SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/11
Paper 11

General comments

Many candidates appeared well prepared for the examination and there were a number of excellent scripts from a range of Centres. However, a significant minority of candidates produced scripts that lacked sufficient sociological knowledge and understanding to achieve a creditable result.

The paper appeared to differentiate effectively, with a majority of candidates gaining a high number of marks in the early parts of questions. Most candidates were able to answer **Question 1**, appearing generally prepared for the compulsory question. However, a number of candidates were not sufficiently well-versed in relation to the core concepts of methodology i.e. reliability, validity and representativeness. Greater and better use of these concepts in many of the sub-questions in **1** would have generally promoted candidates' overall marks. As with previous sittings of the examination, **Questions 2**, **3**, **4** and to some extent **5** proved to be the most popular questions. It was also the case that candidates appeared best prepared for these questions, whereas **Questions 6** and **7** were less popular and produced notably less convincing responses.

A number of issues exist in relation to exam strategy, all of which Centres should consider in their preparation for the Paper. In particular, candidates need to devote their time and length of response to questions in strict proportion to the marks allocated. This might seem a simple point but many candidates failed to maximise their marks because of poor organisation in this respect. In particular, candidates should look toward producing more concise responses to those questions offering up to 4 marks. With these shorter questions, candidates are typically required to make 2 discrete points and to briefly develop them. This can be achieved in a few sentences. Furthermore, candidates should look to demarcate points within their answers as clearly as possible. Candidates would therefore benefit greatly from regular practice at producing responses that are proportionate to the time and marks available. In *Sections B* to *D* many candidates repeated all or some of their answers to **(c)** in part **(d)** of the question. Whilst there may sometimes be an element of overlap between these two questions, candidates should be aware that each part question requires a different response. Finally, a substantial number of candidates are prone to repeat the wording of a question at the outset of their answer – this is unnecessary and wastes valuable time.

On a positive note, there was evidence of an increasing number of candidates who are able to demonstrate an excellent conceptual understanding of sociological issues, and who are able to support their answers with well-judged theoretical references, relevant data and contemporary examples.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) Candidates were generally well-prepared for the question and were able to define the terms effectively, though a number of candidates found some difficulty in defining 'data'.

(b) Many candidates struggled to gain full marks in this question. In particular, they were often unclear as to what was meant by 'coded' and consequently found it difficult to fully develop their responses.

(c) This question was generally well answered, with the majority of candidates able to clearly identify two sampling techniques and to go on to describe their operation succinctly.

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(d) The majority of candidates understood the term 'structured interview', although some were confused by it. Generally, responses were able to identify both a *strength* and a *limitation*. Most candidates focused on the strength of interviewers being able to clarify respondents' difficulties, and most referred to the possibility of interviewer effect or bias as examples of a limitation.

(e) This was generally well answered, with candidates identifying the major strength as relating to measurement over time. However, the identification of a limitation to this method was less confident, with some candidates appearing to guess. Those that answered correctly mostly pointed to the difficulty in keeping contact with the original sample. There were no references to any examples of sociological research using this method to illustrate points made, although this was not a necessary feature of a full mark answer.

(f) This question was reasonably well done, with most candidates able to offer two strengths and two limitations of using questionnaires. However, most candidates failed to include reference in their answers to the key methodological concepts, especially reliability and validity. Candidates need to invoke these concepts as a way of supporting their points. Appropriate usage of these and other significant terms would have enhanced many otherwise satisfactory responses.

Section B

Question 2

(a) The term 'norms' was generally well understood, with most responses providing clear definitions.

(b) Many candidates answered this question well. However, some were not always explicit enough in their *identification* of a particular norm. Some candidates used examples that were very similar, whilst others used ones that described 'values' – Centres are advised to ensure that candidates are able to clearly differentiate between these two concepts and that they are able to provide examples of each.

(c) This question was generally well answered, with most candidates able to show how parents practiced socialisation. Those that focused on the 'how' aspect of the question were well rewarded, whereas those who offered generalised accounts of the meaning of socialisation fared less well.

(d) Most responses achieved good marks for this question and showed a willingness to engage in the debate – many, correctly, couched their responses in terms of 'nature v nurture'. A significant number of answers contrasted the lives of feral children with individuals who had experienced more typical patterns of socialisation to good effect.

Question 3

(a) Most candidates were able to define 'informal social control' clearly enough to achieve 2 marks.

(b) Most candidates were able to describe two examples of 'formal controls'. Many focused on the role of the police or judiciary although some incorrectly identified informal agents.

(c) Few responses achieved the very highest marks here. Some candidates were prone to repeat the response made to **3(b)** and to ignore the references to 'greater need' and to 'modern society' in the question.

(d) This question elicited a wide range of responses. There was a tendency for one-sided responses to this question, either for the view or against it. However, many responses incorporated a sociological perspective into their answers, and contrasted functionalist and Marxist accounts of the role of law; several also included references to feminism. A number of answers were poorly planned, often making simplistic points without giving supporting examples.

Section C

Question 4

(a) This question was very well answered with many candidates achieving 2 marks.

(b) The overwhelming majority of candidates were able to respond appropriately, with most achieving full marks.

(c) This question produced a wide range of responses. Some answers had a narrow focus and discussed the likely lack of skills and educational qualifications. Better responses examined a wider range of issues, discussing the lack of social capital, material resources, language facility and discrimination.

(d) The question was only moderately well answered. Many candidates were able to explain how ethnic minorities might be disadvantaged in terms of education and careers. However, relatively few ranged beyond these social areas. Most responses were one-sided, with very few making an assessment of the improved position of [some] ethnic groups. There was a notable tendency in responses to assume that minority groups are all recent immigrants to their respective countries of destination.

Question 5

(a) This question was very well answered with most candidates achieving 2 marks.

(b) This question was well answered with many candidates gaining full marks. A number of candidates discussed gender, age or ethnicity, whilst others focused on caste and feudal forms of stratification.

(c) This question was only moderately well-answered. Most candidates identified relevant causal factors although some were rather narrow in their focus. Others demonstrated more scope, though few offered enough development or sociological evidence to achieve the highest marks.

(d) This question produced a wide range of responses. Many were one-sided, simply making the case for modern societies being open. Others challenged this but the reference to Marxist approaches were often crudely expressed and not focused on the issue of mobility. Some candidates looked at the issue in terms of ethnicity and gender. Whilst this was legitimate, it often masked an overall inability to address the question directly.

Section D

Question 6

(a) Most candidates failed to associate the concept of 'authority' with notions of legitimacy and therefore few achieved 2 marks.

(b) Most candidates correctly identified two features of democracy, but few were able to develop these identifications into concise descriptions as demanded by the question.

(c) This question produced a generally poor range of answers. Most responses did not appear to be based upon a sociological understanding of the question. Indeed, many candidates used an anecdotal approach that reflected their own general impressions and prejudices rather than an objective analysis. Contemporary examples are welcome but need to be woven into a sociologically framed response.

(d) Answers tended to be narrow in range, although this question was more successfully answered than **(c)**. Most candidates contrasted Marxist and pluralist accounts and focused on the ability of elite groups to maintain the ear of government. Few took the opportunity to discuss the issue beyond the confines of social class, whereas discussion of gender, ethnicity and age may have proved fruitful.

Question 7

(a)   Most responses were limited to voting related comments.

(b)   This question was generally not well answered, with many candidates only identifying one relevant factor. Those who achieved 4 marks tended to discuss party policies and the images of leaders that are presented by the media.

(c)   Answers generally lacked range. Many responses were quite personalised and suggested a lack of sociological knowledge. Better responses discussed the relationship between media ownership and political affiliation. Nearly all candidates assumed that news reporting was a profound influence on voting behaviour.

(d)   This question produced a wide range of responses, some of which were good. Better answers produced a wide range of factors that challenged the idea that voting behaviour was class and family-background based. Many introduced the concept of dealignment to good effect. Weaker responses accepted the pretext of the question and did not include any reference to how some factors have become more important in recent years e.g. the images of party leaders and the record of governments.

SOCIOLOGY

| Paper 0495/12 |
| Paper 12 |

General comments

Many candidates appeared well prepared for the examination and there were a number of excellent scripts from a range of Centres. However, a significant minority of candidates produced scripts that lacked sufficient sociological knowledge and understanding to achieve a creditable result.

The paper appeared to differentiate effectively, with a majority of candidates gaining a high number of marks in the early parts of questions. Most candidates were able to answer **Question 1**, appearing generally prepared for the compulsory question. However, a number of candidates were not sufficiently well-versed in relation to the core concepts of methodology i.e. reliability, validity and representativeness. Greater and better use of these concepts in many of the sub-questions in **1** would have generally promoted candidates' overall marks. As with previous sittings of the examination, **Questions 2**, **3**, **4** and to some extent **5** proved to be the most popular questions. It was also the case that candidates appeared best prepared for these questions, whereas **Questions 6** and **7** were less popular and produced notably less convincing responses.

A number of issues exist in relation to exam strategy, all of which Centres should consider in their preparation for the Paper. In particular, candidates need to devote their time and length of response to questions in strict proportion to the marks allocated. This might seem a simple point but many candidates failed to maximise their marks because of poor organisation in this respect. In particular, candidates should look toward producing more concise responses to those questions offering up to 4 marks. With these shorter questions, candidates are typically required to make 2 discrete points and to briefly develop them. This can be achieved in a few sentences. Furthermore, candidates should look to demarcate points within their answers as clearly as possible. Candidates would therefore benefit greatly from regular practice at producing responses that are proportionate to the time and marks available. In *Sections B* to *D* many candidates repeated all or some of their answers to **(c)** in part **(d)** of the question. Whilst there may sometimes be an element of overlap between these two questions, candidates should be aware that each part question requires a different response. Finally, a substantial number of candidates are prone to repeat the wording of a question at the outset of their answer – this is unnecessary and wastes valuable time.

On a positive note, there was evidence of an increasing number of candidates who are able to demonstrate an excellent conceptual understanding of sociological issues, and who are able to support their answers with well-judged theoretical references, relevant data and contemporary examples.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a)   Candidates were not especially well-prepared for the question and were not always able to define the terms with sufficient precision. For example, many responses did not show an understanding that an 'informal setting' is a mechanism that encourages truthful and detailed accounts from respondents. There was also often a lack of clarity about the meaning of 'reliability' and 'standardised questions'.

(b)   Many candidates struggled to gain full marks in this question. In particular, in part **b(i)** many described unstructured interviews as 'not representative' because this method does not produce data that *represents the truth*. This suggested a misunderstanding of the concept of representativeness and how it relates to a particular method.

(c)   This question was generally well answered, with the majority of candidates able to clearly identify two reasons why unstructured interviews are good for the collection of qualitative data.

(d)   This question was reasonably well answered, although a number of candidates tended to describe the characteristics of quantitative research and did not fully attend to the question i.e. *why* unstructured interviews are unsuitable for carrying out this type of research.

(e)   A significant number of candidates failed to identify two alternatives to questionnaires as a quantitative research method. Very often candidates described a qualitative method, vaguely referred to 'surveys', or discussed a sampling technique.

(f)   This question produced sound answers from most candidates, with many scoring 6-8 marks. However, greater usage of the key concepts of validity and reliability would enhance candidates' ability to illustrate their points more effectively.

Section B

Question 2

(a)   The term 'roles' was generally well understood with most responses providing clear definitions.

(b)   The majority of candidates answered this question well. There was clear evidence of sociological understanding of how gender roles are learned. However, responses were often too long, with many candidates describing more than the two ways required by the question.

(c)   There was a tendency amongst some candidates to repeat material used in their answer to **(b)**. Hence, there was a lack of focus on 'why' gender roles differ in favour of 'how'.

(d)   There was a mixed response to this question. Some candidates confused 'gender role freedom' with sexual orientation, whilst others successfully explored the extent to which femininity and masculinity are more open to interpretation. The overwhelming emphasis was on the greater opportunity afforded to women to define their gender identity.

Question 3

(a)   Most candidates were able to define 'social control' clearly enough to achieve 2 marks.

(b)   Most candidates were able to describe two examples of 'informal controls'. Many focused on the role of the family or peer group, although some incorrectly identified formal agents.

(c)   Most responses correctly identified 'how' formal social control operates, but few responses achieved the very highest marks here because they did not address the question in terms of 'modern societies'.

(d)   This question elicited a wide range of responses. There was a tendency for one-sided responses, mostly against the proposition. However, many candidates incorporated a sociological perspective into their answers, and contrasted functionalist and Marxist accounts of social control. Only a few candidates were able to illustrate their understanding with empirical points.

Section C

Question 4

(a)   This question was very well answered with the majority of candidates achieving 2 marks.

(b)   The overwhelming majority of candidates were able to respond appropriately, with most achieving full marks.

(c)   This question produced a good range of responses, tapping into the fact that there were a variety of possible explanations to the question. The majority focused on childcare responsibilities and discriminatory practices. Generally, there was a good use of sociological vocabulary present.

(d)   This question produced many good responses. The best ones had a wide scope and did not focus solely on the workplace, ranging across education, family, legislation and even the media. Weaker responses tended to be one-sided and dated in their use of material.

Question 5

(a)   This question was generally well answered with many candidates achieving 2 marks.

(b)   This question produced a mixed response. Many candidates correctly identified alternative social divisions to that of class; however, a substantial number of these were insufficiently developed to achieve 3-4 marks. A number of candidates used examples that were not illustrative of 'modern societies'.

(c)   Most candidates identified relevant causal factors although some were rather narrow in their focus e.g. 'wealth'. Others demonstrated more scope to their answers but few offered enough development or sociological evidence to achieve the highest marks. Surprisingly few candidates demonstrated really good accounts of the relationship between class and education.

(d)   This question was not well answered, although some Centres had prepared their candidates very well. Many responses offered simplistic accounts of social class and change. Many were assertive and one-sided, typically in firm agreement with the proposition that class differences were disappearing. Use of terms like embourgeoisement and proletarianisation were common and welcome, but they often were not well directed toward the question. Few counter-argued by referring to the persistent rich-poor gap.

Section D

Question 6

(a)   This question was generally well answered with many candidates achieving 2 marks.

(b)   There were very few good answers to this question. Many candidates were clearly not familiar with the term, whilst others confused 'authority' with 'authoritarian' which invariably resulted in mistaken responses.

(c)   This question produced a moderate range of answers. Most responses were somewhat simplistic and, whilst rewarded, rarely permitted the candidates to enter the 5-6 Level. The range of response was typically very narrow.

(d)   Again, answers tended to be narrow in range. Most candidates contrasted Marxist and pluralist accounts and focused on the ability of insider groups to acquire the ear of decision-makers. Some, but by no means all, candidates showed awareness of the typology of pressure groups. This meant that not all candidates were able to address the question satisfactorily. Some confusion was present over the word 'others' in the question, with a few candidates interpreting it, mistakenly, as referring to non-pressure groups. However, these responses were rewarded if they were credible.

Question 7

(a)   Most responses were typically relevant although not always explicit enough to achieve 2 marks.

(b)   This question was moderately well answered, although a number of candidates often only identified one relevant influence convincingly. There was a tendency toward simplistic points.

(c)   Answers generally lacked range and depth. Overall, candidates did not seem well-prepared for this question. Those who performed better usually looked at the projection of party leaders, the role played by 'spin doctors' etc.

(d)   This question produced a wide range of responses, some of which were good. Better answers showed sound knowledge of those factors that challenged the idea that voting behaviour was no longer class and family background based. Many introduced the concept of dealignment to good effect. Weaker responses were one-sided, usually opposing the view. There was a tendency toward use of dated material, although some Centres were very contemporary indeed, even making reference to elections in 2010.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/13

Paper 13

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Question 7

(a)   Most responses were typically relevant although not always explicit enough to achieve 2 marks.

(b)   This question was moderately well answered, although a number of candidates often only identified one relevant influence convincingly. There was a tendency toward simplistic points.

(c)   Answers generally lacked range and depth. Overall, candidates did not seem well-prepared for this question. Those who performed better usually looked at the projection of party leaders, the Role played by 'spin doctors' etc.

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SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/21
Paper 21

General comments

The standard this session was generally good in comparison with other sessions. Some candidates had clearly absorbed a good understanding of sociological concepts, although few were able to name key studies. There were very few problems with the rubric, although where this occurred there tended to be a Centre factor. Some candidates are continuing to write out the questions before answering, which wastes valuable time. A minor problem was the few candidates who did not write question numbers alongside their answers, leaving the Examiner to guess which questions had been attempted. On the whole most candidates answered the required three questions, spending an equal amount of time on each.

Section A – The Family

Question 1

(a)   Most candidates were able to provide an adequate definition of the term 'functions'.

(b)   A well answered question on the whole. Popular functions described included primary socialisation and care of children.

(c)   A reasonably well answered question in which the majority of candidates were able to explain how family functions have changed in modern industrial societies. Functions being taken over or shared with other institutions, less division of labour, and more specialised functions were among the explanations.

(d)   Candidates appeared to find this part of the question more difficult. Many gave points based on common sense, rather than sociological knowledge.
        The stronger candidates concentrated on the continuing importance of the primary functions of the family, and evidence of diversity in family types, rather than decline of family.

Question 2

(a)   A well answered question by the majority of candidates.

(b)   Most of the candidates were able to identify two other types of family, although some failed to describe the structure of the various families.

(c)   Only a few candidates provided a sound account of how the roles of children within the family have changed in modern industrial societies. The better answers discussed the concept of childhood and its social construction, and the increasing child-centredness of modern families.

(d)   Many candidates provided a limited or one-sided answer here. The diversity of family types found in modern industrial societies was a common approach. Few offered any assessment or analytical development.

Question 3

(a)   Most candidates were able to provide an adequate definition of the 'formal curriculum'. However, a few candidates confused the terms 'formal curriculum' and 'hidden curriculum'.

(b)   Candidates appeared to have difficulty here. The stronger answers included reference to sports, subject choice, and images of males and females in books. Again, some candidates confused the terms 'formal curriculum' and 'hidden curriculum'.

(c) This part of the question was generally well answered, with a wide range of relevant points offered. However, few candidates referred to appropriate studies or sociologists.

(d) This part of the question was generally very well answered. Candidates offered a pleasing range of factors relating to home background and educational achievements. Material and cultural deprivation appeared along with parental attitudes and peer group pressure.

Question 4

(a) Most candidates provided only a partial answer here. A very few defined 'stereotyping'.

(b) The majority of candidates answered this part of the question well. They identified and described two ways in which a candidate's social class may influence their educational achievement. Popular responses included examples of material or cultural deprivation, lack of appropriate role models and access to better Schools.

(c) Candidates had difficulty with this part of the question, and answers tended towards the prescriptive.

(d) This part of the question also proved difficult for many candidates, and few were able to suggest appropriate initiatives, such as compensatory education programmes, mixed ability teaching, and strategies to promote equal treatment. Some candidates failed to concentrate on the performance of ethnic minorities in particular.

Question 5

(a) Most candidates were able to provide an adequate definition of the term 'official crime statistics'.

(b) Most answers cited reasons such as the 'absence of a victim', and 'embarrassment for the company'. Some, however, gave reasons why crime in general often goes unrecorded, instead of concentrating on 'white-collar' crime in particular.

(c) This part of the question was generally answered well. Candidates provided a wide range of reasons why some people fail to report crime to the police.

(d) Candidates appeared well informed on the strengths and limitations of official crime statistics in general, but many had difficulty linking their knowledge to the activities of the police.

Stronger candidates offered material such as deployment of police resources, police stereotyping and labelling.

Question 6

(a) Most candidates offered an adequate definition of 'formal social control'.

(b) On the whole this was a generally well answered part of the question. Candidates provided a wide range of examples of deviant and/or criminal behaviour.

(c) This part of the question proved more difficult for many candidates. Among the better answers, candidates discussed the power of the media, law enforcement agencies and society's elites to label some groups.

Few candidates were able to suggest which groups were likely to be labelled deviant, for example the working class, young males, and ethnic minority groups.

(d) This part of the question was an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of labelling, i.e. 'moral panics', and 'deviancy amplification'.

Few answers provided the range or depth to reach the top banding.

The stronger candidates discussed other factors which may influence the level of crime, for example the activities of the police.

Question 7

(a)   Most candidates provided an adequate definition of the term 'mass media'.

(b)   This was a more difficult part of the question for many candidates. Few were able to offer sound sociological knowledge of trends in the ownership and control of the mass media in modern industrial societies.

    Among the stronger candidates, factors provided included concentration of the mass media into the hands of a few large companies, and the tendency of the owners not only to 'own' but also to control the broadcasting industries.

(c)   This again proved difficult for many candidates, with few able to offer more than assertion and over-generalisation.

(d)   This part of the question was reasonably well answered by those who attempted it. A range of suggestions were offered to explain how owners of the mass media are able to influence and control the behaviour of individuals and groups. Few managed to score in the top part of the band. Those that did referred to other influences, i.e. the family, peer groups and education.

Question 8

(a)   Surprisingly few candidates were able to provide a clear definition of the term 'advertising'. In most cases an incomplete definition was offered.

(b)   Candidates found this part of the question difficult. Few answers referred to types of advertising, for example aspirational or subliminal advertising.

    Most answers were based on assertion or common sense type approaches, rather than sociological knowledge.

(c)   This was another difficult part of the question for many candidates, with most answers relying on assertion and common sense. Few candidates offered appropriate sociological theory or knowledge of the purposes of advertising.

(d)   This part of the question was reasonably well answered by those who attempted it.

    Factors other than advertising which may influence lifestyles included: status and income, peer group pressure, music and fashion and individualistic values.

    Some answers lacked range and detail and few offered a well-reasoned conclusion.

SOCIOLOGY

> **Paper 0495/22**
>
> **Paper 22**

General comments

Candidates' overall performance this session was varied, both within and across Centres. The stronger candidates with in depth knowledge and understanding of the topic areas attained scores ranging between 40 and 50. A few candidates attained 50 plus and one or two achieved full marks.

The use of candidates' own experiences is to be encouraged, provided it is linked to appropriate sociological theory and not assertion or personal bias.

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Section A – The Family

Question 1

(a)   Most candidates offered an appropriate, if limited, definition of the term single parent family.

(b)   Most candidates were able to offer two examples of other types of family. A few identified family types but failed to describe the structure of that family.

In rare cases candidates cited types of marriage, i.e. monogamy and polygamy, rather than types of family.

(c)   The stronger candidates were able to offer a range of reasons for the increase in single parent families, i.e. increasing divorce rates, and its growing acceptability. The economic and social independence of woman, the increase in secularisation, and the rise in the number of couples cohabiting were amongst the reasons given.

(d)   The better answers offered in depth knowledge and understanding of the debate surrounding the importance of the family in modern industrial societies. Some answers were rather one-sided. The weaker answers for example mentioned 'marriage problems' rather than family, relying mainly on common sense and assertion.

Question 2

(a)   On the whole this was a well answered question. However, some of the candidates offered only a limited definition of monogamy.

(b)   Many candidates failed to discuss the decline in first marriages and referred instead to marriages in general.

This highlights the need for candidates to read the question thoroughly and carefully, as many failed to gain marks in this part of the question.

(c) This question varied in quality. Some candidates answered very well, whilst others seemingly misunderstood the question.

(d) At the lower end of the band there was much assertion and personal opinion expressed, with few basic points of sociological relevance.

At the top end of the band candidates provided a more balanced debate, with reference to supporting sociological theory.

Question 3

(a) Some candidates were unable to provide a clear definition of meritocracy; many offered only partial definitions, making reference, for example, to 'equality in society'.

(b) The majority of candidates were able to offer something of relevance here in relation to equality within education. However, others were only able to offer one weak undeveloped answer.

(c) This was generally well answered by most candidates. A wide range of responses were offered, including knowledge of changes taking place in their own and other societies.

The better answers also addressed both home and school factors.

(d) Many candidates appeared to struggle with this part of the question, and answers provided little sociological terminology or theoretical reference. The better candidates offered answers that were more balanced in terms of the evidence that there is 'equality of opportunity' for all in modern industrial societies. Weaker candidates offered more one-sided answers.

Question 4

(a) Some candidates were unable to provide a clear definition of the term ethnic groups. However, most were able to provide a partial answer.

(b) This was generally well answered, and most candidates offered two school factors that may influence the educational performance of ethnic minorities. Factors included: ethnocentrism in the curriculum, streaming and banding policy, the use of stereotypes and the elaborated language code used in schools. A few candidates offered 'outside school' factors, again highlighting the need for candidates to read the questions more carefully.

(c) This question was well answered by the majority of candidates, with a wide range of material and cultural factors offered. Factors included, for example: parental attitudes, language codes, lack of educational resources in the home and the influence of peer groups.

(d) This part of the question was often not as well answered. Some of the candidates offered appropriate theory and argument, but only a few candidates were able to offer relevant sociological factors, such as compensatory education, free school places and lack of extra curricular activities for disadvantaged groups.

Question 5

(a) Many candidates had difficulty in defining 'youth culture', as a set of values and behaviour associated with young people.

(b) Social characteristics were misinterpreted by some candidates, although many were able to offer two social characteristics that distinguish young people from older age groups.

Popular answers focused on music, fashion and mode of speech.

(c) Many candidates had difficulty contextualising youth culture, and few offered a good account of why youth culture had become a feature of modern societies.

Possible factors included, for example: the extensions of higher education, growing affluence among teenagers and the growth of the media.

(d)   This again proved difficult for many candidates. Few were able to provide any real sociological insight in terms of possible threats to the dominant values of society.

Many concentrated instead on deviant or criminal activities carried out by young people.

Question 6

(a)   This was generally well answered by most candidates. A few referred to the middle class nature of white collar crime, but failed to add 'in the course of their occupations'.

(b)   Popular examples included fraud, bribery, and embezzlement. Few mentioned industrial or environmental crimes, or breaches of health and safety regulations law.

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A few candidates discussed under representation of crime in general, rather than stating why white collar crime is under-represented in the official statistics.

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Few candidates could address the 'how far' part of the question, and only a limited few discussed self-report and victim surveys in their answers.

Question 7

(a)   Many candidates gave only a partial definition of the term stereotype.

Good answers were along the lines of 'a generalised and simplified description of a person or group as having certain characteristics. This can distort the truth, often in a prejudicial way'.

(b)   Many candidates gave clear and concise examples and explanations. Some, however, appeared to have misunderstood the question.

Examples used included the stereotyping of groups like women, youth, working class and ethnic minorities.

(c)   Many good answers to this question referred to a range of media images of males and females.

(d)   The majority of candidates found this part of the question a challenge. Many of the answers provided were based on assertion and common sense.

The stronger candidates gave examples of how the mass media influences young people, for example through music, fashion, advertising and the use of celebrity role models.

Few candidates addressed the 'how far' part of the question, which required reference to other influences on young people, e.g. family, peer group, education and religion.

Question 8

(a)   Definitions of democratic society varied in quality. Many candidates offered a partial answer, with reference to equal rights. However, few mentioned that people elect a government to represent their views.

(b)   There were a few good answers here, but many candidates appeared to have misunderstood the question.

The better answers referred to censorship, news values and the decisions of owners and editors of media businesses.

(c) Many candidates answered this question utilising common sense approaches, offering little in the way of sociological insight. The better answers attempted to define bias and distortion, and provided examples of these.

(d) On the whole, candidates found this part of the question very challenging. Assertion and generalisation were common, with poor linkage to the question.

A few candidates offered some attempt at assessment, making relevant links between democracy and the mass media.

Balanced answers containing arguments for and against were few and far between.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/23

Paper 23

General comments

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