

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/11 Socialisation
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Key messages

- The most successful responses were supported with sociological material, such as a concept, study or contemporary example.
- Candidates should allow time for planning their longer answer responses, particularly **Question 1(d)** and **Question 4** or **5** to avoid giving a disorganised answer.
- Candidates should organise their time carefully throughout the examination, with attention given to the marks allocated for each question as some ran out of time for **Question 4** or **5**.
- In **section B**, essay responses could be improved with better technique.
- Candidates should remember that when they make a point in the introduction of their essay for **Question 4** or **5**, they should refer to it in the main body of their answer.

General comments

Most candidates demonstrated a reasonable sociological knowledge. Many were able to use their time reasonably well, but a small proportion spent too long on **Section A** and left themselves too little time to effectively plan for their essay question. Some candidates did not complete **Question 4** or **5** sufficiently.

Most candidates gave responses to **Questions 1, 2(a)** and **2(b)**. These require methodological knowledge, and many candidates showed a secure knowledge base. Centres should note that the marks for these questions are accumulated on a points-based approach, as demonstrated by the mark scheme. Candidates would benefit from understanding the requirements of **Section A** prior to the examination.

Some candidates were unable to give a response for **Question 3(b)**. Few responses were able to develop an appropriate argument against the view that socialisation controls the way people behave.

In **Section B** there was some evidence that candidates had not left enough time to complete the essay. **Question 4** was the most popular though slightly less well answered than **Question 5**. More successful candidates were able to include relevant, detailed sociological theory, studies and concepts to enhance their answers. Less successful candidates were less likely to include references to sociological theory and mistakes were more common in correctly selecting relevant studies or defining concepts within their answers.

In general, careful reading of the questions is vital as it was clear that some candidates failed to refer to key words from the question in their answers. This had a detrimental impact upon their marks for those answers.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The majority of candidates were able to identify two secondary sources of qualitative data. Most commonly identified were personal documents in one form or another such as letters or diaries. Some candidates were confused by this entry level question and could not successfully identify a secondary source of qualitative data and referred to primary sources of qualitative data instead. Others identified two secondary sources of qualitative data and did not describe them. Centres should emphasise to candidates that they need to *identify* and *describe* in their response to **Question 1**.

Question 2

- (a) Many candidates seemed well prepared for this question and could successfully identify two practical factors. Time and cost were heavily relied upon as practical factors and some candidates combined these factors together in one point, then selecting another to explain, such as funding. The best responses linked these factors clearly to a sociologist's choice of research topic. Some candidates did not clearly show the link which impacted upon their marks. Candidates need to remember to support their answer with sociological material such as a concept, study or contemporary example in order to give themselves the best chance of gaining full marks on each of the two points they make.
- (b) Overall, this question was answered well by the majority of candidates, who demonstrated clear explanations of one strength and one limitation of semi-structured interviews. A minority of candidates did not understand that this method is predominantly qualitative and confusion was evident in their answers. As in **Question 2(a)**, more successful candidates were able to identify the strength and weakness, explain them both briefly and correctly and explain *why* their chosen points were strengths/weaknesses. Some candidates did not score more than four on this question as they did not complete the last required step of explaining why their points were strengths/weaknesses.

Question 3

- (a) This question provided candidates with a wide scope of knowledge to draw from in order to gain marks. The majority of candidates focused on the family controlling behaviour, they successfully supported this with relevant studies and concepts, linking their answer to specific types of behaviour such as gendered expectations. Concepts such as social control and positive/negative sanctions were applied well. The most able candidates gave theoretical explanations citing feminism, Marxism and/or functionalism successfully. Weaker candidates focused less on the *controlling of the way people behave* aspect of the question, and instead wrote generally on the topic of socialisation.
- (b) This question proved problematic for some students. The two main approaches to this question were biological accounts of why people behave in the way that they do and interactionist arguments detailing the free will of humans. The more able candidates supported their answers well with relevant theory, studies and concepts. Few candidates detailed more than one point, those that did restricting their marks as only the best point could be credited. Some gave a description of agents of socialisation different to the ones identified in **Question 3(a)** which failed to gain marks. A significant number of candidates were not prepared well for this topic.

Section B

Question 4

This question was by far the more popular of the two essay question options. Overall, the responses to this question were rather weak. Many candidates took quite a general approach focusing on media as an institution/agent but with little or no reference to the impact of it upon identity. Typical evaluation took alternative agents as being more or less important and this approach was often juxtaposed leading to underdeveloped points. A number of candidates took the unusual line of counterposing media with identities as somehow constituting an evaluation point, e.g. ethnicity/gender/social class as a more important influence than media which limited their ability to gain marks. More able candidates were able to successfully detail the impact of media upon identity. Several candidates focused on youth identity and supported their answer with examples, studies and theories relating to youth subcultures or youth identity in general. These candidates tended to also successfully evaluate with clear and well supported arguments to show that other agents of socialisation such as the family may have a more significant influence upon identity. There was some evidence that candidates were leaving insufficient time to focus on this question.

Question 5

Less candidates selected this question, responses for this question were generally stronger. Many of the candidates coped well with the argument that ethical issues make covert participant observation unsuitable for sociological research. The strongest answers developed a range of detailed points accompanied by a clear and explicit evaluation. These included the interpretivist justification of covert participant observation

with supporting studies and concepts such as validity/verstehen and the underlying point that this method is often the only way to study certain groups. Weaker candidates had some knowledge of ethical issues, their responses lacked depth in their supporting sociological evidence and also in their evaluation of the argument. Many answers lacked studies, concepts and theory supporting their arguments. There was some evidence that candidates were leaving insufficient time to focus on this question.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/12
Socialisation

Key messages

- The most successful responses were supported with sociological material, such as a concept, study or contemporary example.
- Candidates should allow time for planning their longer answer responses, particularly **Question 1(d)** and **Question 4** or **5** to avoid giving a disorganised answer.
- Candidates should organise their time carefully throughout the examination, with attention given to the marks allocated for each question as some ran out of time for **Question 4** or **5**.
- In **section B**, essay responses could be improved with better technique.
- Candidates should remember that when they make a point in the introduction of their essay for **Question 4** or **5**, they should refer to it in the main body of their answer.

General comments

The standard of responses overall was good, with some candidates demonstrating strong knowledge and understanding of sociological issues. Many were able to use their time reasonably well, but a small proportion spent too long on **Section A** and left themselves too little time to effectively plan for their essay question. Some candidates did not complete **Question 4** or **5** sufficiently.

Most candidates gave responses to **Questions 1, 2(a)** and **2(b)**. These require methodological knowledge, and many candidates showed a secure knowledge base. Centres should note that the marks for these questions are accumulated on a points-based approach, as demonstrated by the mark scheme. Candidates would benefit from understanding the requirements of **Section A** prior to the examination.

Some candidates were unable to give a response for **Question 3(b)**. **Question 3(a)** proved more difficult for candidates who answered both parts of **Question 3**. Very few responses made appropriate links between peer groups as a socialising agent and gender identity

In **Section B** there was some evidence that candidates had not left enough time to complete the essay. **Question 5** was the most popular, though candidates performed comparably in both questions. More successful candidates were able to include relevant, detailed sociological theory, studies and concepts to enhance their answers. Less successful candidates were less likely to include references to sociological theory and mistakes were more common in correctly selecting relevant studies or defining concepts within their answers.

In general, careful reading of the questions is vital as it was clear that some candidates failed to refer to key words from the question in their answers. This had a detrimental impact upon their marks for those answers.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

It was evident that a large proportion of candidates were well prepared for this question and answered it very well making sure that their answer explicitly referred to a formal social sanction with a brief and clear description. A number of candidates did not obtain a mark and this was normally due to them being far too general about the sanction that they were describing, making it unclear whether the sanction being described was formal or not. Other weaker candidates generally referred to agents of social control as opposed to the

sanctions that such formal agencies used. This question does not require a lot of detail in order to obtain full marks. Responses should be specific and succinct.

Question 2

- (a) This question caused problems for some candidates. More successful responses looked at the influence of a sociologist's values on the choice of topic. The questions required an explanation of those values personal to sociologists. Some candidates were able to include successful reference to concepts such as validity, objectivity and bias. Many candidates looked at the theoretical approach taken by researchers referring to positivism *and* interpretivism and the impact of this on the choice of method. The theoretical point could only be credited as one example of *a way* and not the two required in the question. Some candidates focused on practical issues or other influences on research rather than the researcher's values as specifically referenced in the question.
- (b) Generally, this question was answered well with clear and concise limitations being described. Commonly, limitations in relation to a lack of ecological validity and the ethical issues of studying humans in laboratory experiments were given. Supporting studies (particularly Milgram's work) were cited. Weaker responses showed uncertainty about the method and relied on brief answers such as time and cost with unclear explanations or alternatively gave reference to concepts such as reliability, which would be considered a strength of this method.

Question 3

- (a) This question posed a problem for many candidates as they did not address the peer group being the most influential agent of socialisation in relation to the shaping of gender identity. The two most common mistakes were a) writing a response generally on peers as opposed to other agents of socialisation being the most influential with no reference to gender, or b) writing an answer wholly on gender identity with no reference to peer groups. When this occurred, marks were restricted to the lower band of the markscheme. More successful candidates recognised the two aspects of the question that needed to be referenced and managed to successfully do so with the support of relevant studies and concepts.
- (b) Several candidates referred to more than one argument against the view that the peer group is the most influential agent of socialisation in shaping gender identity. These candidates did not allocate their time on this question effectively as only one point could be credited. Candidates that were weak in **3(a)** often also continued their previous errors into this question (by only focusing on the agency of socialisation *or* the shaping of gender identity rather than both). Some candidates did identify an agency of socialisation, most commonly the family and used evidence such as Oakley to describe how the agent shaped gender identity. Some did not to relate that back to a comparison as to how they were more successful in doing so than peers, which limited their answer. The best responses successfully limited their answer to one argument against the view and gave a well-supported and detailed point with reference to how the agency of socialisation identified did so more successfully than peer groups in shaping gender identity.

Section B

Question 4

This question was the least answered of the two options. For some candidates the question proved challenging in terms of how social identities changing has been *exaggerated*. Better responses went through different aspects of identity, such as age, gender and class, and showed why they have not changed and are still important, to support the view in the question that change has been exaggerated. They used theories such as Marxism and feminism to support their points. In evaluation, evidence for change was used, and postmodernism was often applied with supporting concepts. Some weaker responses gave a two-sided response and presented arguments that were in support of the statement in the question as an evaluation. There was some evidence that candidates were leaving insufficient time to focus on this question.

Question 5

The majority of candidates answered this question. Weaker responses focused on describing different qualitative methods in a list like way, sometimes looking at their strengths and weaknesses, but not fully

using this knowledge to address the view in the question. Stronger candidates were able to apply such knowledge to form more general arguments about the usefulness of qualitative methods, focusing on interpretivism, and used appropriate supporting concepts such as validity, verstehen, rapport and subjectivity. To be fully credited, these concepts needed to be accurately explained and applied. To challenge the view in the question, candidates were usually able to refer to positivism, and the value of quantitative methods, linking these with reliability and objectivity. Less successful responses juxtaposed this knowledge, rather than effectively using it to evaluate the usefulness of qualitative methods. Some candidates wasted valuable time by going into detail on the disadvantages of using quantitative methods in studying social behaviour. There was some evidence that candidates were leaving insufficient time to focus on this question.

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Paper 9699/13 Socialisation
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Key messages

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- Candidates should organise their time carefully throughout the examination, with attention given to the marks allocated for each question as some ran out of time for **Question 4** or **5**.
- In **section B**, essay responses could be improved with better technique.
- Candidates should remember that when they make a point in the introduction of their essay for **Question 4** or **5**, they should refer to it in the main body of their answer.

General comments

Most candidates demonstrated a reasonable sociological knowledge. Many were able to use their time reasonably well, but a small proportion spent too long on **Section A** and left themselves too little time to effectively plan for their essay question. Some candidates did not complete **Question 4** or **5** sufficiently.

Most candidates gave responses to **Questions 1, 2(a)** and **2(b)**. These require methodological knowledge, and many candidates showed a secure knowledge base. Centres should note that the marks for these questions are accumulated on a points-based approach, as demonstrated by the mark scheme. Candidates would benefit from understanding the requirements of **Section A** prior to the examination.

Some candidates were unable to give a response for **Question 3(b)**. Few responses were able to develop an appropriate argument against the view that socialisation controls the way people behave.

In **Section B** there was some evidence that candidates had not left enough time to complete the essay. **Question 4** was the most popular though slightly less well answered than **Question 5**. More successful candidates were able to include relevant, detailed sociological theory, studies and concepts to enhance their answers. Less successful candidates were less likely to include references to sociological theory and mistakes were more common in correctly selecting relevant studies or defining concepts within their answers.

In general, careful reading of the questions is vital as it was clear that some candidates failed to refer to key words from the question in their answers. This had a detrimental impact upon their marks for those answers.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The majority of candidates were able to identify two secondary sources of qualitative data. Most commonly identified were personal documents in one form or another such as letters or diaries. Some candidates were confused by this entry level question and could not successfully identify a secondary source of qualitative data and referred to primary sources of qualitative data instead. Others identified two secondary sources of qualitative data and did not describe them. Centres should emphasise to candidates that they need to *identify* and *describe* in their response to **Question 1**.

Question 2

- (a) Many candidates seemed well prepared for this question and could successfully identify two practical factors. Time and cost were heavily relied upon as practical factors and some candidates combined these factors together in one point, then selecting another to explain, such as funding. The best responses linked these factors clearly to a sociologist's choice of research topic. Some candidates did not clearly show the link which impacted upon their marks. Candidates need to remember to support their answer with sociological material such as a concept, study or contemporary example in order to give themselves the best chance of gaining full marks on each of the two points they make.
- (b) Overall this question was answered well by the majority of candidates, who demonstrated clear explanations of one strength and one limitation of semi-structured interviews. A minority of candidates did not understand that this method is predominantly qualitative and confusion was evident in their answers. As in **Question 2(a)**, more successful candidates were able to identify the strength and weakness, explain them both briefly and correctly and explain *why* their chosen points were strengths/weaknesses. Some candidates did not score more than four on this question as they did not complete the last required step of explaining why their points were strengths/weaknesses.

Question 3

- (a) This question provided candidates with a wide scope of knowledge to draw from in order to gain marks. The majority of candidates focused on the family controlling behaviour, they successfully supported this with relevant studies and concepts, linking their answer to specific types of behaviour such as gendered expectations. Concepts such as social control and positive/negative sanctions were applied well. The most able candidates gave theoretical explanations citing feminism, Marxism and/or functionalism successfully. Weaker candidates focused less on the *controlling of the way people behave* aspect of the question, and instead wrote generally on the topic of socialisation.
- (b) This question proved problematic for some students. The two main approaches to this question were biological accounts of why people behave in the way that they do and interactionist arguments detailing the free will of humans. The more able candidates supported their answers well with relevant theory, studies and concepts. Few candidates detailed more than one point, those that did restricting their marks as only the best point could be credited. Some gave a description of agents of socialisation different to the ones identified in **Question 3(a)** which failed to gain marks. A significant number of candidates were not prepared well for this topic.

Section B

Question 4

This question was by far the more popular of the two essay question options. Overall, the responses to this question were rather weak. Many candidates took quite a general approach focusing on media as an institution/agent but with little or no reference to the impact of it upon identity. Typical evaluation took alternative agents as being more or less important and this approach was often juxtaposed leading to underdeveloped points. A number of candidates took the unusual line of counterposing media with identities as somehow constituting an evaluation point, e.g. ethnicity/gender/social class as a more important influence than media which limited their ability to gain marks. More able candidates were able to successfully detail the impact of media upon identity. Several candidates focused on youth identity and supported their answer with examples, studies and theories relating to youth subcultures or youth identity in general. These candidates tended to also successfully evaluate with clear and well supported arguments to show that other agents of socialisation such as the family may have a more significant influence upon identity. There was some evidence that candidates were leaving insufficient time to focus on this question.

Question 5

Less candidates selected this question, responses for this question were generally stronger. Many of the candidates coped well with the argument that ethical issues make covert participant observation unsuitable for sociological research. The strongest answers developed a range of detailed points accompanied by a clear and explicit evaluation. These included the interpretivist justification of covert participant observation

with supporting studies and concepts such as validity/verstehen and the underlying point that this method is often the only way to study certain groups. Weaker candidates had some knowledge of ethical issues, their responses lacked depth in their supporting sociological evidence and also in their evaluation of the argument. Many answers lacked studies, concepts and theory supporting their arguments. There was some evidence that candidates were leaving insufficient time to focus on this question.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/21 The Family

Key messages

- Candidates should ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination – familiarisation through use of past exam papers/marks schemes would benefit them.
- Candidates need to focus responses on the context of **the family**, rather than wider society.
- More successful responses applied relevant sociological theories, concepts, and research to demonstrate sociological knowledge and understanding.
- Candidates should ensure essay responses engage in competing views, looking at different sides of the issue in the question and apply relevant sociological material.
- Teachers/candidates should use the mark schemes as teaching and learning tools, particularly for **2b**.

General comments

Most candidates showed a reasonable level of sociological knowledge and understanding of functionalism, social class/Marxism, feminist strands, and factors leading to gender inequality. Social class and diversity were typically less understood. The **more successful** candidates produced responses that reflected the requirements of the question and applied relevant sociological material to support their responses. Candidate 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.

The extended writing questions were excellent discriminators for candidates to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding, interpretation and application, and analysis and evaluation. Candidates occasionally failed to provide a response that addressed contrasting sides of the debate, providing one-sided responses.

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

In general, candidates need to be more aware of their use of time. For example, in **Question 1** introductions and conclusions are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions. Several candidates appeared to run out of time providing essay responses. Most candidates answered the questions in order; some perhaps could have benefitted from answering the essay first.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The majority of candidates were able to identify two household forms. Most commonly identified were *single/lone parent families* and *cohabitation*, with relevant descriptions. Other popular responses included *child headed* and *singleton*.

Less successful candidates did not provide relevant descriptions of the identified household (either these were too vague or just not provided), or only provided one example. A small number of candidates provided

incorrect responses, seemingly misunderstanding what the question was asking of them. Some candidates gave reasons for an increase in cohabitation, decrease in marriages, or the increase in lone parenthood, all of which were not the requirement of the question.

Occasionally candidates provided more than the two responses required. Some candidates wrote far too much, with responses including introductions, conclusions and definitions of household.

Note: *Candidates should be encouraged to 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 provided two appropriate reasons and relevant explanation. There were some very good answers that achieved full marks, with some candidates seemingly following a logical and well thought structure of:

- *Identified reason/point*
- *Reason explained*
- *Relevant supporting sociological material*
- *Application of this material to demonstrate the original point.*

This is very encouraging to see. It is beneficial for candidates to adopt this approach as it helps them to focus their response.

The more successful responses clearly demonstrated two reasons, commonly the *persistence of patriarchal values*, *gendered socialisation of children*, and *biological assumptions*, supported with the application of appropriate sociological material.

Less successful candidates whilst able to provide two relevant reasons, did not support with sociological material, therefore at most were awarded half the marks available to them. Incorrect responses focused on gender inequality in society in general rather than in the family, why there is equality in the family or why there should not be inequality. A common error was for candidates to describe an example of gender inequality in the family, as opposed to the **reason** for it existing, which is what the question required.

To improve, candidates need to support points using appropriate sociological material e.g. concepts, studies, relevant sociologists etc. and apply these in demonstrating the original point made. Too often, candidates wasted valuable time providing lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of gender inequality – **these are not required, and candidates should be encouraged to get straight into the response.**

Note: *Candidates should be encouraged to structure responses as two separate paragraphs identified as*

'The first.... The second....' for clarity and only provide the two points required.

(b) Candidates in general still appear unprepared for the demands of this question. A minority identified at least one strength of liberal feminist views of the family.

A fairly common approach was for candidates to write down all they could about liberal feminism. Some candidates confusing liberal feminism with other forms of feminism (namely radical), and even with functionalism. Candidates did not construct their responses within the context of the family, rather society in general.

There was an assumption/misunderstanding from some candidates that liberal feminists themselves have introduced laws, when of course they have not. What they have done is influenced governments to introduce/change social policies.

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

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates provided a response that demonstrated a reasonable knowledge of functionalism and the benefits of the (nuclear) family. The more successful candidates were those that took the functionalist ideas of predominantly Murdoch and Parsons, and discussed how, for example *socialisation, reproduction or the stabilisation of adult personalities* benefitted the whole of society, making reference to ideas such as *organic analogy and social cohesion*. Some candidates applied Marxist ideas which were valid if applied appropriately.

Less successful candidates discussed how the individual/family benefits rather than the whole of society – candidates appeared to know the functions but struggled with applying them to how society benefitted. There were a significant number of candidates who spent time unnecessarily detailing the loss of functions debate, whilst some wasted time providing an introduction/conclusion, or definitions of the family.

Note: *a small number of candidates provided an unnecessary evaluation of the claim. This is not a requirement of the question (they do this in 3b). Lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions are unnecessary, and candidates should be discouraged from doing this.*

- (b) Candidates overall responded well here, and generally performed better on 3b than 3a. Commonly, responses focused on how capitalism/the bourgeoisie benefit, or how patriarchy/men benefit. Another popular approach was how women did not benefit, and all were generally supported with appropriate sociological material such as *Althusser/ISA, consumerism, Oakley/gender role socialisation, radical feminism, and domestic violence*.

There were a few candidates that did not provide a valid response, as they discussed how other institutions such as education and religion perform functions that benefit society, whilst there were those that confused the different strands of feminism.

Section B

Question 4

Good responses addressed and debated the question that the social position of children within the family has improved. These responses used sociological material in support.

Some candidates turned this into a historical discussion of how childhood used to be, with little consideration of the question itself, whilst there were candidates whose response discussed whether childhood had improved or not, neglecting to consider the social position within the family, or to discuss the family altogether.

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

Question 5

Candidates generally performed better here. Candidates had a wider topic area to draw upon. Many discussed family structure, lifestyle and family relationships. Stronger responses applied relevant sociological material to support points made, developing this to engage the question.

Many candidates did appear to have a limited knowledge of how social class influences diversity, often relying on a basic level of argument with little sociological evidence to support. The counter argument was something candidates were stronger on. This tended to be a juxtaposition of points rather than explicit evaluation of the question. Commonly, *secularisation, ethnicity and women's employment* were cited.

Weak responses would cite examples of family diversity (e.g. lone parent) as a reason for family diversity existing, when these are just an illustration that diversity exists, whilst some cited Parson's Fit Thesis, demonstrating a lack of understanding as this discusses how one dominant family type was replaced by a different dominant family type.

Other weak/incorrect responses included those that discussed why family diversity is bad and those that had no real understanding of the term family diversity, seemingly confusing with conflict or neglect in the family. There were a small number of candidates who demonstrated no comprehension of the term social class.

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

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/22 The Family

Key messages

- Candidates should ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination – familiarisation through use of past exam papers/marks schemes would benefit them.
- Candidates need to focus responses on the context of **the family**, rather than wider society.
- More successful responses applied relevant sociological theories, concepts, and research to demonstrate sociological knowledge and understanding.
- Candidates should ensure essay responses engage in competing views, looking at different sides of the issue in the question and apply relevant sociological material.
- Teachers/candidates should use the mark schemes as teaching and learning tools, particularly for **2b**.

General comments

Most candidates showed a reasonable level of sociological knowledge and understanding of functionalism, the impact of gender and social class on children in the family, and factors affecting the decline of marriage. Changes in fatherhood was less well understood, very little sociological material was applied to responses. The **more successful** candidates produced responses that reflected the requirements of the question and applied relevant sociological material to support their responses. Candidate 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.

The extended writing questions were excellent discriminators for candidates to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding, interpretation and application, and analysis and evaluation. Candidates occasionally failed to provide a response that addressed contrasting sides of the debate, providing one-sided responses.

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

In general, candidates need to be more aware of their use of time. For example, in **Question 1** introductions and conclusions are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions. Several candidates appeared to run out of time providing essay responses. Most candidates answered the questions in order; some perhaps could have benefitted from answering the essay first.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates were able to identify two ways. The most common responses gave *housework, childcaring and breadwinning*. Very few candidates discussed the parent/child relationship becoming more equal. Less successful candidates demonstrated repetition, particularly of the description or only gave one way.

Occasionally candidates provided more than the two responses required. Some candidates wrote far too much, with responses including introductions, conclusions and definitions of the family and explanations for why inequality exists.

Note: *Candidates should be encouraged to 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 provided two appropriate ways and relevant explanation. There were some very good answers that achieved full marks, with some candidates seemingly following a logical and well thought structure of:

- *Identified way/point*
- *Way explained*
- *Relevant supporting sociological material*
- *Application of this material to demonstrate the original point.*

This is very encouraging to see. It is beneficial for candidates to adopt this approach as it helps them to focus their response. Responses commonly focussed on *primary socialisation and stabilisation of adult personalities*, whilst *economically* was also referred to.

The more successful responses clearly demonstrated two ways, supported with the application of appropriate sociological material. Less successful candidates whilst able to provide two relevant ways, did not support with sociological material, therefore at most were awarded half the marks available to them. Some candidates focussed on how the family *benefits society*. This was not the requirement of the question, therefore not awarded. Some candidates identified socialisation and primary socialisation as two different functions the family performed. They were awarded for one of these as the second is repetition.

Candidates occasionally provided more than the two ways required which wasted valuable time, although at times this was inadvertently as their response discussed each of Murdoch's four functions plus Parson's two, thereby providing six in total. The best two were awarded.

To improve, candidates need to support points using appropriate sociological material e.g. concepts, studies, relevant sociologists etc. and apply these in demonstrating the original point made. Too often, candidates wasted valuable time providing lengthy introductions, conclusions, and Murdoch's definition of the family – **these are not required, and candidates should be encouraged to get straight into the response.**

Note: *Candidates should be encouraged to structure responses as two separate paragraphs identified as*

'The first.... The second....' for clarity and only provide the two points required.

- (b) Candidates in general still appear unprepared for the demands of this question. A minority identifying one valid strength and one valid limitation of functionalist views of the family.

Candidates were more successful in identifying a limitation of functionalism than a strength, commonly citing how it fails to acknowledge the dark side of the family. *A common error made was in stating a positive or a critique of the nuclear family, rather than of functionalist views of the family.* Positives/negatives of the nuclear family are not the same as strengths/limitations of functionalist views of the family.

Sometimes a response discussed functionalism without a clearly identified strength/limitation. Incorrect responses included those that discussed Marxism rather than functionalism, and those that discussed within the context of society in general rather than the family.

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

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates provided a valid response. In general candidates performed less successfully on **3a** than **3b**. The impact of ethnicity on childhood in the family was generally understood, however there was a lack of the lack of sociological material/evidence to support points made, with candidates largely relying on anecdotal/common-sense knowledge. Points made had a tendency to be sweeping and assertive, with ethnicity often simplified as black children/white children, with no differentiation considered.

Other issues affecting awarding, included candidates either discussing within the context of society in general (e.g. school, media) as opposed to the family or, childhood in the family without the context of ethnicity (e.g. general discussions of socialisation/gender roles). Some candidates even discussed social class rather than ethnicity and therefore not awarded any marks.

Note: *a small number of candidates wasted time providing an unnecessary evaluation of the claim. This is not a requirement of the question (they do this in 3b). Lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions are unnecessary, and candidates should be discouraged from doing this.*

- (b) Most candidates were able to provide a valid response, with social class and gender being the most popular choices. Many candidates demonstrated a comprehensive sociological awareness, using appropriate evidence/material to support claims made. Hence, candidates were measurably more successful on **3b** than **3a**.

Some responses were brief; candidates need to give consideration to the marks available – 6 marks for one point. Therefore, the point made by the candidate needs to be developed, moving beyond a simplistic statement.

Some responses did not consider the context of the family (as the question required), and discussed society in general, therefore not answering the question.

Section B

Question 4

The more popular option of the two essays, and generally the better answered. Candidates demonstrated a reasonable comprehension of the improvement in women's position in society, largely focused on education and employment/finance, although often little consideration was given to status. In general, candidates were able to support arguments against the claim more strongly than in support of it, commonly secularisation, a generous welfare system and laws/policies were referred to. Although it was common for these to be juxtaposition (simply presenting alternative reasons) rather than an explicit evaluation. Very few candidates explicitly addressed *the main reason*. There were a small number of candidates that evaluated the view that marriages were declining, providing counter claims.

Weak responses tended to rely on common-sense and unsupported claims, whilst irrelevant responses focused on how feminists think women should not be married, or contrasting views on the functions of the family.

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

Question 5

The least opted for question of the two. Generally responses were weaker, with reliance on anecdotal evidence/common-sense and little to no sociological material used to support claims made. This would perhaps suggest a general lack of familiarity with the topic of fatherhood.

Stronger responses were able to discuss how fatherhood had changed, focussed on the greater involvement of the father in childcare and in showing an interest in the child's happiness and welfare. Less successful responses were those that simply gave an account of how fatherhood used to be, without addressing how it had changed, or those that discussed the changing roles of men in the family in general terms (conjugal

roles/domestic labour), without the context of fatherhood. Other poorly focused responses discussed changes in lives of women/motherhood, with little/no consideration given to fatherhood.

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

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/23 The Family

Key messages

- Candidates should ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination – familiarisation through use of past exam papers/marks schemes would benefit them.
- Candidates need to focus responses on the context of **the family**, rather than wider society.
- More successful responses applied relevant sociological theories, concepts, and research to demonstrate sociological knowledge and understanding.
- Candidates should ensure essay responses engage in competing views, looking at different sides of the issue in the question and apply relevant sociological material.
- Teachers/candidates should use the mark schemes as teaching and learning tools, particularly for **2b**.

General comments

Most candidates showed a reasonable level of sociological knowledge and understanding of functionalism, social class/Marxism, feminist strands, and factors leading to gender inequality. Social class and diversity were typically less understood. The **more successful** candidates produced responses that reflected the requirements of the question and applied relevant sociological material to support their responses. Candidate 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.

The extended writing questions were excellent discriminators for candidates to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding, interpretation and application, and analysis and evaluation. Candidates occasionally failed to provide a response that addressed contrasting sides of the debate, providing one-sided responses.

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

In general, candidates need to be more aware of their use of time. For example, in **Question 1** introductions and conclusions are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions. Several candidates appeared to run out of time providing essay responses. Most candidates answered the questions in order; some perhaps could have benefitted from answering the essay first.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The majority of candidates were able to identify two household forms. Most commonly identified were *single/lone parent families* and *cohabitation*, with relevant descriptions. Other popular responses included *child headed* and *singleton*.

Less successful candidates did not provide relevant descriptions of the identified household (either these were too vague or just not provided), or only provided one example. A small number of candidates provided

incorrect responses, seemingly misunderstanding what the question was asking of them. Some candidates gave reasons for an increase in cohabitation, decrease in marriages, or the increase in lone parenthood, all of which were not the requirement of the question.

Occasionally candidates provided more than the two responses required. Some candidates wrote far too much, with responses including introductions, conclusions and definitions of household.

Note: *Candidates should be encouraged to 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 provided two appropriate reasons and relevant explanation. There were some very good answers that achieved full marks, with some candidates seemingly following a logical and well thought structure of:

- *Identified reason/point*
- *Reason explained*
- *Relevant supporting sociological material*
- *Application of this material to demonstrate the original point.*

This is very encouraging to see. It is beneficial for candidates to adopt this approach as it helps them to focus their response.

The more successful responses clearly demonstrated two reasons, commonly the *persistence of patriarchal values*, *gendered socialisation of children*, and *biological assumptions*, supported with the application of appropriate sociological material.

Less successful candidates whilst able to provide two relevant reasons, did not support with sociological material, therefore at most were awarded half the marks available to them. Incorrect responses focused on gender inequality in society in general rather than in the family, why there is equality in the family or why there should not be inequality. A common error was for candidates to describe an example of gender inequality in the family, as opposed to the **reason** for it existing, which is what the question required.

To improve, candidates need to support points using appropriate sociological material e.g. concepts, studies, relevant sociologists etc. and apply these in demonstrating the original point made. Too often, candidates wasted valuable time providing lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of gender inequality – **these are not required, and candidates should be encouraged to get straight into the response.**

Note: *Candidates should be encouraged to structure responses as two separate paragraphs identified as*

'The first.... The second....' for clarity and only provide the two points required.

(b) Candidates in general still appear unprepared for the demands of this question. A minority identified at least one strength of liberal feminist views of the family.

A fairly common approach was for candidates to write down all they could about liberal feminism. Some candidates confusing liberal feminism with other forms of feminism (namely radical), and even with functionalism. Candidates did not construct their responses within the context of the family, rather society in general.

There was an assumption/misunderstanding from some candidates that liberal feminists themselves have introduced laws, when of course they have not. What they have done is influenced governments to introduce/change social policies.

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

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates provided a response that demonstrated a reasonable knowledge of functionalism and the benefits of the (nuclear) family. The more successful candidates were those that took the functionalist ideas of predominantly Murdoch and Parsons, and discussed how, for example *socialisation, reproduction or the stabilisation of adult personalities* benefitted the whole of society, making reference to ideas such as *organic analogy and social cohesion*. Some candidates applied Marxist ideas which were valid if applied appropriately.

Less successful candidates discussed how the individual/family benefits rather than the whole of society – candidates appeared to know the functions but struggled with applying them to how society benefitted. There were a significant number of candidates who spent time unnecessarily detailing the loss of functions debate, whilst some wasted time providing an introduction/conclusion, or definitions of the family.

Note: *a small number of candidates provided an unnecessary evaluation of the claim. This is not a requirement of the question (they do this in 3b). Lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions are unnecessary, and candidates should be discouraged from doing this.*

- (b) Candidates overall responded well here, and generally performed better on 3b than 3a. Commonly, responses focused on how capitalism/the bourgeoisie benefit, or how patriarchy/men benefit. Another popular approach was how women did not benefit, and all were generally supported with appropriate sociological material such as *Althusser/ISA, consumerism, Oakley/gender role socialisation, radical feminism, and domestic violence*.

There were a few candidates that did not provide a valid response, as they discussed how other institutions such as education and religion perform functions that benefit society, whilst there were those that confused the different strands of feminism.

Section B

Question 4

Good responses addressed and debated the question that the social position of children within the family has improved. These responses used sociological material in support.

Some candidates turned this into a historical discussion of how childhood used to be, with little consideration of the question itself, whilst there were candidates whose response discussed whether childhood had improved or not, neglecting to consider the social position within the family, or to discuss the family altogether.

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

Question 5

Candidates generally performed better here. Candidates had a wider topic area to draw upon. Many discussed family structure, lifestyle and family relationships. Stronger responses applied relevant sociological material to support points made, developing this to engage the question.

Many candidates did appear to have a limited knowledge of how social class influences diversity, often relying on a basic level of argument with little sociological evidence to support. The counter argument was something candidates were stronger on. This tended to be a juxtaposition of points rather than explicit evaluation of the question. Commonly, *secularisation, ethnicity and women's employment* were cited.

Weak responses would cite examples of family diversity (e.g. lone parent) as a reason for family diversity existing, when these are just an illustration that diversity exists, whilst some cited Parson's Fit Thesis, demonstrating a lack of understanding as this discusses how one dominant family type was replaced by a different dominant family type.

Other weak/incorrect responses included those that discussed why family diversity is bad and those that had no real understanding of the term family diversity, seemingly confusing with conflict or neglect in the family. There were a small number of candidates who demonstrated no comprehension of the term social class.

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

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/31
Education

Key messages

- Candidates should note the marks allocated for each question and spend more of their time responding to the highest scoring questions.
- Good responses addressed the question fully and had carefully considered what type of response was needed to gain high marks.
- The strongest responses had fully explained points in relation to the question asked.
- Practising on questions from past papers will help candidates understand the requirements of different types of questions.

General comments

Many candidates were able to demonstrate a range of good sociological knowledge and understanding. The best responses used relevant sociological evidence and supported the points being made, with some evidence such as a study, theory, concept, statistics or relevant examples. Some candidates made points or used evidence that was not related to the question asked and did not gain credit for this. Candidates need to explain how their response is related, e.g., 'this study supports the argument that...' Using a structure such as this will help candidates check that their point and evidence is relevant and demonstrate clearly to the Examiner that they know why it is relevant.

Question 3 requires an argument against a given statement. Candidates need to give evaluation in their response, they do not need to give any arguments supporting the statement. The best responses gave arguments against the statement which included criticisms of the logic or evidence on which it is based as well as presenting alternative points of view.

Question 4 should take the form of a balanced essay. This should include arguments from both sides equally. The strongest responses evaluated each argument as well as presenting the two opposing arguments. They looked critically at the evidence used on both sides and understood that an argument need not be completely true or false but may be more or less applicable for different groups at different times and in different places. Evaluating a view means 'weighing it up'. A conclusion briefly explaining how far an argument is useful based on all the evidence and other points of view considered, is required.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates could identify at least one example of what can be learned through the hidden curriculum. The most common responses were references to norms and values, respect for authority, punctuality, and uniform. In their explanation, many candidates did not score full marks as they did not adequately describe how the example related to what is taught in school.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to identify two ways that teachers' perceptions of gender can affect candidates. The most common points were in relation to negative labelling of genders, subject choice, boys being 'disruptive' and girls being 'invisible'. Many used the concept of self-fulfilling prophecy and related this to

positive and negative impacts on achievement in their selection of material and explanations of these points. Many also referred to the work of Stanworth, Francis, and Skelton.

Those who did not select the relevant sociological material required to move up the mark band could only score up to 4 for this question. Candidates who discussed labelling in general, for example referring to the work of Becker and the 'ideal candidate', but did not connect this to gender, could not be rewarded.

Question 3

Nearly all candidates were able to identify two arguments against the view that education allows talented working-class candidates to achieve upward social mobility. The most common arguments referred to were from the Marxist perspectives or by reference to cultural and material deprivation and cultural capital. Less common responses referred to interaction and social processes within schools such as teacher labelling based on class. A significant number of candidates referred to the work of Bowles and Gintis, Althusser, Bernstein and Bourdieu.

Candidates who presented good accounts of causes of underachievement but did not specifically refer to the term social mobility scored less. Some candidate's responses lacked structure, for example, by listing several arguments without linking these under a broader heading such as cultural deprivation. Some candidates wasted time by giving an account of how the education system *does* allow talented working-class candidates to achieve upward social mobility.

Question 4

Most candidates were able to at least demonstrate a basic knowledge and understanding of the view that education contributes to social solidarity. A significant number of responses referred to the work of Durkheim and Parsons and to a lesser extent, Davis and Moore. Many candidates gave examples such as assemblies, uniform and the teaching of history. Less candidates than usual gave a range and depth of points required to demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of this view. For example, very few were able to apply concepts such as collective conscience and social cohesion or discuss the social democratic view of equality of opportunity and how this contributed to social solidarity.

Many candidates gave a general description of functionalist views on universalistic values, achievement and meritocracy, without explaining how they contributed to social solidarity, this affected the marks awarded for interpretation and application. When arguing against the view, many presented descriptive accounts of Marxist and or feminist arguments but related these to educational achievement, rather than social solidarity.

In terms of analysis and evaluation, candidates were able to give a wide range of arguments against this view, particularly in terms of class and gender. Very few candidates made specific evaluation points on evidence used and so were not able to access the top mark band. Evaluation was largely by juxtaposition, although most candidates were able to identify the other side of the debate. The most common specific evaluation point was from a Marxist or feminist perspective. While some candidates did discuss subcultural rejection of school values, very few referred to arguments relating to ethnocentricity and institutional racism.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/32
Education

Key messages

- Candidates should note the marks allocated for each question and spend more of their time responding to the highest scoring questions.
- Good responses addressed the question fully and had carefully considered what type of response was needed to gain high marks.
- The strongest responses had fully explained points in relation to the question asked.
- Practising on questions from past papers will help candidates understand the requirements of different types of questions.

General comments

Many candidates were able to demonstrate a range of good sociological knowledge and understanding. The best responses used relevant sociological evidence and supported the points being made, with some evidence such as a study, theory, concept, statistics or relevant examples. Some candidates made points or used evidence that was not related to the question asked and did not gain credit for this. Candidates need to explain how their response is related, e.g., 'this study supports the argument that...' Using a structure such as this will help candidates check that their point and evidence is relevant and demonstrate clearly to the Examiner that they know why it is relevant.

Question 3 requires an argument against a given statement. Candidates need to give evaluation in their response, they do not need to give any arguments supporting the statement. The best responses gave arguments against the statement which included criticisms of the logic or evidence on which it is based as well as presenting alternative points of view.

Question 4 should take the form of a balanced essay. This should include arguments from both sides equally. The strongest responses evaluated each argument as well as presenting the two opposing arguments. They looked critically at the evidence used on both sides and understood that an argument need not be completely true or false but may be more or less applicable for different groups at different times and in different places. Evaluating a view means 'weighing it up'. A conclusion briefly explaining how far an argument is useful based on all the evidence and other points of view considered, is required.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Many candidates were not familiar with the concept and referred to the curriculum in general or referred to gender or social class. Some candidates described types of ethnocentrism or racism in interaction but without reference to the curriculum. Others confused the language of the school as being part of an ethnocentric curriculum rather than giving examples of specific points related to the curriculum.

Good answers gave points relating to history and literature and explained these with reference to the impact they would have on ethnic minority candidates.



Question 2

Most candidates knew that female educational achievement had increased, and were able to point to processes e.g. the rise of the service/tertiary sector, legislation such as the Equal Pay Act, and changing parental expectations. The work of Sue Sharp was often cited, and to a lesser extent that of Ulrich Beck, Mitsos and Browne or Francis and Skelton. Candidates who did not refer to any sociological material could only gain a maximum of two marks for each point.

Many candidates merely discussed traditional bias against females, for which they gained no marks. The question was about *changes*. Other candidates referred to *internal* factors e.g. teachers labelling girls as unintelligent, or schools favoring boys and encouraging them to take STEM subjects, these examples were not awardable. To gain marks examples had to refer to *external* factors.

Question 3

This question was generally answered well. The best answers covered two relevant points such as labelling, ability grouping, racism or gender stereotyping. These could gain full marks if well supported with relevant studies and explanations. A range of interactionist studies on labelling, the self-fulfilling prophecy, streaming and school subcultures were popular and well understood.

Some candidates did not give arguments *against* the view, but discussed factors *outside* school affecting attainment, thus gaining no marks.

Question 4

Most candidates were able to produce an explanation of the functionalist view that education facilitated role allocation and were familiar with the work of Durkheim, Parsons and Davis and Moore. Candidates varied on how well they integrated a discussion of meritocracy into the question asked.

Many candidates explained how education prepares for the capitalist workforce. This could be used on either side of the debate. A discussion of meritocracy as a myth and associated evidence on inequalities gained more credit according to how explicitly it was related to the question. The gendered curriculum could also be shown to be very relevant here.

Some good candidates were able to detail other roles of education from functionalist, social democratic or postmodern perspectives. The best answers included a range of points from both sides of the debate. These were explained with relevant sociological evidence and terminology.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/33 Education
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There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/41 Globalisation, Media, Religion

Key messages

- Good answers used a range of relevant sociological material to construct arguments for and against the view expressed in the question.
- While some candidates demonstrated good evaluation skills, others provided little coverage of this assessment objective.
- Some answers lacked focus on the wording of the question.
- Higher marks could be gained by making more use of references to relevant sociological studies.
- Some candidates attempted to answer the questions without use of sociological concepts and theories.

General comments

There were some high scoring answers that combined good sociological knowledge and understanding with detailed analysis and evaluation. Use of sociological concepts and theories to support the evaluation was a feature of responses that triggered the higher mark bands. Some answers demonstrated reasonable subject knowledge, but offered only limited evaluation. Lower scoring responses lacked references to appropriate sociological material, relying instead on assertion and general knowledge. Some answers addressed the general topic of the question, but neglected the issues raised by the specific wording. More use of evidence from sociological studies and other appropriate sources, would be one way in which candidates could gain higher marks.

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

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

High quality responses to this question demonstrated a good understanding of how poverty may have led to the spread of global crime. Good answers also considered other explanations for the spread of global crime, questioning whether poverty is the primary factor. Some candidates gained credit by examining factors specific to the spread of different types of global crime, alongside considering explanations for global crime in general. Lower scoring answers were often characterised by a few simple points about global crime with little or no analysis of the factors leading to the spread of crime across national frontiers.

Question 2

High scoring responses to this question demonstrated a good understanding of what is meant by globalisation and its impact on developing societies. Good answers often considered different aspects of globalisation, such as cultural, social, economic, environmental factors as the basis for developing a sustained evaluation of the view expressed in the question. Some candidates also distinguished between developing societies that have benefitted from globalisation and those that have not benefitted. Lower scoring answers were often characterised by a few simple points about the economic benefits of globalisation.

Section B

Question 3

Good answers to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of the view that audiences are the main influence on the content of the media. High quality responses also considered the possible limitations in these arguments and examined the scope for other agents and agencies to influence media content. Some candidates linked their analysis to the Marxist and pluralist theories of the media. Likewise, a distinction was often drawn between the traditional media, which is seen to be less susceptible to control by audiences, and the new media where the division between consumers and producers of content is more fluid. There were a few low scoring responses that lacked references to sociological material and offered only personal opinion about who controls media content.

Question 4

Most candidates recognised that the question provided an opportunity to discuss contrasting models of media effects. The hypodermic-syringe model, in particular, was used in explaining the view expressed in the question. Some candidates also made good use of research evidence about the influence of the media on particular forms of behaviour, such as violence and moral panics. Good responses included a sustained evaluation of the view that the media has a direct influence on behaviour. The two-step flow and uses and gratification models of media effects were cited in opposing the view expressed in the question, and this was often supported with links to supporting research studies. There were a few low scoring responses that lacked references to sociological material and offered only personal opinion about the influence of the media on human behaviour.

Section C

Question 5

High quality responses demonstrated a good understanding of the Marxist view that religion helps the ruling class achieve social control. Some candidates made good use of examples to illustrate how religion might support ruling class interests at the expense of other groups in society. Good answers also considered limitations in the Marxist view and offered examples of where religion has challenged the power of the ruling class and acted as a force for social change. There were some lower scoring answers that outlined different theories of religion without linking the material clearly to the debate about whether religion helps the ruling class achieve social control.

Question 6

This question provided an opportunity for candidates to discuss the secularisation thesis. High quality responses demonstrated a detailed understanding of the view that growth in support for new religious movements and New Age ideas indicates that religion has lost its social significance. In good answers, the analysis was supported with reference to relevant concepts, theories, and study evidence. Credit was also gained by considering the difficulties in defining and measuring 'loss of social significance' in relation to religion. Some candidates made good use of distinctions between different religions and/or cultures to warn against over-generalising about the decline of religious influence. Lower scoring responses were often confined to a narrow range of points about religious belief today, with only limited reference to recognisable sociological content.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/42 Globalisation, Media, Religion

Key messages

- Good answers combined detailed sociological knowledge with sustained analysis and evaluation.
- More candidates are making effective use of references to relevant research studies.
- While some candidates demonstrated good evaluation skills, others provided little coverage of this assessment objective.
- Higher marks could be gained by making more use of concepts and theories to support key points.
- Some candidates discussed the general topic underpinning the question rather than focusing on the specific wording.

General comments

The overall standard of the scripts was good, with many candidates making effective use of relevant sociological material to provide detailed and suitably analytical responses. High quality answers provided a sustained evaluation of the issues raised by the question and included appropriate references to concepts and theories. Some responses are still too descriptive and rely on a summary of relevant knowledge without providing any related evaluation. Higher marks could also be gained by using evidence from research studies to support key arguments and analysis. Lower scoring responses lacked references to appropriate sociological material, relying instead on assertion and general knowledge. Some answers were too short to provide sufficient demonstration of the skills required to trigger the higher mark bands.

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

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

High scoring responses to this question demonstrated a good understanding of the processes of globalisation and their cultural impact. Good answers also provided a sustained evaluation of the view expressed in the question. Debate about whether globalisation has led to cultural convergence rather than cultural divergence often featured as part of the evaluation. Low scoring answers were limited to a few points about globalisation with little or no reference to cultural effects.

Question 2

High quality answers to this question demonstrated a good understanding of how global migration might affect levels of poverty in a society. Good answers often considered different types of migration as the basis for developing a sustained evaluation of the view expressed in the question. Some candidates also explored which groups are most likely to experience poverty as a result of global migration. Neo-liberal arguments about the benefits of global migration for all groups were often used as a contrast with theoretical perspectives that highlight the negative aspects of global migration. Lower scoring answers were characterised by a few general points about global migration with little or no discussion of links to poverty.

Section B

Question 3

Good answers to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of the cultural effects model and its role in explaining media effects. Some candidates used evidence from relevant research studies to illustrate the different features of the cultural effects model. High scoring answers also included a sustained evaluation of the view expressed in the question. Reference to other models of media effects were often included as a way of analysing the strengths and limitations of the cultural effects model. There were a few low scoring responses that showed little understanding of the cultural effects model.

Question 4

Good answers to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of the view that the media supports the interests of a wide range of groups. High quality responses also considered the possible limitations in these arguments and examined alternative views about which interests are served by the media. Some candidates linked their analysis specifically to contrasts between the pluralist and Marxist explanations of media influence. Another feature of many high scoring answers was a discussion of the differences between the traditional media and the new media in terms of the interests each serve. There were a few low scoring responses that lacked references to sociological material and offered only personal opinion about the role of the media.

Section C

Question 5

High quality responses to this question demonstrated a detailed understanding of the view that religion has become less important in people's lives. Good answers also featured references to relevant concepts, theories, and study evidence. Credit was awarded for considering the difficulties in defining and measuring religiosity when drawing comparisons between the importance of religion for people today and in the past. Some candidates made good use of distinctions between different religions and/or cultures to warn against over-generalising about trends in religiosity. Lower scoring answers were often confined to a narrow range of points about religious belief today, with only limited reference to recognisable sociological content.

Question 6

High scoring answers demonstrated a good understanding of the view that religion has become less patriarchal. The discussion was often contextualised in terms of feminist ideas about the connections between religion and patriarchy. Good responses questioned whether the feminist account remains relevant today and noted changes in religious practice and organisation that may have weakened any links with patriarchy. This was complemented by a sustained evaluation that questioned the accuracy of the claim, that religion has become less patriarchal. There were some lower scoring answers that offered a few points about the feminist view of religion without addressing the issue of whether religion has become less patriarchal over time.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/43
Globalisation, Media, Religion

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.