluation into responses so that it is sustained. Interactionism was often conflated with postmodernism. A number of responses offered sound arguments in support of the view but did not consider arguments against. This approach significantly limited the marks they were able to attain as the essay questions are weighted in favour of evaluation.

Question 5

Evaluate the view that the strengths of overt participant observation outweigh the limitations. (26)

Stronger responses fully explored the conceptual breadth of the topic often shaping their approach in terms of practical, ethical and theoretical considerations. This was an effective strategy that led to discussion of the range of concepts and issues that relate to the use of overt participation. These essays also made very good use of empirical studies to support their points. The strongest responses evaluated throughout and by careful comparison with covert approaches. Less successful ones focused more attention on covert studies with only tacit links to the question. There was a lack of clarity with some responses in relation to empirical research, with references often made to studies that were not overt. The understanding of validity and reliability was often confused. A number of candidates usefully outlined the theoretical backdrop to this question (qualitative v quantitative, interpretivist v positivist approaches) but very often this meant that they lost a direct focus on the question.

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Paper 9699/14
The Family

Key messages

- Read questions carefully and answer the question set.
- Plan longer answers but keep low-scoring answers relatively short
- Have a sound knowledge of concepts, studies and theory including post modernism.

General comments

There was sufficient detail in most papers, but in a few cases, questions were copied out with lengthy introductions that explained what the question was asking instead of directly answering the question set. Some candidates defined the family at the start every question. These definitions tended to include superfluous historical material, such as in 1(d) detailed accounts of traditional conjugal roles or medieval attitudes to childhood. Sometimes, full-page responses were written for question 1(b) but the essay – where more marks are at stake – was left incomplete.

It is a good idea for candidates to pay careful attention to the exact wording in the question. For example, writing about causes rather than consequences in 1(c), or society rather than family in 1(c) and 1(d) limits the success of answers. Writing out the whole question is not necessary. Many responses did not include assessment in their answers to 1(d) and the essay. Phrases such as *this evidence indicated/this trend demonstrate that/this evidence shows* can help to make it clear that assessment is being made.

In **section B** there was evidence of relevant knowledge and understanding although at times responses did not directly answer the question.

A sound knowledge was demonstrated of key concepts, studies and theories although knowledge about post-modernist views was at times lacking

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Few responses included a clear and accurate definition of this term addressing both 'dependency' and 'ratio', although most did show some understanding of one element or the other. Most responses included an understanding of dependency, although some explained it in terms of individuals within a family being dependent on their relatives, while others described dependency culture. A small number of responses showed a clear understanding of ratio but excluded a definition of dependency. A few candidates did not answer the question. It is advisable to always try and answer as marks are not taken away for wrong answers.
- (b) A few responses showed understanding of New Right arguments about the potential death of the traditional family. Responses often included medical reasons (such as HIV) for a decline in population numbers rather than sociological reasons for a supposed decline in the popularity of families. Most responses included descriptions of the various ways in which families had changed over time, often referring to structural diversity, loss of functions or divorce, though such responses sometimes did not contain an explanation of how these changes might lead to the death of the family rather than its transformation. Some responses that included the loss of function used it twice, describing two different functions, thereby only scoring two marks. It is recommendable to have different reasons when answering such questions. Some answers included the identification

of something, such as divorce as being linked to this supposed decline, but then provided no description of it. A few responses included the claim that primary socialisation happens in schools and not families. An effective approach to answering this question is to start with the identified reason then on the next line describe it. Stronger responses presented sound reasons based on women choosing careers over starting a family, or the rise of individualism.

- (c) Most candidates were able to offer a range of both positive and negative points about how families are affected by the presence of elderly relatives. Most identified the financial and emotional burden that caring for elderly relatives can cause. Many answers did have a sound list of consequences for the family but did not develop their points by referring to statistics, studies or concepts. Some responses included unsupported assertions that an increasing life expectancy has a negative consequence for birth rates. Stronger responses made reference to the work of such key thinkers as Kagan and others used the sandwich (pivot) generation to good effect. Stronger responses included the development of points and the inclusion of sociological details such as concepts, studies or theories. Although many candidates focused on the negative consequences for the family some made reference to grandparents providing free childcare and financial support. More developed responses supported these ideas with concepts or statistics (for example Rake's estimate that 90 per cent of grandparents provide financial support to grandchildren). The impact on family structure was also considered, in terms of the resurgence of extended families, with reference to Brannen and beanpole families or modified extended families and in a few answers the impact of state policy.
- (d) Many responses identified roles within the family. Stronger answers demonstrated the ways in which conjugal roles may or may not have changed and were supported with evidence showing both how symmetry can be seen to have developed as well as feminist critiques of this stance. There were some detailed accounts of the rise of the symmetrical family and Sullivan's 'quiet revolution', countered by Oakley or Delphy and Leonard. Some answers also identified changes that may have occurred in the roles of parents, grandparents and children. Some responses included explanations of how the role of the family has changed rather than exploring roles **within** the family. There were some strong responses on parenting and linking it to the new father, sharing childcare and the expressive role, although sometimes this was not compared to the role of the father in the past. Many responses focussed on the discussion of conjugal roles and when the new father was used it was as a part of a conjugal role and not as part of fatherhood.

Section B

Question 2

The most successful answers to this question gave a clear description of functionalist views of how the family contributes to value consensus mostly through socialisation. This view was then contrasted to a wide variety of other views mainly those of different Marxists and feminists. The most complete answers were supported by a wide variety of evidence, such as Althusser, Zaretsky and Duncombe and Marsden. Sometimes responses lacked specific evaluation of weaknesses in the functionalist view i.e. evidence showing that in some cases value consensus is not achieved by families or that ideological control is a type of value consensus. In the question, value consensus was an important key word but in a number of responses it was not used.

Many responses focussed on the family socialising children into values and behaviour patterns but did not link it to the idea that those values were shared by the majority and order achieved. Some response focused on functionalist, Marxist and feminist perspectives on the family in general terms, with varying levels of sociological support, but did not address the actual question set. Stronger responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the distinction between consensus theories and conflict theories.

A few responses included the point that that Marxism also argues that the family contributes to value consensus, but that it is negative. The strongest responses pointed out that critics of functionalism do agree with functionalists that the family provides consensus but differ with them about the nature of that consensus. Some candidates used post-modernism as a means of providing an evaluation.

Question 3

This was the more popular essay question and a common approach involved identification and description of (1) secularisation (2) cohabitation (3) divorce, (4) female emancipation though many responses did not explain their implications for the significance of marriage. Many candidates were able to explain why the numbers who marry today is far less than it used to be and often to provide sociological evidence to support their arguments. Stronger answers recognised that cohabitation might be a trial or prelude to marriage and that divorce is often followed by re-marriage. Some mentioned cross-cultural examples, such as arranged marriages or the stronger hold of religious values in some communities.

The main limitation in many responses to this question was their absence of sociology. Many responses offered essays based on common knowledge. Many responses did not develop the points made or did not include evaluation. Some responses focused on marriage rates rather than the significance of marriage thus answering why people do or do not marry today.

The strongest responses contained a wide range of sociological knowledge such as Sharpe, Giddens, Oswald, Morgan.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/21 The Family

Key messages

It is a good idea for candidates to:

- familiarise themselves with question structure and ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination.
- focus responses on the family rather than wider society as this is the focus of the unit.
- apply relevant theories, concepts and research to demonstrate sociological knowledge and understanding.
- engage in competing views, look at different sides of the issue in the question and apply relevant sociological material.
- manage their time in the examination i.e. time taken to answer reflects marks available.

General comments

Most candidates provided a response to all questions set. Many responses demonstrated a relatively basic level of sociological knowledge and understanding and tended to rely on common sense/personal experiences.

The more successful responses reflected the requirements of the question and applied relevant sociological material to support their responses. Weaker responses tended to not answer the question set, and/or were descriptive and lacked application of sociological material in providing evidence of analysis and assessment.

In general candidates were able to name some relevant sociological concepts; less successful responses did not apply these to develop the answer, often relying on simply defining/describing them rather than applying them. This was particularly noticeable within essay responses. For **Questions 2a** and **3b**, responses sometimes provided more points than were required.

When writing responses, the marks available need to be taken into account. For example, in **Question 1** a lengthy introduction and conclusion are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions. The majority of candidates answered the questions in order; some perhaps could have benefitted from answering the essay first.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

The majority of candidates answered all questions in **Section A**.

Question 1

More successful responses clearly identified two reasons for the decline in the number of marriages in some societies with relevant explanations. Most responses tended to be based around increase in women's independence/not getting married, and secularisation/people are no longer bound by religious pressure and expectations.

Less successful responses tended to either not provide two reasons or did not provide the relevant explanations. Some responses confused decline in marriages with delaying marriage and reasons for divorcing/rising divorce rates. Occasionally responses provided more than the two responses required whilst there were some that provided unnecessary introductions and conclusions.

It is recommended that Candidates structure their Question 1 responses as two bullet points, avoiding introductions and unnecessarily lengthy answers. Also provide just the two responses required.

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates were able to provide at least one point and relevant explanation with the majority able to provide two as required. In the main candidates appeared to focus responses on how the family provides workers and consumers. However few responses included support with relevant sociological material. It is important to support the original point made/identified by applying relevant concepts, studies etc.

A small number of responses focused on functionalism rather than Marxism, whilst some responses demonstrated confusion between capitalist society and Marxist society. A minority of responses demonstrated no comprehension at all of Marxism.

It is suggested that responses are structured as two separate paragraphs identified as '*The first.... The second....*' for clarity and only provide the two points required.

- (b) There were some candidates that were able with some success, to clearly identify and explain one strength and one limitation of Marxist views on the family. However, many responses lacked a clear explanation of why Marxism has this strength/limitation thus limiting marks awarded. Weaker responses simply described characteristics of Marxism or what Marxism wanted to achieve, whilst incorrect answers included those that discussed functionalism or focused on Marxist views of society rather than the family.

Using a phrase, such as '*A strength of Marxism.../A limitation of Marxism...*' can be a clear way of presenting points.

Occasionally, candidates provided more points than was required.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates were able to provide some explanation of the view that conjugal roles have become equal. More successful responses focused on one or two points and developed these using relevant sociological theories and concepts e.g. '*New Man*' and '*joint conjugal roles*', or discussed how the changing lives of women has led to more equality. However, many responses contained little sociological material to support points made, often relying on simplistic accounts of how women are going to work and men are doing more around the house.

Responses tended to be too brief whilst some showed confusion, as their responses focused on equality in the workplace e.g. women can now be doctors, rather than conjugal roles.

A very small number of responses provided an unnecessary evaluation of the claim; this is not a requirement of the question (*they have the opportunity to do this in 3b*). Furthermore, lengthy introductions and conclusions are unnecessary and the inclusion of these on this question should be discouraged.

- (b) On the whole, most candidates were able to provide a response to this question with the more successful responses tending to cite that women face dual burden/triple shift, therefore there is no equality.

Unsuccessful responses relied on personal view/judgement as to why equality in conjugal roles is wrong, or assertion e.g. that functionalists state segregated conjugal roles are necessary.

A small number of responses provided more than one argument against the claim.

Section B

All candidates provided a response to either **Question 4** or **5** in **Section B**.

Question 4

Significantly more candidates answered this question than **Question 5**. The majority of candidates were able to discuss how external institutions have taken over some functions of the family with varying degrees of detail/development; stronger responses focused on the loss of functions from a functionalist/'fit thesis' perspective, whilst weaker ones adopted a more common sense/general knowledge approach e.g. how social media is more of an important influence in the socialisation process. **Note:** there were some responses that demonstrated confusion between socialisation/socialising (learning norms, values, behaviours) with socialising in the sense of hanging out with friends/going to bars.

Again, stronger responses countered the claims by applying functionalist accounts of how the family retains certain key functions (Parsons/Fletcher), and occasionally applying Marxism in the context of the family still retains the function of providing workers for capitalism/still acts as a unit of consumption. Weaker responses relied on simple counter to the point made for loss, e.g. '*...but the family is still the first place we learn things....*' or '*...the family still are there to care for us....*'.

Occasionally candidate responses were assertive i.e. stating what the family *should do* rather than what it does which negatively affects marks awarded.

Notably, very few responses explicitly engaged in an evaluation of ideas, often relying on juxtaposition of simple or descriptive alternative/opposing viewpoints. Furthermore, there were some responses that incorrectly addressed issues such as family diversity and whether or not the nuclear family was still the dominant family type.

Question 5

Significantly fewer candidates answered this question than **Question 4**, and responses to it were generally weak. There was a tendency for responses to focus too much on how childhood was in medieval times, rather than childhood in contemporary society. What is more, there was very little AO3 application; predominantly juxtaposition of simple points.

Stronger responses made some attempt to engage with the notion that laws e.g. ban of child labour, and families e.g. helicopter parenting are focused more on children, largely resulting in greater protection. Weaker responses relied more on general knowledge than application of sociological material to support, and again assertion through moral judgment e.g. parents *should* protect children.

A key point is to be aware of the importance of assessment within essays, given its weighting in the mark scheme

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Paper 9699/22 The Family

Key messages

It is a good idea for candidates to:

- familiarise themselves with question structure and ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination.
- focus responses on the family rather than wider society as this is the focus of the unit.
- apply relevant theories, concepts and research to demonstrate sociological knowledge and understanding.
- engage in competing views, looking at different sides of the issue in the question and apply relevant sociological material. Less successful responses tend to be descriptive and/or one sided.
- manage their time in the examination i.e. time taken to answer reflects marks available.

General comments

In general, it appears that candidates/teachers have adapted reasonably well to the new question paper format, with most providing a response to all questions set. In general, responses appeared to demonstrate a reasonable grasp of functionalism and Marxism, however wider sociological knowledge and understanding appears rather limited, often demonstrating a more basic level or relying on common sense.

The more successful responses reflected the requirements of the question and applied relevant sociological material to support their answers. Responses that achieved lower marks tended to not answer the question set, and/or tended to be descriptive and lacked application of sociological material in providing evidence of analysis and assessment, often relying more on common sense/general knowledge.

Most candidates were able to name relevant sociological concepts; less successful responses did not apply these to develop their response, often relying on simply defining/describing them rather than applying them in a way that engages the question. This was particularly noticeable within essay responses. For **Questions 2a** and **3b** some responses provided more points than were required.

When writing responses, the marks available need to be taken into account. For example, in **Question 1** a lengthy introduction and conclusion are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions. The majority of candidates answered the questions in order; some perhaps could have benefitted from answering the essay first.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

The majority of candidates answered all questions in **Section A**.

Question 1

More successful responses clearly identified two ways increased life expectancy has impacted the family with relevant explanations. Most responses tended to be based around increase in extended family structures/increased involvement of grandparents, and growth in pivot or sandwich generation/the increased physical or financial burden. Less successful responses tended to either not provide two ways, or did not provide the relevant explanations. Some response demonstrated confusion between increased life expectancy with infant mortality rate (IMR). Occasionally answers provided more than the two responses required whilst there were some that provided unnecessary introductions and/or explanations of why people are now living longer e.g. improvements in health care.

It is advisable to structure **Question 1** responses as two bullet points, avoiding introductions and unnecessarily lengthy answers. Also provide just the two responses required.

Question 2

- (a) All candidates were able to provide at least one point and relevant explanation, with the majority able to provide two. In the main candidates appeared to focus responses on the emergence of the 'New Man' and the impact of changes in the lives of women e.g. increased employment. More successful responses clearly demonstrated why there may be greater gender equality in the family by using relevant sociological material in support. A successful response applies relevant sociological material e.g. concepts, studies etc. and apply these in supporting the original point made.

There were a small number of responses that answered incorrectly by providing responses as to why there was *inequality* in the family, or focused responses on society rather than the family. What is more, there were responses that included explanations as to why gender inequality exists or why there is not equality in the family.

It is a good idea to structure responses as two separate paragraphs identified as '*The first.... The second....*' for clarity and only provide the two points required.

- (b) The majority of candidates were able to identify and explain one strength and one limitation of liberal feminist views on the family. However, many responses did not clearly explain why liberal feminism has this strength/limitation thus limiting marks awarded. Weaker responses simply described characteristics of liberal feminism or characteristics of other feminisms with no clear link to it being a strength/limitation of liberal feminism. Other weaker responses focused on what liberal feminism wanted to achieve or confused liberal feminism with radical feminism.

Phrases, such as '*A strength of liberal feminism/A limitation of liberal feminism...*' often help to make the point being made clear

Question 3

- (a) All candidates were able to provide some explanations of the view that cohabitation is replacing marriage. More successful responses focused on 2 or 3 points and developed these using relevant sociological theories and concepts clearly focused on cohabitation replacing marriage. However, many responses included little sociological material to support the points made. Other slightly less successful responses tended to provide a more list-like approach of multiple reasons with limited development, whilst the weakest responses tended to use a more generalised/common sense reasoning or attempted to use sociological material that lacked any explanation and development.

Furthermore, some responses demonstrated confusion between cohabitation with living as singletons/lone parenting, and even reasons for divorce.

A very small number of responses provided an unnecessary evaluation of the claim; this is not a requirement of the question (*they have the opportunity to do this in 3b*). Furthermore, lengthy introductions and conclusions are unnecessary and an inclusion of these in this question should be discouraged.

- (b) Most candidates were able to provide a response to this question with candidates tending to argue that cohabitation is a pre-cursor to marriage or that in some societies, cultural norms/state legalities prevented cohabitation whilst favouring marriage. Unsuccessful responses focused on why

marriage is important (from a functionalist/New Right view or personal value judgement) rather than why it is not being replaced by cohabitation, whilst some discussed the negative impact of cohabitation.

A small number of candidates provided more than one argument against the claim, using up time that could be useful elsewhere.

Section B

All candidates provided a response to either **Question 4** or **5** in **Section B**.

Question 4

Significantly more candidates answered this question than **Question 5**. The more successful responses were clearly focused on the role or functions of the family from a functionalist perspective, with the majority of candidates able to discuss key functionalist ideas of Murdoch/Parsons (with varying degrees of detail/development), whilst providing opposing viewpoints via Marxism (how the family supports capitalism) and less successfully feminism (tending to miss the point of the family's role in supporting patriarchy). Occasionally a candidate would expand this to include post modernism. However, few responses explicitly engaged in an evaluation of functionalist ideas, often relying on juxtaposition of alternative or opposing viewpoints.

Weaker responses tended to simply present viewpoints or relied on description rather than a clear engagement of material, whilst a few used no sociological material at all. Furthermore, there was an occasional tendency to drift away from the question set, providing responses that discussed the nuclear family as the dominant family structure, or of what constitutes family.

Question 5

Significantly fewer candidates answered this question than **Question 4**, with a small number of responses demonstrating a weak understanding of what social policies are, as some answers focussed on socialisation. Nevertheless, where candidates did understand the question, responses tended to discuss policies allowing women greater freedoms/rights or, how policies have contributed to family diversity or, how easier access to divorce has increased the divorce rate.

Stronger responses made some attempt to engage with feminism and/or New Right ideas, whilst weaker responses tended to show limited knowledge and understanding, often relying on common sense descriptions and assertions rather than sociological material to support.

A key point is to be aware of the importance of assessment within essays, given its weighting in the mark scheme

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/23 The Family

Key messages

It is a good idea for candidates to:

- familiarise themselves with question structure and ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination.
- focus responses on the family rather than wider society as this is the focus of the unit.
- apply relevant theories, concepts and research to demonstrate sociological knowledge and understanding.
- engage in competing views, look at different sides of the issue in the question and apply relevant sociological material.
- manage their time in the examination i.e. time taken to answer reflects marks available.

General comments

In general, it appears that candidates/teachers have adapted reasonably well to the new question paper format, with most candidates providing a response to all questions set. Only occasionally were questions left unanswered. Candidates in general appeared to demonstrate a reasonable grasp of key sociological theoretical perspectives (Marxism, functionalism, feminism/s). However some responses demonstrated limited wider sociological knowledge and understanding, often demonstrating a more basic level or relying on common sense.

The more successful responses reflected the requirements of the question and applied relevant sociological material to support their answers. Responses that achieved lower marks tended to not answer the question set, and/or tended to be descriptive and lacked application of sociological material in providing evidence of analysis and assessment, often relying more on common sense/general knowledge.

Most candidates were able to name relevant sociological concepts; less successful responses did not apply these to develop answers, often relying on simply defining/describing them rather than applying them in a way that engages the question. This was particularly noticeable within essay responses. For **Questions 2a** and **3b**, responses sometimes provided more points than were required.

It is important for candidates to be aware of the marks available when answering a question. For example, in **Question 1** a lengthy introduction and conclusion are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions, such as essay questions. The majority of candidates answered the questions in order; some perhaps could have benefitted from answering the essay first.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

The majority of candidates answered all questions in **Section A**.

Question 1

The majority of candidates were able to clearly identify two ways the state may influence the family with relevant explanations. An example of a successful common response:

China's Child policy/limits the number of children in a family + generous welfare benefits/encourages more lone parents

Some candidates successfully applied loss of functions as an impact e.g. '*...provision of state funded healthcare means families no longer play a healthcare role...*', however other less successful responses simply stated functions of the family e.g. stabilisation of adult personalities/socialisation. Some responses applied Marxism but were not successful in clearly demonstrating the state influence, or confused state to mean status/social class. Less successful responses tended to either not provide two ways, or did not provide the relevant explanations.

It is advisable to structure **Question 1** responses as two bullet points, avoiding introductions and unnecessarily lengthy answers. Also provide just the two responses required.

Question 2

- (a) In the main, candidates were able to provide at least one point and relevant explanation with the majority able to provide two. More successful responses clearly demonstrated how the family supports the interests of men by using relevant sociological material e.g. concept/study, and applied this material in supporting the original point made. However, this was not always the case with responses not gaining the full marks due to only providing point plus explanation.

Stronger answers apply relevant sociological material e.g. concepts, studies etc. and apply these in supporting the original point made.

There was some tendency in the responses for there to be a focus on the oppression of women without linking this back to how it benefits men, which prevented responses from scoring highly. Furthermore, there were a small number of responses that included the incorrect application of functionalism rather than feminism, and responses that claimed the family does not support the interests of men. Both of these were not requirements of this question and therefore not awarded.

It is a good idea to structure responses as two separate paragraphs identified as '*The first.... The second....*' for clarity and only provide the two points required.

- (b) Overall, candidates were able to with some success, clearly identify and explain two limitations of radical feminist views on the family. There were a significant number of candidates who achieved full marks/almost full marks as they demonstrated the three elements required: they identified the limitation; explained why radical feminists have this limitation; explained why this is a limitation. However not all responses were constructed in order like this, often with the limitation being in the final sentence and the E1/E2 identified earlier.

Those candidates that were less successful, was largely due to not explaining why radical feminists had the limitation, thus not awarded for E1. Some weaker responses simply described characteristics of radical feminism or characteristics of other feminisms with no clear link to it being a limitation of radical feminism. Other weak responses focused on what radical feminism wanted to achieve or confused radical feminism with Marxist feminism.

Candidate responses would have benefitted from using the phrase '*The first limitation of radical feminism/The second limitation of radical feminism...*' as sometimes points merged and became difficult to separate.

Note: Candidates could benefit from creating a table of strengths and limitations of the key theoretical stances in relation to the family during their studies, to aid their revision.

Question 3

- (a) On the whole candidates appeared to understand the question, recognising how one's social class can influence the structure of the family. However, responses that did not apply relevant sociological material or provided just one point achieved fewer marks.

Some weaker responses showed confusion, focusing on how class can influence family relationships/activities/family life in general rather than structure, whilst a few simply described Marxist views of the family.

A very small number of responses provided an unnecessary evaluation of the claim; this is not a requirement of the question (*they have the opportunity to do this in 3b*). Furthermore, lengthy introductions and conclusions are unnecessary in this question.

- (b) Most candidates were able to provide a response to this question with candidates tending to argue that ethnicity or culture is more influential. Some responses discussed the growth of individualism or the impact of laws/policies. Only a small number of candidates did not provide a response at all.

Stronger responses supported the claim with the use of relevant sociological material, whilst weaker ones relied more on common sense/general knowledge.

Note: a small number of responses provided more than one argument against the claim, using up time that could be useful elsewhere.

Section B

All candidates provided a response to either **Question 4** or **5** in **Section B**.

Question 4

Significantly fewer candidates answered this question than **Question 5**. The more successful responses were clearly focused on assessing the question, although AO3 tended to be more juxtaposition than explicit evaluation.

Candidate responses tended to provide more material/arguments opposing the point than supporting it, often citing changes in laws, growth in individualism and secularisation. Some candidates used these points for example, as illustrations of increasing opportunities for women which then provided fewer opportunities to counter the claim.

Weaker responses had a tendency to list different reasons for divorcing, without engaging critically with the material. Furthermore, there was an occasional tendency to drift away from the question set, providing responses that discussed reasons for delaying marriage or, not marrying rather than divorcing.

Question 5

Significantly more candidates answered this question than **Question 4**, with most showing a fairly sound grasp of Marxist explanations of the role of the family. Stronger responses developed points of Marxism made, applying concepts identified e.g. *ideological state apparatus*, *ruling class ideology*, *false class consciousness*, whilst weaker responses that identified relevant concepts, simply described them.

Most if not all candidates applied functionalist ideas on the role of the family as the counter to Marxism with varying degrees of success. With some, there was a good demonstration of assessment skills, with candidates explicitly evaluating, whilst others demonstrated more juxtaposition. Where responses were less successful, was with applying feminism, often relying on describing feminist ideas rather than applying them to explain the role of the family.

It is important to stay focused on the question set.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/24 Theory and Methods

Key messages

- Good answers showed sound knowledge and understanding of a range of sociological concepts and theories. Many candidates were able to apply their understanding effectively to the questions
- The most successful essay responses contained evaluative content that was well applied to the question.
- The least successful responses did not apply their knowledge to the concepts required by the question. This was particularly the case in **Question 1(d)** and occasionally in **Question 1(c)**.

General comments

Question 1(a) tested candidates' knowledge of the term 'social problems'. Many were able to define the term successfully but quite a few repeated the term again or stated an example without an attempt at definition. In **Question 1(b)** there was a tendency to either repeat the same point again or make methodological statements unrelated to 'funding'. **Question 1(c)** required candidates to explain how a sociologist's 'values' may influence the research process. Some candidates were able to do this effectively by examining a range of ways but other responses examined a variety of general factors affecting the research process without explicit links to the sociologist's 'values'. **Question 1(d)** was the most problematic for many candidates. There was a general lack of knowledge surrounding the debate of whether 'sociological research should be to improve society'? Many scripts showed only a partial understanding or were based only on assertion. Stronger answers were able to apply some theoretical knowledge backed up with examples. In **Section B** the question focusing on the merits of quantitative data was far more popular as an option than the question requiring a debate surrounding the nature of sociology and a comparison with the natural sciences. In **Question 2** many responses showed good knowledge and understanding of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies although some tended to be overly descriptive and lacking in evaluation. **Question 3** did elicit some very good responses. Despite it being answered by fewer candidates some of those that did attempt it were able to effectively use theory and concepts to answer the question well.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Many responses were able to define the term 'social problems' usually developed by stating an appropriate example. However, some attempts either merely repeated the concept by saying that 'social problems' were 'problems' without further meaningful development or just stated an example without any development. This was not enough to gain any credit.
- (b) This question required candidates to show how research might be affected by funding. Those who did this successfully were able to identify two separate ways this might happen and develop them. A feature in many responses was that they repeated the same point twice. This was usually a suggestion linked to the idea that the 'amount of funding available' would influence the research in some way. This could only gain half the marks available. A few candidates did not link their answers to funding at all.
- (c) There were some strong answers to this question which described the influence of personal values on choice of topic and method as well as on the research process such as the interpretation of data, the effects on participants or the imposition of researcher values. Some answers merely

asserted that 'values result in bias' without any meaningful explanation. There was also a tendency for weaker responses drifting into a discussion of whether or not sociology was value free with no links to the question.

- (d) The strongest responses to this question were able to accurately use theoretical stances such as Feminism, Marxism, Positivism etc. in the debate often illustrated with appropriate examples. The strongest answers were able to discuss the role of sociology in raising awareness and understanding of problems as opposed to it being a collection of objective findings. These answers were clearly focused on the requirements of the question. However, many responses contained lengthy descriptions of how sociological research is linked to social policy without addressing whether it should 'improve society'. The weakest answers made references to improving socialisation and family life.

Section B

Question 2

Most answers showed a good understanding of the differences between quantitative and qualitative methodologies with a varying degree of development by way of relevant examples. Some answers failed to go beyond description but others were able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. The strongest responses went beyond a compare-and-contrast approach and explicitly discussed how 'useful' each approach was using both practical and theoretical evidence by way of evaluation. Less effective answers tended to drift into lengthy lists of research methods with little or no comparison or evidence of evaluation.

Question 3

Some very good responses to this question showed not only a very good understanding of the positivist/interpretivist debate but also questioned the nature of science itself, made reference to realist/postmodernist thinking etc. in the debate. Other strong answers engaged with the positivist/interpretivist views on the nature of sociological research with varying degrees of success. Some weak responses clearly lacked knowledge or contained several inaccurate assertions.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/31
Education

Key messages

- Candidates should ensure they read the questions carefully
- Intentionally demonstrate assessment objectives: know and use relevant sociological materials; as you refer to them explain their relevance to the question asked; weigh up their strength in supporting or opposing the view stated in the question.
- Get used to thinking sociologically as you prepare for the examination. What do you think about the key questions raised about education on your course and why? Continue thinking sociologically in the examination itself.

General comments

Candidates with a thorough knowledge of the syllabus and who allocated their time wisely scored highly. There was a generally good understanding of the key concepts. Potential marks for the higher scoring questions could be lost by either giving too much detail in proportion to the marks available for **Question 1** and **Question 2** or including knowledge not directly related to the question, such as problems of material deprivation, for **Question 2** or **Question 3**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This question was generally well answered. Most candidates were able to offer similarities between school and workplace, the most common being that both have hierarchies, and both require punctuality. Stronger candidates located their examples within Bowles and Gintis's correspondence theory and were able to cite more sophisticated similarities e.g. fragmentation and external rewards. Weaker responses tended to make unsubstantiated assertions such as both have meritocracy or rules.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to show that working-class candidates are more likely to be negatively labelled. Reasons given were often related to cultural deprivation or language use. Some cited relevant sociological evidence such as Becker's 'ideal candidate'. A significant number of responses cited a self-fulfilling prophecy as a consequence. There were a few who cited anti-school subcultures. A significant number did not refer to consequences at all.

Question 3

Most candidates referred to Marxist views that suggest imposition of ruling-class values. Some also drew upon gender or ethnicity to highlight the patriarchal nature of schooling or ethnocentrism. A few candidates misunderstood the concept of value consensus or missed the focus of the question and outlined the functionalist view that education does reinforce value consensus.

Question 4

Where the view was supported, candidates tended to show how IQ related test results promote those labelled intelligent. The best answers used functionalist arguments around meritocracy and role allocation

alongside equal opportunity and compensatory educational practices. Few candidates were able to fully address this question, often overlooking the arguments that may have been in favour of the view that intelligence is the main factor in influencing achievement. Arguments against the view were generally more thorough, usually including reference to cultural and material deprivation, cultural capital, and labelling in relation to class, gender, and ethnicity. Stronger candidates also included arguments about the social construction of intelligence in educational contexts.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/32
Education

Key messages

- Candidate should ensure they read the questions carefully.
- Intentionally demonstrate assessment objectives: know and use relevant sociological materials; as you refer to them explain their relevance to the question asked; weigh up their strength in supporting or opposing the view stated in the question.
- Get used to thinking sociologically as you prepare for the examination. What do you think about the key questions raised about education on your course and why? Continue thinking sociologically in the examination itself.

General comments

Candidates with a thorough knowledge of the syllabus and who allocated their time wisely scored highly. There was a generally good understanding of the key concepts. However, to score well, each word in the questions needed to be noted carefully, particularly 'wider social changes' in **Question 2** and 'curriculum' in **Question 3**. Potential marks for the higher scoring questions could also be lost by either giving too much detail in proportion to the marks available for **Question 1** and **Question 2** or including knowledge not directly related to the question, such as problems of material deprivation, for **Question 3** or **Question 4**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates could identify at least one example of how anti-school subcultures can affect educational attainment and were able to explain this adequately to get the additional mark. Common responses referred to disrupting lessons, being excluded and teacher labelling. A significant number of candidates referred to subcultures having alternative goals, most commonly by citing Willis' 'lads'. Other made reference to minority ethnic group subcultural values resulting from perceived racism in the education system. Less effective responses gave descriptive accounts of subcultural groups without linking their values to the effect they had on achievement.

Question 2

This question produced a very wide range of answers, with most candidates able to identify two ways in which girls' educational performance may be influenced by wider social changes. Common successful responses included changes in female aspirations, employment opportunities and family structure. While most candidates could accurately explain their identified ways, many of them were less successful in applying sociological material accurately to gain maximum marks. A small minority of candidates simply stated a way without referring to how this linked to school. A significant number of candidates did not make rewardable points as they failed to link internal factors, for example, the feminisation of education, to any change that occurred outside of school.

Question 3

Most candidates were able to identify two arguments against the claim that the school curriculum gives an equal chance to fulfil their educational potential. The most common response was language codes, followed by references to the ethnocentric or gendered curriculum. However, this question did create problems for

many candidates. Less effective responses lacked focus on the curriculum and drifted into a discussion of inequality in the education system in general. A significant number of candidates made points that failed to score as they did not refer to the curriculum at all, but only to inequality in general.

Question 4

Most candidates were able to demonstrate at least a reasonable range of knowledge on the view that education is an instrument of ideological control. Many candidates clearly had a good amount of conceptual knowledge and knew a significant number of studies, particularly the work of Althusser, Bowles and Gintis, Willis and Bourdieu. There were also some useful references to the feminist perspective and the work of Young on the social construction of knowledge. The very best answers contained specific evaluation of the question, for example, citing Willis to suggest that attempts at ideological control might be limited in practice, or even pointing out that the existence of this syllabus is challenging it. The main weakness in many responses was that material was not explicitly applied to the question of ideological control, but rather took the form of a juxtaposition of the Marxist and functionalist views on the role of education in general. A common error was that candidates drifted into a discussion of differential achievement, particularly inequalities in social class, without connecting this to ideological control.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/33
Education

Key messages

- Read the questions carefully, and answer what the question is asking.
- Intentionally demonstrate assessment objectives: know and use relevant sociological materials; as you refer to them explain their relevance to the question asked; weigh up their strength in supporting or opposing the view stated in the question.
- Get used to thinking sociologically as you prepare for the examination. What do you think about the key questions raised about education on your course and why? Continue thinking sociologically in the examination itself.

General comments

Responses that demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the syllabus scored highly. There was a generally good understanding of the key concepts. Potential marks for the higher scoring questions were lost at times by either too much detail in proportion to the marks available. When preparing to write a question, it is important to take the marks that are available into account in order to construct a response that is of an appropriate length. It is also important to support the arguments given in a response with up-to-date and relevant sociological material.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates were able to offer two policies. Credit was only given for explanation if this clearly linked the policy to a disadvantaged group – which could be by class, gender, ethnicity, or disability. Some good answers explained how girls were once a disadvantaged group in terms of achievement in STEM subjects and cited relevant policies designed to address this. There were many interesting global examples of compensatory education.

Question 2

Most candidates cited dated but relevant examples regarding parental attitudes or working-class values (Douglas, Sugarman, Hyman). There were very detailed accounts of Bernstein on language codes. Given the mark allocation many candidates spent too long writing lengthy accounts, this time may have been better spent on the remaining questions. Some strong responses referred to cultural capital which was still rewarded mainly in relation to school choice and the impact of marketisation. However, a general Marxist perspective or details of material deprivation did not gain marks.

Question 3

There was a widespread awareness of both unfairness in grouping according to class/ethnicity/gender based on stereotyped judgements of ability and of the negative consequences of streaming in terms of the self-fulfilling prophecy or subcultures. There were some weaker answers on general educational inequalities. Some stronger answers highlighted benefits of mixed ability teaching which could be missed. Some also mentioned bias in testing and how differentiated curricula deny lower streams access to higher order knowledge.

Question 4

Generally well-focused answers. Some used mostly dated material on female disadvantage, but this could gain some credit as it could still be relevant in many parts of the world. Those that used more up-to-date material on changing female success or male underachievement gained credit for this, but often did not use it to full advantage in evaluating whether this meant gender was more or less a factor in attainment. There was usually at least a reasonable juxtaposition of class and ethnicity and possibly innate ability as factors, but it was rarer to explore the relationship between these and gender or to have a clear evaluative conclusion. A few strong candidates introduced the concept of intersectionality whilst others concluded that gender was of relatively minor significance when compared to class.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/34 Social Inequality and Opportunity

Key messages

- Some outstanding answers demonstrating detailed sociological insight and sound analysis.
- Good answers to the **(b)** questions combined detailed sociological understanding with sustained assessment.
- A few answers lacked references to relevant sociological evidence.
- Further marks could be gained by using sociological concepts and theories to support key arguments.
- Some low scoring answers relied on assertion and general knowledge rather than relevant sociological material.

General comments

There were some very good answers again this series, combining detailed sociological knowledge with thoughtful and well-informed analysis and assessment. The best answers were tightly constructed in a way that demonstrated clarity of thought and careful attention to the wording of the question. Some answers to the **(a)** questions included evaluation alongside explanation. Only explanation is required in answering these questions and therefore candidates misuse their time in the examination by offering evaluative responses to the **(a)** questions. Some lower scoring responses to the **(b)** questions were too descriptive, relying on a summary of relevant knowledge without providing any contrasting arguments or critical analysis. More practice in formulating evaluative answers for the **(b)** questions would be helpful for these candidates. A small minority of candidates found the exam difficult, these candidates were only able to use assertion and general knowledge to answer the questions, rather than drawing on relevant sociological materials and argumentation. Marks for this type of answer are inevitably at the lower end of the range.

Most candidates answered three questions in the time available and there were no rubric errors. Some candidates answered more than three questions, though they appeared to derive no advantage from this strategy in terms of marks achieved. The questions on Education proved most popular, with those on Global Development less frequently attempted.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a)** Good answers demonstrated a sound understanding of the hidden curriculum and its impact on educational performance. High scoring responses included several examples of how the educational performance of girls specifically may be influenced by the hidden curriculum. There were some low scoring answers that discussed the impact of the hidden curriculum in general, with little or no reference to female candidates. A few candidates demonstrated only a limited understanding of what is meant by the hidden curriculum.
- (b)** There were some high scoring answers that provided a sustained assessment of the view that the education system works against the interests of working-class candidates. Good responses included evidence about how factors linked to material and cultural deprivation may impact on educational performance. High quality responses also considered other factors affecting the performance of working-class candidates, such as peer group pressure and the attitudes and values of teachers. There were some low scoring answers that discussed educational performance in a general way, without reference to the factors affecting working-class candidates.

Question 2

- (a) Good answers demonstrated a sound understanding of how teachers may influence educational attainment. High scoring responses included references to relevant concepts such as labelling, self-fulfilling prophecy, language codes, streaming, and cultural capital. There were some low scoring answers that were limited to a few general points about the influences on educational attainment.
- (b) High scoring answers considered a range of evidence and arguments about whether gender is more important than ethnicity in determining levels of educational achievement. Answers that reached the top mark band made effective use of concepts such as gender stereotyping, the gendered curriculum, feminisation of education, crisis of masculinity, habitus, and ethnocentrism. Lower scoring answers lacked references to relevant concepts and theories and relied on assertion and generalisation, rather than appropriate links to sociological arguments and evidence.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) Answers that merited high marks offered a well-developed discussion of several ways in which differences in levels of development can be measured. Good responses often referred to both economic and social/cultural measures of development. There were some low scoring responses that covered only one or two poorly developed points about the nature of development in general.
- (b) Good answers identified a range of points for and against the view that overpopulation is the main cause of poverty in developing countries. High scoring responses included relevant references to different sociological perspectives on development, including Marxist, functionalist, and environmentalist. Lower scoring answers often relied on a simple line of argument rather than considering contrasting theories and arguments.

Question 4

- (a) There were a few good answers that made several well-developed points about how development may be affected by colonialism. High scoring answers often drew relevant comparisons between Marxist and functionalist perspectives. Links between colonialism and neo-colonialism were explored to good effect in some answers. Lower scoring responses lacked detail and were confined to outlining just one or two relevant points. There were a few answers that demonstrated little or no understanding of what is meant by colonialism.
- (b) Good answers offered a sustained assessment of whether all societies are moving towards the same development stage. High scoring responses often discussed different evolutionary models, including those associated with Comte, Marx, early functionalist anthropologists, and Rostow's modernisation theory. Some candidates also made good use of examples to consider whether development is progressing in the same ways between different societies. There were a few low scoring answers that showed little understanding of the sociological debates about whether development follows a linear path.

Section C

Question 5

- (a) Good answers demonstrated a sound understanding of the relationships between ownership and control of the media as described in Marxist analysis. High scoring responses often included references to relevant studies of the media and to concepts such as gatekeeping, media conglomerates, agenda setting, hierarchy of control, and interlocking elites. Some responses showed only a limited or inaccurate understanding of the Marxist view of the supposedly close links between ownership and control of the media.
- (b) High scoring answers provided a sustained analysis of the view that the media control how information is received and interpreted by audiences. Good responses often discussed different models of media effects, contrasting ideas of direct control (the hypodermic syringe model) with the view that media influence is indirect at best (uses and gratifications and two-step flow models, for

example). Some candidates made good use of the distinction between the traditional media and the new media in developing their analysis. Lower in the mark range, little use was made of relevant concepts and theories.

Question 6

- (a) Higher in the mark range, answers identified several factors that influence how news is reported. Some well-formed answers included references to relevant concepts such as news values, sensationalism, agenda setting, stereotyping, and media bias. Low scoring answers lacked references to relevant sociological material and relied instead on personal opinions about how the news is reported.
- (b) High quality answers provided a sustained assessment of the view that the new media has brought about a transfer of power from large organisations to individual citizens. Good responses often included examples to illustrate how the new media has been used by citizens in challenging existing power structures in society. Some candidates also made good use of theories of the media (Marxist, pluralist, postmodernist) to develop their assessment. There were a few low scoring answers that discussed the power of the media in general without reference to the new media specifically.

Section D

Question 7

- (a) Good answers offered several well-developed points about why the growth of New Religious Movements can be seen as evidence of secularisation. High scoring responses often considered links between the breakdown of established religious authority and the emergence of NRMs. Concepts such as collective conscience, spiritual shopping, religious disenchantment, and desacralisation were widely used in high scoring responses. There were some low scoring answers that offered a few points about the role of NRMs without making relevant links to secularisation.
- (b) Answers that reached the top of the mark range offered a detailed assessment of the claim that religious organisations are increasingly seeking to bring about social change. Evidence from studies was often used to consider links between religious organisations and efforts to change society. Some high quality answers distinguished between the situation in specific religions, noting that some may be more aligned with social reform movements than others. Answers that merited the middle of the mark range often relied on a largely uncritical account of functionalist and Marxist views about the role of religion. There were a few low scoring answers that made assertions about the role of religion today without reference to the subject of social change.

Question 8

- (a) High scoring answers provided a well-developed account of several ways in which cults differ from other types of religious organisation. Contrasts were often drawn between cults and sects and/or churches, in particular. Lower scoring answers were often confined to making just one or two relevant points in an undeveloped way.
- (b) Most candidates recognised that the question provided an opportunity to examine themes from the secularisation thesis. Good answers identified a number of arguments suggesting that religion has lost influence in many societies in recent years. The strength of these arguments was then assessed using a mix of research evidence and theoretical analysis. The best answers usually distinguished between specific religions and recognised that the extent to which desacralisation has occurred varies from country to country and between religions. Answers in the middle of the mark range tended to endorse the view expressed in the question, with little critical analysis or reflection on other possible perspectives. There were a few low scoring answers that demonstrated little knowledge of the debates surrounding the secularisation thesis.

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Key messages

- High scoring answers made good use of relevant sociological material.
- Some answers lacked references to sociological studies and theories.
- There were some good answers that considered a range of arguments for and against the view stated in the question.
- Higher marks could be achieved by making more use of evidence and examples.
- Some low scoring responses lacked focus on the question.
- Use of assertion rather than sociological arguments was a feature of many low scoring answers.

General comments

There were some high quality answers that demonstrated a good understanding of relevant sociological concepts, theory, and evidence. The best responses also included a sustained analysis and assessment of the view stated in the question. Answers in the middle of the mark range often made good points in support of the view stated in the question, but omitted to consider possible counter arguments and contrary evidence. To gain high marks for AO3, it is essential to challenge and test the view expressed in the question as part of the process of reaching an overall conclusion about the merit of the stated view. There were some low scoring answers that lacked detail, often being confined to just one or two short paragraphs. Answers at this level were also characterised by a reliance on assertion rather than references to relevant sociological arguments and evidence.

Examples of rubric error were rare. Some candidates answered more than the two questions required, with the extra answers rarely contributing to an improvement in the overall mark. Failure to reference answers with the appropriate question number occurred in the case of a few scripts. Candidates may disadvantage themselves by omitting the question number or writing the number illegibly, as it makes it difficult for the examiner to be certain which question is being attempted.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

High scoring answers demonstrated a good understanding of different views about the cultural impact of globalisation. There were some good responses that critically assessed the Marxist view that the spread of global capitalism is leading to a Westernisation of global culture. Concepts such as globalisation, cultural hybridity, and cultural defence featured in the assessment. Some candidates made good use of references to particular cultural forms, such as popular music and cuisine, to support or challenge the view stated in the question. The spread of global media was another theme that was explored in higher scoring answers. Lower scoring responses were often limited to a summary of just one view about the cultural impact of globalisation. A few candidates discussed the economic consequences of globalisation rather than the cultural impact.

Question 2

Most candidates recognised that the question invited a discussion of who benefits from global migration. Good answers identified several ways in which migration may serve the interests of the wealthy elite in developed countries. This was complemented by an assessment of whether any other groups benefit from global migration. The analysis in most answers focused on whether migrants from developing countries derive any advantages from working in developed countries. High scoring responses recognised the complexities in the debate and avoided simplistic, one-dimensional conclusions favouring one view or another. There were a lot of answers in the middle of the mark range that supported the view stated in the question with only a limited review of counter arguments and contrary evidence. Lower scoring answers often lacked references to relevant sociological theory and concepts, relying instead on a range of assertions about the impact of global migration for different groups.

Section B

Question 3

This was a popular question that was well answered overall. High scoring responses demonstrated a sound understanding of the pluralist view that different groups in society influence the content of the media. This was complemented by a sustained assessment of the strengths and limitations of the pluralist view. Some candidates made good use of examples to illustrate how media content may be influenced by different groups, such as audiences, journalists, government officials, and owners. Evidence from studies was also used to show that there are limitations in how far the media is controlled by any one group. Marxist theory was widely used in countering the pluralist view and some answers also included feminist ideas about the putative male dominance of media content. Lower scoring responses often lacked a discussion of the limitations of the pluralist view. There were also a few answers that discussed the influence that the media has on individuals without making appropriate links to the idea of the media serving the interests of different groups.

Question 4

Good answers provided a sustained discussion of views about how far the media is able to influence human behaviour. High scoring responses included a review of relevant evidence from studies of media influence, such as those by Bandura. Some candidates made good use of the distinction between direct and indirect media influence. Different models of media effects also featured in some higher scoring answers. Answers in the middle of the mark range often provided support for the view stated in the question without considering possible counter arguments and evidence. Better responses provided a sustained analysis of a range of points both for and against the view that there is no clear evidence of the media influencing human behaviour. Lower scoring answers often omitted to consider evidence from studies of media influence and some also demonstrated little understanding of different models of media effects.

Section C

Question 5

There were relatively few answers to this question. Good responses considered a range of factors that influence levels of participation in religious practice, including social class. This was complemented by a sustained assessment of the relative importance of social class. High scoring answers included supporting evidence about the factors influencing religious participation. Answers in the middle of the mark range often lacked references to evidence and relied instead on an account of different theories about which groups in society are most likely to engage in religious practices. Some candidates argued convincingly that gender and age are more important than social class in determining patterns of religious participation among the population. There were some lower scoring answers that uncritically accepted the view that social class is the main factor influencing religious participation.

Question 6

Good answers to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of feminist views that religion is a patriarchal institution that contributes to gender inequality. High scoring responses also included a sustained assessment of the feminist viewpoint. Links between religion and patriarchy were explored through references to scripture, religious ceremonies, and the role of females within religious organisations. Differences between religions were explored in some higher scoring answers, with candidates often drawing the conclusion that some religions are more patriarchal than others. There were a lot of answers in the middle of the mark range that used relevant sociological material to support the view stated in the question, without considering possible counter arguments and contrary evidence. Low scoring answers often lacked reference to feminist theories and relied on assertion to deliver the assessment.

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Key messages

- There were some high-quality responses that combined good understanding with strong analytical skills.
- Good answers considered arguments against the view expressed in the question.
- High scoring answers made sustained use of relevant concepts and theories.
- Higher marks could be achieved by making more use of evidence and examples.
- Some low scoring responses relied on assertion and general knowledge.
- References to appropriate sociological theory was lacking in some of the answers.

General comments

The standard of the scripts overall was good, with most candidates able to demonstrate skills across all three assessment objectives. High scoring answers examined a range of arguments for and against the view expressed in the question. The analysis was often well supported with references to relevant studies, concepts, theories, and evidence. Some candidates overlooked the requirement to build an assessment by considering alternative views to the one stated in the question. Instead, they supported the stated view without examining its possible limitations or weaknesses. To gain high marks for AO3, it is essential to challenge and test the view expressed in the question as part of the process of reaching an overall conclusion about the merit of the stated view. There continues to be a few candidates who rely on assertion and general knowledge as a basis for their answers. The marks awarded to responses of this kind that lack references to appropriate sociological material are inevitably low. It is important therefore that candidates have the opportunity to study the recommended textbooks and are encouraged to use references to sociological sources in their answers.

Examples of rubric error were rare. Some candidates answered more than the two questions required, with the extra answers rarely contributing to an improvement in the overall mark. Failure to reference answers with the appropriate question number occurred in the case of a few scripts. Candidates may disadvantage themselves by omitting the question number or writing the number illegibly, as it makes it difficult for the examiner to be certain which question is being attempted.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

High scoring answers to this question demonstrated a good understanding of different types of global crime, both financial and non-financial. Explanations for the origins of each type of global crime were explored and a well-reasoned conclusion was reached about whether the spread of global capitalism is the main underlying cause of global crime. Some candidates made good use of the Marxist perspective to support the view that the spread of global capitalism is the main factor behind the rise in global crime. Weaknesses in the Marxist argument were also identified in answers that were strongly evaluative. Lower scoring answers were often limited to a discussion of just one or two types of global crime and there was little focus on the underlying causes of these forms of criminality. A few candidates discussed the causes of crime in general, with little or no reference to global crime specifically.

Question 2

Good answers to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of what is meant by globalisation. High scoring responses identified a number of consequences of globalisation for developing societies and provided a sustained assessment of whether the stated consequences are entirely negative. Some candidates made good use of different theories of development to assess the view expressed in the question. Marxist theories often featured in answers that attempted to support the view that the consequences of globalisation for developing societies are entirely negative. Modernisation theory was often deployed in arguing that the consequences of globalisation are not necessarily disadvantageous for developing societies. Candidates also gained credit for citing examples of developing societies that appear to have benefitted from globalisation. Lower scoring answers often lacked references to relevant sociological theory and concepts, relying instead on a range of assertions about the nature of globalisation and its impact on different societies.

Section B

Question 3

Good answers provided a sustained discussion of the postmodernist view that the media plays a central role in people's lives today. Some high scoring responses included a detailed account of relevant postmodernist concepts and arguments about the influence of the media today. This was complemented by a sustained assessment of the claim that the media plays a central role in people's lives today. There were also some answers in the middle of the mark range that discussed the influence of the media today without considering postmodernist ideas in detail. Good evaluative responses often highlighted weaknesses in the idea that the media has a direct influence on behaviour, drawing on logical arguments and evidence from relevant studies. Some candidates also used the two-step flow and uses and gratification models of media effects to argue that audiences are active rather than passive consumers of the media, and therefore less influenced by the media than postmodernist theory would assume. Lower scoring answers often agreed with the view that the media plays a central role in people's lives today, without providing supporting evidence and analysis to any extent.

Question 4

This was a popular question that was well answered overall. High scoring responses demonstrated a sound understanding of the Marxist view that the media reflects the interests of the ruling class. This was complemented by a sustained assessment of the strengths and limitations of the Marxist view. Some candidates made good use of examples to illustrate how the media may be used to support ruling class interests. Evidence from studies was also used to show that there are limitations in how far the media is controlled by the ruling class. Pluralist theory was widely used in countering the Marxist view and some answers mentioned the growth of the new media as a development that limits the scope of the ruling class to dominate media content. Lower scoring responses omitted to explain how ruling class interests may be supported by the media and they often lacked an analysis of limitations in the Marxist view. There were also a few answers that discussed the influence that the media has on individuals without making appropriate links to the idea of the media serving ruling class interests.

Section C

Question 5

There were some good answers to this question that explored the contrast between sociological theories that view religion as a conservative force opposing social change, and theories that recognise some role for religion in challenging the status quo and bringing about social change. High scoring responses demonstrated a clear understanding of a range of arguments and evidence supporting the idea that religion is an obstacle to social change. This was complemented by a sustained assessment of the view expressed in the question. Weber's Protestant Ethic thesis was often used to suggest that religious influences can play a part in bringing about social change. Examples such as liberation theology was also used to counter functionalist and Marxist views about the supposedly conservative influence of religion. Some candidates also used material from feminist studies to debate the role of religion in obstructing/supporting efforts to bring about gender equality. There were some lower scoring answers that uncritically accepted the view that religion is an obstacle to social change.

Question 6

Good answers to this question offered several well-developed points about why the growth of New Religious Movements (NRMs) might be seen as evidence against the secularisation thesis. High scoring responses also included a critical analysis of how far the growth of NRMs can be seen as representing a religious revival. Concepts such as collective conscience, spiritual shopping, religious disenchantment, and desacralisation were widely used in well-constructed answers. There were a lot of answers in the middle of the mark range that discussed arguments for and against the secularisation thesis with only a few basic references to NRMs. A sustained focus on the significance of NRMs for the question was required to gain higher marks. Low scoring answers often lacked reference to relevant sociological material and relied on assertion to argue a case for or against the claims of the secularisation theorists.

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Key messages

- There were some high-quality answers that combined good understanding with skilled analysis and assessment.
- Good answers considered arguments for and against the view expressed in the question.
- High scoring answers made sustained use of relevant concepts and theories.
- Higher marks could be achieved by making more use of evidence and examples.
- Some answers lacked references to sociological studies and research evidence.
- Some low-scoring responses relied on assertion rather than sociological arguments.

General comments

The standard of the scripts overall was good, with most candidates demonstrating a clear understanding of the issues raised by the questions. High scoring answers combined detailed knowledge of relevant sociological material with skillful analysis and assessment of the case for and against the view stated in the question. Answers in the middle of the mark range often made good points in support of the view stated in the question, but omitted to consider possible counter arguments and contrary evidence. To gain high marks for AO3, it is essential to challenge and test the view expressed in the question as part of the process of reaching an overall conclusion about the merit of the stated view. There continues to be a few candidates who rely on assertion and general knowledge as a basis for their answers. Answers that lack appropriate sociological material inevitably achieve only low marks. It is important therefore that candidates have the opportunity to study the recommended textbooks and are encouraged to use references to sociological sources in their answers.

Examples of rubric error were rare. Some candidates answered more than the two questions required, with the extra answers rarely contributing to an improvement in the overall mark. Failure to reference answers with the appropriate question number occurred in the case of a few scripts. Candidates may disadvantage themselves by omitting the question number or writing the number illegibly, as it makes it difficult for the examiner to be certain which question is being attempted.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

High scoring answers demonstrated a good understanding of contrasting views about how different cultures are affected by globalisation. Good responses identified several ways in which globalisation may be leading to increased cultural diversity. Alternative views about the impact of globalisation were discussed as part of the assessment. The idea that globalisation may be leading to cultural convergence was used in many answers to challenge the view stated in the question. Some candidates made good use of references to particular cultural forms, such as films and dance styles, to support their analysis. The spread of western consumerism was another theme that explored in higher scoring answers. Lower scoring responses lacked references to relevant sociological theories and often relied on assertion rather than reasoned argument.

Question 2

Good answers to this question demonstrated a detailed understanding of dependency theory as an explanation for global inequality. High scoring responses also provided a sustained assessment of the strengths and limitations of dependency theory. The assessment was often delivered through drawing contrast between dependency theory and other theories of development, such as modernisation theory and the world systems perspective. Some candidates supported their analysis by making good use of evidence about inequality in particular countries. Answers in the middle of the mark range often showed good understanding of the arguments supporting dependency theory, but lacked an analysis of the possible limitations of that theory. There were a few low scoring responses that discussed the causes of global inequality without referring to dependency theory.

Section B

Question 3

This was a popular question that was well answered overall. High scoring responses demonstrated a sound understanding of the view that media content is controlled by governments. This was complemented by a sustained assessment of how far governments are able to influence the media. Some candidates supported their analysis with references to relevant concepts such as censorship, interlocking elites, ideological state apparatus, hegemony, and agenda setting. Higher scoring answers also often used evidence from studies to debate how far governments are able to control media content. Distinctions between authoritarian and democratic political regimes featured well in some answers. Lower scoring responses often agreed with the view stated in the question with little supporting argument or consideration of alternative perspectives.

Question 4

There were some good answers to this question. High scoring responses demonstrated a sound understanding of the hypodermic syringe model. This was complemented by a sustained assessment of the strengths and limitations of that model, with candidates often drawing contrasts with other theories of media effects such as the two-step flow and uses and gratifications models. Some candidates made good use of evidence from studies to draw conclusions about the hypodermic syringe model. There were a lot of answers in the middle of the mark range that demonstrated a good understanding of the limitations of the hypodermic syringe model, without considering possible strengths. Better answers considered both strengths and limitations. Low scoring responses lacked detail and some relied on a general discussion of the role of the media with no reference to models of media effects.

Section C

Question 5

Good answers to this question explored the contrast between sociological theories that see religion as promoting social order, and theories that recognise some role for religion as a source of conflict and opposition to the status quo. High scoring responses demonstrated a clear understanding of a range of arguments and evidence supporting the idea that religion is a source of conflict. Examples such as liberation theology, theocratic revolutions, such as those in Iran and Afghanistan, and conflicts over controversial issues, such as abortion, were used to support the idea that religion may contribute to tensions and disruption in society. This was complemented by a sustained assessment of the view expressed in the question, with functionalist and Marxist theories of religion often used to challenge the idea that religion is a source of conflict. Some higher scoring responses cited examples of where religion has served as a means to resolve conflicts in various societies. Answers in the middle of the range often described the functionalist and Marxist theories of religion without responding directly to the question of whether religion is a source of conflict. Lower scoring responses lacked references to relevant concepts and theories, relying instead on personal observation and assertion about the role of religion.

Question 6

Good answers demonstrated a detailed understanding of the evidence that is used in assessing the merit of the secularisation thesis. High scoring responses considered a range of reasons why it can be argued that the available evidence on religious participation and belief fails to support the claim that religion has lost its social significance. This was complemented by a sustained assessment that critically examined the view that there is no evidence-based support for the secularisation thesis. Higher scoring responses considered evidence about, for example, church attendance figures, participation in religious ceremonies, religious belief, and support for religious institutions and values in public life. Some candidates also used evidence from particular societies to demonstrate that the extent to which secularisation has occurred varies from country to country and between religions. Answers in the middle of the mark range tended to use theoretical arguments to assess the secularisation thesis rather than referring to evidence. There were a few low scoring answers that demonstrated little knowledge of the debates surrounding the secularisation thesis.