

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/11
11 The Family

Key messages

Candidates should:

- divide their time equally between **Section A** and **Section B** which are both worth 25 marks
- read the stimulus material and questions carefully, paying attention to the command words used
- support their answers with precise sociological studies and theories
- ensure they are familiar with all key concepts listed in the syllabus
- include analysis and evaluation as well as knowledge of sociological material in their answers when this is required by the question.

General comments

Nearly all candidates answered all the required questions and there were few rubric errors or signs of rushed final answers. A few candidates answered both **Question 2** and **Question 3** and some did not answer all required questions on the paper. Some candidates displayed a good understanding of sociology including a wide range of general theory and concepts. Performance could be improved by the application of more sociological studies, especially in extended answers which require evaluation as well as the appropriate application of knowledge. Candidates who construct their answer in response to the specific wording of the question are more successful, others need to develop their skills in composing tightly structured, analytical responses to the questions set for this paper. Candidates should read questions carefully, paying particular attention to command and key words used.

Question 1 generally received higher marks than the essay questions. Candidates could improve on their performance by using time effectively and including more detail as well as the higher order skills of application and evaluation in their extended answers.

Candidates responses were more effective where they

- related their answer to the key concepts and wording of the question
- supported their answers with references to and arguments from sociological theory
- planned their answers to avoid over lengthy and repetitive descriptions of knowledge.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

The stimulus material accompanying this question provided clear, focused information that proved helpful in enabling the majority of candidates to direct their attention to what was being asked and to offer appropriate response to each question. Where there was evidence of limited sociological knowledge and understanding, candidates were still able to use the stimulus phrases to gain some reward.

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates know that the term related to actions in society and is culturally produced. Some offered partial definitions or described aspects of socialisation. Good answers were able to demonstrate that it relates to behaviour that is culturally rather than naturally or biologically produced. In order to improve performance candidates need to be familiar with all the terms outlined in the syllabus. A common error was to state that age was a social construct and to simply define age. A number of candidates gave a weak definition of the term but then used it accurately

later in the paper. A common error was to link the concept to the building of society or the emergence or construction of society.

- (b) Most candidates offered two acceptable problems for society of an ageing population. Candidates need to read questions carefully as some described the problems caused for the elderly or changing fertility levels which were not the focus of the question. The most successful answers outlined two different problems separately (numbering them 1 and 2) and related their answer to society. Less successful answers were likely to mix together the descriptions of both problems. Successful answers outlined the dependency ratio, increased need for care, policy implications for pensions and the costs for families and economies. Common errors were to name something without explaining why it was a problem, explain why there is an ageing population or describe an ageing population on a global scale. A less common error was to moralise about the way in which the elderly are treated in society.
- (c) Most answers named at least two societies and outlined the difference between them, usually by contrasting the status of the elderly as a burden in one society and a respected social group in another. The most successful of these named specific societies such as Japan and the U.S.A. or aspects of influence such as class, gender ethnicity and sub-culture rather than using generic terms such as 'developed' or 'some societies'. Many of these answers were supported by a discussion of the social construction of age in different societies. In order to improve on their performance candidates should look to support their points by reference to sociological research such as the work of Vincent on the position of the elderly and understand the meaning of key terms such as status rather than relying on common sense answers.
- (d) The majority of candidates were able to discuss successfully the role that age plays within family structures although they were weaker about how age is a social division as opposed to a role. This was frequently linked to power and authority within the family and how this can influence relationships. More successful answers identified another social division and how it influences relationships within the family and the most popular was gender. This allowed for a more developed answer as opposed to one which just described roles, explained how individuals are socialised or described rites of passage. Candidates showed sound knowledge of gender as a social division. Some excellent answers contrasted how individuals pass through different stages whereas gender is fixed throughout life. There was some very good use of Postman and how it is possible to show that childhood and adulthood have merged in postmodern societies. Some candidates selected a factor such as religion or ethnicity to contrast with age and it was difficult to support such arguments sociologically. In order to improve performance candidates need to read the question carefully. This is especially relevant in relation to the command words. This question asked for assessment which meant outlining at least two factors and comparing them. The most successful answers considered the 'extent' in the question. Not all answers described relationships within the family but rather focused on society which was not the focus of the question.

Section B

Candidates were required to answer either **Question 2** or **Question 3** in this section of the paper.

Question 2 was more popular than **Question 3**. These option questions were usually answered reasonably by candidates who had allowed enough time to plan and develop their answer. A number of candidates offered a rather hurried list like answer. This section is worth 50 per cent of the total marks for this paper and candidates should spend 45 minutes preparing for and answering it.

Question 2

Candidates who had read the question carefully and understood its meaning offered responses that contained detailed arguments on each side of the debate. These used concepts, theories and studies well, referring to: 'fit', Parsons, Murdock, Marxism, Chester, Feminism and evaluating by using family diversity or Post modernism to support their answer. There were some very good descriptions of the bean pole family as well as a variety of other family types; most candidates were able to give a wide list of diverse families. Some were able to provide a clear account of a range of family structures in modern industrial societies and relate the social and economic changes that could impact on the structure of the family. Others needed to develop more detailed answers containing concepts, theories or studies in order to achieve higher marks. A common error was to interpret the question as one asking which is the best type of family according to feminists or the New Right. In order to improve their performance, candidates need to have sound understanding of basic sociological information such as the work of Murdock who was frequently misquoted. Another strategy to boost performance would be to use sociological examples as evidence to develop points rather than

reference to television programmes as well as to evaluate points or theories within their answer. A small number of responses were unclear on what a nuclear family is. Many of these correctly defined it at the start of their response, but then later showed confusion as to which modern family types are nuclear. A few candidates interpreted 'dominant' to mean the inflicting of dominance or power within the family itself and then went on to describe domestic violence

Question 3

Few candidates selected this question but the majority of those who did had some understanding of Marxist theory about the relationship between the family and the economy if only in as much as providing a workforce. Others clearly engaged with the economic function and used Marxism and functionalism well. These tended to use feminism or Neo-Marxism as evaluation of other perspectives. A number of candidates were able to provide an effective argument that explored issues such as family support, exploitation of women, ideological control and functional fit. Others looked at the possible changing functions of the family, included aspects of welfare support and collective responsibility or the global differences using theory to support their answer. Less successful answers were brief and/or outlined other functions of the family and used common sense examples rather than sociological ones.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/12
12 The Family

Key messages

Candidates should:

- divide their time equally between **Section A** and **Section B** which are both worth 25 marks
- read the stimulus material and questions carefully, paying attention to the command words used
- support their answers with precise sociological studies and theories
- ensure they are familiar with all key concepts listed in the syllabus
- include analysis and evaluation as well as knowledge of sociological material in their answers when this is required by the question.

General comments

The paper was well answered by the majority of candidates who answered the required number of questions with no rubric errors. There was evidence of planning in many successful answers and few signs of rushed final answers. Many candidates displayed a sophisticated and detailed knowledge and understanding of sociology including a wide range of theory, empirical data and concepts as well as reference to contemporary societies presented in a well-constructed framework. These candidates also shared the time evenly between the questions. Other answers were hurried or incomplete occasionally in a list like format rather than using an essay style response.

Some candidates addressed the questions in a generalised way rather than responding to the specific wording of the question. In order to improve such answers need to be more directly linked to the question and include evaluative points.

In summary, candidates' responses were more effective when they

- related their answer to the key concepts and wording of the question
- supported their answers with references to and arguments from sociological theory
- planned their answers to avoid over lengthy and repetitive descriptions of knowledge.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

The stimulus material accompanying this question provided clear, focused information that proved helpful in enabling the majority of candidates to direct their attention to what was being asked and to offer appropriate response to each question. Where there was evidence of limited sociological knowledge and understanding, candidates were still able to use the stimulus phrases to gain some reward. Many candidates spent much longer on **Section A** than **Section B**.

Question 1

- (a) A very well understood concept. Many answers were very concise and this is to be encouraged in this question. Others overcomplicated their answer by including more detail than required giving reasons why reconstituted families happen. An uncommon error was to refer to the emergence of different roles and purposes of family life in modern industrial societies. Some candidates did not include children in their definition and purely described re-marriage, a few simply described the nuclear family.

- (b) Nearly all candidates correctly identified and described two appropriate family structures. A small number named the same type twice such as single and lone parent family and so could only be awarded marks for one of their examples. Others identified two but only described one. Candidates need to be well versed in basic sociological terminology. An uncommon error was to name a type of household rather than a family or a childless family such as the empty nest family or LATs.
- (c) Most candidates offered excellent argument with two or more reasons for why individuals have more choice outlined and supported by theory or contemporary data. Many noted the post-modern focus of the question and these developed arguments which outlined the way in which factors such as secularisation, employment opportunities and the changing position of women which made it possible for individuals to exercise more choice in their living arrangements. These answers correctly focused on why change has happened rather than simply describing the change. Some very good responses did include comparison between the past and the present and the opportunities presented in these situations. Good use was made of concepts such as class, ethnic variations and gender. Other answers evaluated whether choice was good or bad or described life styles. Candidates need to fully understand command words and this question only required explanation and not evaluation. Some descriptions of diversity would have been more appropriate if used in answering **Question 1d**. Answers which developed each point into a separate paragraph tended to make the explanation of different points more focused on to the question.
- (d) Candidates had a good understanding of the meaning of family diversity. Many responses were excellent with detailed arguments on both sides of the debate using appropriate theory and candidates had clearly understood the wording in the question. Very good use was made of the work of key thinkers such as Fletcher, Chester, Somerville, Calhoun and Brannen. Some of these answers took a for and against style, which gained some credit, but did not include an assessment of 'exaggerated'. There was excellent application of the work of theorists such as Stacey and the use of concepts such as 'fluid' and 'family of choice'. Some answers were too brief and were one sided or were written in a list like form describing different types of families and this was particularly noticeable in relation to the work of the Rappaports. Others went into overlong detail rather than making a succession of points. Candidates need to read the question carefully looking for command words as some misunderstood the question thinking it meant that the family had lost importance. Candidates can improve on their performance by having an accurate understanding of the work of Murdock, many wrote at length about his definition displaying weak understanding instead of focusing on the question as set. In order to improve, some candidates need to focus their answer and include some evaluation for a question worth 11 marks. Some answers were longer than their answer to **Question 2** or **3**.

Section B

Both questions were popular but more candidates answered **Question 2** than **Question 3**. Those candidates who had who had allocated some time to planning their response prior to answering the question usually answered well. Other answers were rather hurried and maybe indicated that the candidate had not allocated enough time to answering this question. Both sections of the paper have 25 marks and it is important that candidates allocate enough time to each.

A number of candidates started one essay then crossed it out and chose the other. This is permissible but candidates should be instructed to number their answer correctly as some had done one essay but labelled it as the other.

Question 2

Many excellent responses contained detailed arguments on both side of the debate and included extensive sociological support which included theory, concepts and reference to appropriate sociological evidence. There were some very good responses from well prepared candidates who were able to provide a clear account of possible changes in the relationships between parents and children focusing on evidence of greater equality. Some compared the position of children in different societies, comparing Brazilian street children and child workers to those in societies where children are better protected. A few candidates took an interesting view that relationships between parents and children in the past were more equal as children worked whereas now they are depended on their parents. Excellent use was made of the concepts of the nurtured and the nurturing child. Some candidates took a broader historical view and this could be successful if direct reference to parents and children were included and such answers highlighted changes in the concept of childhood as well as legal changes. Such answers included evaluative points. Other candidates described childhood and how it had changed over time without making reference to the relationship between

parents and children and no links were made to equality. A common error was to misread greater equality as gender equality and such answers tended to focus on the nuclear family and conjugal roles. Others described family relationships with little or no reference to children. Candidates need to be reminded to read questions carefully before starting their answer.

Question 3

Many excellent responses contained detailed arguments on both side of the debate and included detailed sociological support which including theory, concepts and reference to appropriate sociological studies. Many candidates wrote full and perceptive answers demonstrating considerable insight into how the nuclear family might or might not serve the interests of the state. Such candidates had clearly interpreted the question correctly and described the ways in which the family performs functions, such as the economic function, which helps the state to operate. Others supported their responses by making use of a range of theoretical perspectives based on Marxist, Neo-Marxists, functionalist, feminist post-modernist and New Right views. Such answers had a clear understanding of what was meant by 'the state' and use concepts such as fitness for purpose, aspects of the family as self-serving and exploitation. There were some good and through Marxist presentations with functionalist rebuttals of the view contained in the question. The Marxist position was frequently described as assisting the state because the nuclear family served 'capitalism'. Some candidates used capitalism as an alternative term to that of the state and candidates should be advised that it more appropriate to use the key words in the question. A number of candidates focused primarily on the nuclear family and discussing the nuclear family as an independent topic, therefore, not making explicit connections to how the nuclear family could be seen to serve the interests of the state. Some candidates could improve on their response by including an evaluative conclusion. Common errors were to describe why the extended family did not serve the interests of the state and to include overlong and largely unnecessary explanation of the work of Engels.

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/13
13 The Family

Key messages

Candidates should:

- divide their time equally between **Section A** and **Section B** which are both worth 25 marks
- read the stimulus material and questions carefully, paying attention to the command words used
- support their answers with precise sociological studies and theories
- ensure they are familiar with all key concepts listed in the syllabus
- include analysis and evaluation as well as knowledge of sociological material in their answers when this is required by the question.

General comments

The paper was well answered by nearly all candidates demonstrating careful preparation; there were no rubric errors and few signs of rushed final answers. Many candidates displayed a sophisticated and detailed understating of sociology including a wide range of theory, empirical data and concepts as well as reference to appropriate contemporary societies. These candidates also shared the time evenly between the questions. Other answers were hurried or incomplete occasionally in a list like format rather than using an essay style response.

Some candidates addressed the questions in a generalised way rather than responding to the specific wording of the question. In order to improve such answers there needs to be a more direct link between the answer and the specific question set.

In summary, candidates' responses were more effective when they

- related their answer to the key concepts and wording of the question
- supported their answers with references to and arguments from sociological theory
- planned their answers to avoid over lengthy and repetitive descriptions of knowledge.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

The stimulus material accompanying this question provided clear, focused information that proved helpful in enabling the majority of candidates to direct their attention to what was being asked and to offer appropriate response to each question. Where there was evidence of limited sociological knowledge and understanding, candidates were still able to use the stimulus phrases to gain some reward.

Question 1

- (a) This concept was not well understood but the majority of candidates attempted an answer. Some candidates knew that the term was associated with Giddens but then described different family types. Candidates need to be familiar with all key concepts listed in the syllabus.
- (b) Most candidates had a good understanding of the types of families that had become more common in recent times. The best answers clearly named a type such as beanpole/lone/blended families and the briefly described it. Candidates would have been well advised not to get involved in long descriptions of why these family types have emerged which was not what the question was asking. However, many candidates received full marks. Some candidates selected nuclear or extended

family as their example and it is not clear that they are 'new' family types especially as some candidates quoted 'in preindustrial times extended families were common.' These types could be appropriate if connected to social processes such as recent trends in migration. Common errors were to identify two versions of the same type such as lone and single parent families or singleton households which are not a family.

- (c) This was a well answered question and many candidates including reference to the New Right, Morgan, Marsland and Murray and their criticisms of family diversity and the alleged social problems created including those associated with welfare dependency, increased crime and the lack of male role models. The views of functionalists were considered, comparing the position of Chester and Fletcher as well as the implications of a 'risk' society. A common error was to focus on what the potential benefits of living in a nuclear family are as opposed to the 'negatives of diversity' as the question required. A less common error was to evaluate if it is true that negatives can be related to diversity. Although many candidates wrote excellent sociological answer in this evaluation it was not what the question had asked and candidates would be well advised to pay attention to command words. **Question (c)** asks for explanation not evaluation. Candidates lose no marks by doing this but neither do they gain any and the time could be better used on other parts of the paper.
- (d) Many candidates answered this question very well achieving the highest level of marks. Some were extremely sophisticated using many theories and theorists for example Postman and the ability of children to influence their choices of family life and life course. Many of these answers contained detailed arguments on both sides of the debate. Many agreed that there was great freedom to choose and supported their answer with sociological evidence such as the work of the Rappaports, feminist writers as well as detailing social, economic and legal changes that have enabled individuals to have greater choice. Some concentrated on the restrictions that society can impose. Stronger answers considered sides, offering details of how individuals have greater freedom to choose as well as pointing out that even in societies where there are freedoms there can also be constraining factors too. Useful reference was made to legal changes permitting same sex relationships and divorce. Comparisons were made between societies based on class, gender, age, ethnicity and religion. Specific societies such as China, Pakistan and Nigeria were referred to with credit. Candidates can improve on their answers by reading questions carefully and identifying the key concepts. This one asked about being 'free' to have 'choice'. Common errors were to interpret this as equality in the family/loss of function in the family/which is the dominant family. Some candidates included information in this answer which would have improved their answer to part (c) of their paper. Candidates can improve their performance by thinking about their answers to the whole paper before starting to write. Some answers to this question were longer than the answer to **Question 2** or **3**.

Section B

Most essays showed a sound understanding of sociological theories, empirical data and concepts and applied their knowledge to answering the question as set. Those candidates who had who had allocated some time to plan their response prior to answering the question usually answered well. Other answers were rather hurried and maybe indicated that the candidate had not allocated enough time to answering this question. Both sections of the paper have 25 marks and it is important that candidates allocate enough time to each.

Question 2

This question was answered well by the majority of candidates, many of whom offered detailed arguments on both sides of the debate considering whether the family serves the interests of all of its members, some of its members or none. Others needed to develop more detailed and balanced arguments in order to achieve high marks as they outlined the view of one side (usually that of the functionalists, arguing that the family does serve the interests of all and justified this with the work of Murdock and Parsons). Or they used the alternative view, such as that of the Marxists and the feminists, that the family does not serve all needs equally. The best responses outlined how the functions of the family impact of different members both to their advantage and disadvantage. Those that really excelled at this question included children and the elderly and did not confine themselves to male/female or conjugal roles. Again candidates could improve their responses by ensuring they have read the question and answered what was being asked. A common error was to interpret equally as the family needs to introduce equality.

Question 3

This question was answered well by the majority of candidates, with many answers containing detailed arguments on both sides of the debate. There was some very good use of contemporary sociology such as the work of Lucy Mair. A number of candidates showed clear understanding of the issues and had an excellent knowledge of a range of studies outlining a range of statuses that the elderly can have that considered historical, cultural and social dimensions. Both positive and negative views were considered and well supported with evidence such as that of Mutran, Burk and Dowd as well as concepts such as disengagement. A few considered gender differences and their impact on status for elderly females compared to the elderly males. Others needed to develop more detailed and balanced arguments and conclusions in order to achieve high marks.

SOCIOLOGY

<p>Paper 9699/21 21 Theory and Methods</p>
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Key messages

- Good answers showed sound knowledge and understanding of a range of sociological concepts and theories. Some candidates were able to apply these theories appropriately to the questions.
- This session candidates performed a little better in the data response question compared to the essay one.
- The skills required for success in some elements of **Question 1** remain lacking in a number of cases.
- Poor understanding of the meaning of some key concepts undermined responses to methods-based questions. For example, candidates are uncertain of the meaning of validity and reliability and often confuse the two.
- Little evidence of the use of empirical studies to illustrate methodological issues; development in this area is something that could help improve performance.

General comments

The standard of responses was fairly similar to the previous session. Those candidates achieving the highest marks demonstrated all of the relevant skills. The essay element (**Section B**) was less well answered than the data response element (**Section A**). The necessity for candidates to adopt a more strategic approach to each of the sub questions within **Question 1** was evident again. Candidates should look to produce responses that contain concise, well distinguished points that are sociologically developed. In terms of skills, for **1a** it is useful for candidates to think about writing a response that contains two elements in relation to outlining the term. Throughout **Question 1** there was a deficit in the knowledge base of some key terms, and the use of key methodological terms like validity and reliability lacked conceptual accuracy and they were often confused or used interchangeably. Overall, responses to the essay questions produced some good answers with a number of candidates demonstrating sound essay construction skills that included analytical understanding of different theoretical strands. However, many responses lacked sufficient substance and depth and few candidates produced responses which achieved the highest marks. Candidates should try to make greater use of empirical studies from other parts of the specification when discussing theoretical and methodological issues. Those candidates who supported their arguments using studies in **Question 1d** on unstructured interview often produced better quality answers, but there were very few of them. Candidates need to answer the question set and ensure that their responses are consistently addressing the wording of question. In both essays there was a tendency for some candidates to provide answers for questions that they had prepared for rather the question on the paper. Reminding candidates to show that they understand the question and the specific issues raised by its wording is a useful thing for Centres to consider. There were no rubric errors and mostly no time related issues, although a number of responses were not of a sufficient overall length given the exam's duration

Question 1

- (a) Most responses were not able to define the term sampling frame accurately. There was a clear deficit in knowledge of this concept. A number of candidates made reference to the target population or criteria for sampling rather than a list.
- (b) Most responses could identify an appropriate advantage and disadvantage, and many were able to describe these sufficiently well enough to gain a second mark. Overall there was good evidence that candidates were aware of a range of points that could be made to answer this question, although not all went on to gain 3 or 4 marks because their development points were not sufficiently explanatory. This question demands precision in the way candidates craft their answers. Practising the skills of identifying and then describing might improve candidates' success in this

question. A number of candidates offered more than two points but could only be rewarded for the most accurate ones.

- (c) Many responses tended to make one or two reasonable points, often on the constraints of the structure or on aspects of bias applying to any interview. In order to gain higher marks, there needs to be a greater range of points made or greater development. Those that did do so often achieved this by successfully linking their ideas to key concepts or sociological perspectives. In common with previous years, a number of responses made evaluation points by discussing the strengths of structured interviews, which was not necessary in this question.
- (d) This question was handled somewhat better than **1c** although a number of candidates were too reliant on the source material without making significant additions. Many responses gave a basic summary of the strengths and weaknesses of interviews usually with a commentary of the general features of this method. In order to gain further marks candidates needed to explore the key concepts of validity and reliability or the debates arising in relation to positivism with greater assurance. As with other methodological questions, candidates would have benefitted from using empirical studies to illustrate their ideas or to make evaluation points.

Question 2

This question was the most popular of the two essay options. Overall, candidates did not cope well with the issues raised in the question and there were many answers relying simply on common sense rather than sociological knowledge. Successful responses often addressed the question in terms of the positivist – interpretivist debate. A few candidates included relevant points from key thinkers such as Durkheim and Weber and some genuinely sought to reach evaluative conclusions. A number of responses asserted that individuals are all inevitably biased and therefore sociologists must be too. Many candidates also incorrectly asserted that sociologists would want to distort their results. A way to have improved performance in this essay would have been to pursue the idea that some perspectives are value linked (e.g. Marxism, feminism). Generally, there appeared to be a deficit in candidate understanding about the issue of values in research.

Question 3

Although this question was less popular, it was more likely to be answered successfully than **Question 2**. Some reasonably good answers covered either functionalism or Marxism well, but seldom both thoroughly. A few candidates also referred to interactionist, feminist or postmodern approaches. There was a significant proportion of responses that relied on common sense understanding and which simply described a need for and dependence on each other.

SOCIOLOGY

<p>Paper 9699/22 22 Theory and Methods</p>
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Key messages

- Good answers showed sound knowledge and understanding of a range of sociological concepts and theories. Most candidates were able to apply their understanding appropriately to the questions.
- Many essay responses contained evaluative content that was thoughtful and well applied to the question. Others showed a tendency for juxtaposed assessment that could be developed to achieve higher marks.
- Candidates continue to perform a little better in the essay questions compared to the data response one. However, the gap is closing.
- The skills required for success in some elements of **Question 1** could be improved upon. Typically, candidates write too much for **Questions 1a** and **1b**. Many also approach **Question 1d** as requiring an essay style response, but this is not necessary to achieve the highest marks.
- There was an improvement in the knowledge base for some sociological methods. In particular, candidates showed greater confidence in their usage of key concepts such as validity and reliability.

General comments

The standard of responses was fairly similar to that of the previous session. Those candidates achieving the highest marks demonstrated all of the relevant skills. A number of candidates produced answers of very high quality. The gap in performance between the compulsory data response question and the optional essay one has narrowed. This perhaps suggests that candidates are becoming more adept at the skills required to achieve good marks in the compulsory question. Whilst this is positive it is still worth highlighting some of the skill based areas that teachers can focus on to improve performance. **Question 1a** should contain two elements to the description. Responses should be brief and succinct. Focusing candidates' attention on this style of response will lead to more answers achieving full marks. Likewise with **1b** the emphasis should be on writing short, well crafted responses that directly address the issue. Often with this question candidates are prone to writing answers that contain material that is marginal to the question. It is quite common for introductions to be included and these are not needed. Candidates should immediately address the question's command word, in this case the identification of two ways. Practising the skills of identifying and then developing a point should help improve performance in this question. As with previous sessions, many candidates wrote far too much on this question when a few lines will do. A number of candidates respond to **Question 1d** in the style of an essay response. There is no need to do this. Only three of the marks available for this question are for evaluation, so a balanced response is not necessary to reach to top level.

Overall, responses to the essay questions produced many good answers with a number of candidates demonstrating sound essay construction skills, including analytical and sociological understanding of different theoretical strands. There was ample evidence, especially in **Question 2**, of the use of studies and key thinkers to illustrate sociological ideas. Candidates should look to avoid responses that list theoretical perspectives but which are not linked to the question. Candidates need to answer the question set and ensure that their responses are consistently addressing the wording of question. In both essays there was a tendency for some candidates to provide answers that they had prepared for rather the question on the paper. Reminding candidates to show that they understand the question and the specific issues raised by its wording is a useful thing for Centres to consider.

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates demonstrated some understanding of the term value consensus and were able to gain at least one mark for a reference to the concept of shared values or agreement on values. Successful responses connected the idea of agreement on social values to how a society is

organised and were able to gain full marks. Less successful responses misunderstood the concept and explained it in terms of social conformity or primary socialisation.

- (b) Most candidates had a fairly clear idea of what is meant by peer group. A large number of responses correctly identified two appropriate ways. The idea of peer group members as role models was common and a range of positive and negative sanctions were used to support responses. However, a proportion of candidates responded by writing about peer groups in general rather than responding to the specific issues raised by the question. A number of candidates mistakenly considered the peer group to be an agency of primary socialisation.
- (c) There was considerable variation in the quality of responses to this question. The most commonly cited reasons given to explain why individuals may not conform to socially acceptable behaviour were inadequate socialisation and/or the absence of socialisation. Cases of feral children continued to capture the imagination of many candidates, but the specific relevance of these examples often needed greater application. The influence of sub-cultures, peer group pressure, and class disadvantage were well covered. There were many references to the concept of 'over-socialisation', although the meaning of this term was not always well understood. Strong responses made effective links to relevant theoretical issues.
- (d) Many responses gave a sound summary of the interpretivist perspective on socialisation, although often further marks could have been gained by including references to relevant empirical studies and thinkers or offering more thoughtful conclusions. However, there was evidence of good knowledge in most answers with many candidates able to make effective assessment; for example, there were some sound discussions of the structuralist critiques of interpretivism. A number of responses provided an outline of the methodological approach taken by interpretivists which was not relevant to the question. Only a few candidates directly addressed the word 'convincing' in their responses and there was a tendency, even amongst good responses, to automatically agree with the statement. Many candidates treat **Question 1d** as an essay. This meant that they offered a balanced response which is not necessary to achieve full marks. Quite often more time was devoted to alternative perspectives leading to a loss of focus on the question

Question 2

The majority of candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the salient features of unstructured interviews. In most cases some relevant comparisons were made with structured interviews. Effective responses highlighted the theoretical assumptions underpinning structured and unstructured interviews. Concepts such as the halo effect and prestige bias and whether it is possible for the interviewer to inhabit a 'value vacuum' were often tackled well. The majority of candidates did not give sufficient focus to the central issue of unstructured interviews being too subjective. Many responses simply reviewed the main advantages and disadvantages of unstructured interviews as a research method. Candidates need to answer the question set; those who provided an answer for a question they had prepared for, rather than for the question on the paper, were limited to lower marks. The least effective responses engaged in lengthy discussions of the usefulness of questionnaires, participant observation, experiment and/or secondary sources of data.

Question 3

This question was less popular than **Question 2**.

While a significant proportion of candidates made references to the key theoretical positions of Marxism, functionalism, social action and post-modernism, they did not always link these to the specific thrust of the question. Discussions of what is meant by 'social order' were in many cases too vague and sometimes absent from responses. Some very good responses directly addressed the wording of the questions and put forward thoughtful evaluations. A number argued that in an age of globalisation and the emergence of a 'risk society' the idea of a stable social order has become increasingly open to question. A number of candidates made the point that in many contemporary states it is the ruling elites rather than 'the people' who have grounds for feeling the most fearful. Weaker answers were mainly based on personal assertions about the nature of social control, often limiting the response to a few examples of formal social control such as the police, and punishments such as imprisonment.

SOCIOLOGY

<p>Paper 9699/23 23 Theory and Methods</p>
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Key messages

- Good answers showed sound knowledge and understanding of a range of sociological theories and concepts. Many candidates were able to apply these appropriately to the questions.
- Many essay responses were analytical and evaluative in tone
- A number of candidates assessed mainly by juxtaposition. Higher marks can be accessed by candidates developing techniques that allow them to assess the merits of arguments not simply by contrasting them.
- Candidates continue to perform a little better in the essay question compared to the data response one. However, this distinction is narrowing.
- The skills required for success in some elements of **Question 1** remain lacking in a number of cases. A greater appreciation of the command words would improve candidate marks.

General comments

The standard of responses was fairly similar to the previous session. Those candidates achieving the highest marks showed excellent knowledge and understanding of sociological theory and methods. A number of candidates produced answers of very high quality many with an excellent evaluative tone that was present throughout their essay responses. Less successful responses were characterised by a tendency to generalised comment, and were less well supported by analysis. Sometimes candidates did not take full account of the wording of the question in their response. Differences in performance between the two sections of the paper continue to narrow. In **section A** candidates showed a variation in performance, with some concepts not especially well understood (e.g. ideology in **1a**). Candidates often produce over long definitions for **1a** and unfocused responses to **1b**. For **1a** it is useful for Centres to think about writing a response that contains two elements in relation to outlining the term. Both **1a** and **1b** demand precise and relatively brief answers. Many candidates provide introductions and conclusions for these questions which are not needed to achieve full marks. In comparison to previous sessions, many candidates used relevant empirical studies when discussing theoretical and methodological issues, which is a positive development. There were no rubric errors and mostly no time related issues.

Question 1

- (a) A number of answers showed some understanding of the term *ideology* but many were unable to develop this enough to gain full marks. The most successful responses referred to a set of ideas or beliefs that are held by a particular social group. Overall, the term did not seem to be well understood. A number of candidates were side tracked into lengthy discussions of Marxism or feminism. A simple crisp definition is required for this question, preferably containing two elements.
- (b) Most candidates had a fairly clear idea of why workers generally conform to their work roles. Most responses could specify at least one appropriate reason and very often these identifications were explained successfully. However, a number of candidates struggled to develop their reason sufficiently to gain a further mark. There was evidence of repetition in the reasons offered, particularly in relation to false consciousness. This question demands precision in the way candidates craft their answers. A proportion of candidates wrote too much for this 4 mark question. A concise paragraph is all that is required.
- (c) This question was generally well answered with a number of very good responses. The best answers integrated formal description with convincing discussion of the Marxist view on how the state maintains social control. For example, Althusser's ideological and repressive state apparatus regularly featured as a means of demonstrating this. Many introduced the hidden curriculum when

applying their understanding. Less successful responses relied on rather general knowledge of the Marxist perspective.

- (d) Many responses gave a sound summary of the functionalist perspective on social order and most offered an accompanying Marxist account as well. A number introduced feminist thinking which was also acceptable. This resulted in some sound general discussion on the nature of social order with some good examples of effective assessment. Few candidates were fully successful at addressing the precise wording of the question in relation to the idea of 'overestimation', which would have turned some very good answers into excellent ones. With questions that express a 'view' it is always good practice for candidates to attribute the view to an approach, or at least to show that they have taken note of it in the way they are responding.

Question 2

Most candidates who tackled this question did so effectively. Many responses offered a good account of the positivist v anti-positivist debate and were able to demonstrate at least a sound level of conceptual and theoretical understanding. Some answers were of a high quality offering an evaluative tone throughout and reaching well considered conclusions. Others needed to develop more detailed and balanced arguments in order to achieve high marks. Sometimes the question itself was not adequately addressed and there was evidence of pre-prepared answers which did not fully address the wording of the question. A number of candidates incorrectly interpreted the question as pertaining to socialisation and were awarded low marks accordingly.

Question 3

Overall, candidates performed well in this question with most providing a reasonably sound overview of qualitative methods, their features and relationship to the concept of reliability. Some excellent responses were produced which were comprehensive in the range of methods discussed and analytical in the way that the background debate was drawn into the answer. These successful responses managed to retain focus and relevance throughout and to apply the key concepts of reliability and also validity to good effect. In less successful responses, a popular approach was to simply compare and contrast qualitative and quantitative approaches but with little focus on the concept of reliability. It would be useful to remind candidates to consistently link their points to the wording of the question directly. Others listed the features of methods but with little regard to the concepts involved.

SOCIOLOGY

<p>Paper 9699/31 31 Social Inequality and Opportunity</p>

General comments

The standard of the answers overall continues to improve, with more candidates making use of relevant sociological knowledge from textbook sources. However, some answers continue to be based on general knowledge rather than reference to appropriate concepts, theories and research findings. Candidates should be discouraged from using this 'general knowledge' approach as it inevitably results in low marks. There were a lot of answers that made reasonable use of sociological sources, but lacked good analysis and assessment. High scoring answers achieved an appropriate balance between knowledge and assessment, also making good use of examples and research findings to support key analytical points.

Most of the candidates appeared to have no difficulty in answering three questions in the time available. Some candidates attempted more than three questions, though this approach was rarely successful in improving the overall mark for the script. There were a few instances of scripts based on very short answers (less than 100 words per answer). Answers this short are unlikely to gain sufficient marks to achieve a pass grade at A Level.

Key features

- High scoring answers often included references to relevant studies and sociological evidence.
- Many lower scoring answers relied on personal observation rather than sociological knowledge.
- More use of sociological theories would help candidates gain higher marks.
- Answers on Global Development often lacked detail and references to appropriate sociological sources.
- Some candidates appeared to allocate their time inefficiently by writing over-long answers to the part (a) questions.

Questions

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates demonstrated some understanding of the functionalist view of the relationship between education and the economy. Good answers explained clearly the specific links that functionalists draw between education and the economy, often referring to the ideas of Durkheim, Parsons, and Davis and Moore. Lower scoring answers identified only a few aspects of the functionalist view or discussed the relationship between education and the economy without reference to sociological theory.
- (b) There were some high quality responses that discussed the influence of intelligence on educational achievement with reference to the available evidence. Good answers often included reflections on the difficulties in defining and/or measuring intelligence. Lower scoring answers often ignored the influence of intelligence and focused on describing other factors that may influence educational achievement.

Question 2

- (a) There were some good answers that identified a wide range of ways in which educational achievement may be influenced by material deprivation. High quality responses often included references to relevant studies. There were some lower scoring answers that demonstrated only a weak understanding of the term 'material deprivation'. A few candidates confused material deprivation with cultural deprivation.

- (b) Good answers were tightly focused on exploring the influence of teacher-candidate interaction on differences in educational achievement between males and females. Lower scoring answers often considered the influence of teacher-candidate interaction on educational achievement without making links to differences in male and female performance. Some answers focused on differences in male and female educational achievement but without making relevant connections to interactionist account of the importance of teacher-candidate relations.

Question 3

- (a) Some candidates struggled to identify three separate ways of defining development. A few answers discussed development in general rather than focusing on definitions. Good answers distinguished clearly between three different ways of defining development, usually referring to economic indicators such as GDP, income distribution, the Hamburger Standard, consumption levels. Some responses included cultural and social indicators of development.
- (b) There were some high quality answers that demonstrated a good understanding of different theories of development, including the dependency and world systems perspectives. Lower scoring answers often lacked strong references to theory and relied more on general discussion of how and why rich countries might seek to prevent other countries from achieving economic development.

Question 4

- (a) Some lower scoring answers were confined to describing different types of aid programme. Better answers offered a range of reasons why many aid programmes are unsuccessful. High quality responses often used examples of aid programmes to illustrate different explanations of why such programmes are often unsuccessful.
- (b) There were some lower scoring answers that discussed the causes of poverty without linking the material to the issue of over-population. Good answers analysed the possible links between over-population and poverty in developing countries, often noting that over-population may be an effect rather than a cause of poverty. High-quality responses also demonstrated an understanding of other explanations of poverty, often through reference to relevant structural and cultural factors.

Question 5

- (a) There were some good answers that identified several ways in which the media help to shape the social identities of young people. High quality responses often made use of relevant concepts, such as stereotyping, labelling, moral panics, and folk devils. Lower scoring answers were often limited in the range of examples used to illustrate the impact of the media on the social identities of young people.
- (b) Most answers included some reference to relevant studies of the impact of media violence on human behaviour. Good responses discussed several studies and often used different models of media influence to consider how far watching violent media content leads to violent behaviour. Low scoring responses were often confined to a simple affirmation of the idea that media violence causes viewers to act violently.

Question 6

- (a) There were a few good answers that referred to the work of Antonio Gramsci and related the material well to studies of the media by subsequent sociologists, such as Stuart Hall and the Glasgow Media Group. Some low scoring answers discussed the influence of the media in general and demonstrated little understanding of the concept of hegemony.
- (b) Good answers demonstrated a clear understanding of debates about the power of owners to control media content. There was also a sustained assessment of the view on which the question was based. Answers in the middle of the mark range usually lacked assessment and were confined to identifying a few ways in which owners are able to control the content of the media. There were a few weak answers that relied on personal observation rather than sociological understanding of the issues surrounding media ownership.

Question 7

- (a) Some lower scoring answers were confined to simply defining the term sect. Better answers identified the features of two types of sect, often referring to the typologies outlined by Wallis. A few candidates confused sects with cults.
- (b) There were some low scoring answers that described gender inequality in religion without considering feminist explanations. Better answers discussed various reasons why gender inequality exists within religious organisations. High scoring answers referred to a range of relevant feminist theories and often illustrated key points with links to appropriate studies.

Question 8

- (a) There were some good answers that considered a range of difficulties that sociologists face in measuring religious belief. Some candidates made good use of the distinction between positivist and interpretivist approaches to researching religious beliefs. Lower scoring answers were often confined to just a few points about the difficulty of measuring religiosity.
- (b) Most candidates correctly noted that this question provided an opportunity to discuss the secularisation debate. Good answers considered a range of contributions to the debate, recognising that there are different perspectives on the extent to which secularisation has occurred in modern societies. High quality responses often referred to evidence of religious revival and the growth of NRMs. Lower scoring responses were often limited to just a few relevant points about the influence of religion today; references to concepts and theories were often absent in answers at this level.

SOCIOLOGY

<p>Paper 9699/32 32 Social Inequality and Opportunity</p>

General comments

Good sociological knowledge and understanding was evident in many of the scripts. High scoring answers also demonstrated good skills in the areas of analysis and assessment. Some of the responses provided a lot of detail in terms of knowledge, but lacked sound arguments and analysis in addressing the issues raised by the question. A few candidates continue to rely on general knowledge rather than sociological theories and evidence in answering the questions. Candidates should be discouraged from adopting this approach as it inevitably results in low marks.

Most of the candidates appeared to have no difficulty in answering three questions in the time available. A few failed to write the question numbers clearly and there were a few instances of almost illegible handwriting. Candidates should be encouraged to number each question clearly and also to include the question number on any continuation sheets.

Key features

- Good answers made intelligent links between theories and research evidence.
- Knowledge of post-modernist themes was often evident in high scoring responses.
- Some low scoring answers were based on general knowledge rather than sociological understanding and evidence.
- Candidates could attain higher marks by including more assessment in their answers to the part **(b)** questions.
- Some answers lacked a direct focus on the wording of the question.

Questions

Question 1

- (a) Good answers explained a number of ways in which the rich and powerful may be able to control what is defined as knowledge. There were some low scoring answers that discussed the influences on educational achievement rather than the factors that shape how knowledge is defined.
- (b) There were a lot of answers in the middle of the mark range that discussed a variety of factors that influence educational achievement, including ethnicity. Higher scoring answers were focused on the influence of ethnicity specifically and often included references to relevant studies and research findings showing how ethnicity may affect educational achievement. There were a few low scoring answers that were confined general observations about educational achievement in general.

Question 2

- (a) Good answers were often based on an accurate account of the correspondence theory associated with the work of Bowles and Gintis. There were some low scoring answers that discussed the links between Schools and the workplace in general rather than in relation to Marxist theory specifically.
- (b) There were a lot of answers in the middle of the mark range that discussed the influence of social class on candidate attitudes to education, while neglecting the reference to gender in the question. Higher scoring responses assessed the relative influences of social class and gender on candidate attitudes to education. Good answers often included references to relevant studies and research findings. Appropriate links to theoretical perspectives also often featured in the better answers.

Question 3

- (a) Good answers considered a range of factors influencing the birth rate in developing countries. Some high quality responses included references to relevant theories and/or research evidence. Lower scoring answers were often confined to brief points about one or two factors influencing the birth rate.
- (b) There were a few good answers to this question that used relevant examples to illustrate how education programmes can help to improve the health of people in developing countries. Lower scoring responses often discussed how education in general might contribute to better health care and there was a lack of detail about particular types of education programme.

Question 4

- (a) Lower scoring answers to this question were often based on general knowledge rather than references to appropriate sociological evidence and theory. Good answers identified the main features of western models of development and explained why they may be inappropriate for many developing countries.
- (b) Many of the answers used well-chosen examples to illustrate how corruption among elite groups may be an obstacle to development. High scoring responses also included an assessment of the view that corruption is the main obstacle to development in many countries. There were a few low scoring answers that were confined to general points about the obstacles to development, with little or no reference to corruption.

Question 5

- (a) There were some low scoring answers that demonstrated only a vague understanding of the term 'folk devils'. Better responses understood the term and made appropriate links to the related notion of moral panics and the work of Stan Cohen in particular.
- (b) Good answers discussed a number of ways in which the Internet may have weakened the power of the traditional media. High quality responses also included an assessment of the extent to which the power of the traditional media has been challenged by the growth of the Internet. There were some lower scoring answers that were short of examples of the impact of the Internet or which discussed features of the Internet without linking the material well to the position of the traditional media today.

Question 6

- (a) Good answers were distinguished by use of well-chosen examples of stereotypes that are applied to young people by the media. Lower scoring responses lacked examples and some failed to demonstrate an understanding of what is meant by a media stereotype.
- (b) Most of the answers demonstrated an understanding of the hypodermic syringe model of media influence. Good answers also included an assessment of the strengths and limitations of this model of media influence. Some high quality responses made helpful contrasts with other theories of media influence, such as the uses and gratification and cultural effects models. Good use of references to studies of media influence was also a feature of some high scoring answers.

Question 7

- (a) Some lower scoring answers discussed whether religion can bring about social change rather than explaining how religion can have this effect. Good answers provided examples of different ways in which religion can bring about social change. Some of the examples used included liberation theology, the Iranian revolution, Weber's explanation of the role of religion in the rise of capitalism, and the campaigns by various church groups against capital punishment in European countries.
- (b) There were some low scoring answers that discussed the decline in traditional religion without linking the material well to the growth of NRMs. Better responses considered the possible reasons for the growth of NRMs, including links to the decline in traditional religion. High quality answers also included an assessment of the view that the growth of NRMs is a response to the decline in traditional religion.

Question 8

- (a) Good answers used well-chosen examples to illustrate how religious rituals may contribute to social solidarity. References to relevant ideas from the work of thinkers such as Durkheim and Malinowski also featured in high scoring responses. There were some low scoring responses that discussed the influence of religion in general rather than focusing on religious rituals specifically.
- (b) Good answers were often based on a clear account of the Marxist theory of religion, though some candidates also made relevant references to the feminist view that religion serves the interests of men as the powerful group. High scoring responses also included an assessment of the view that religion serves the interests of the rich and powerful. Lower scoring responses often lacked references to theoretical perspectives and/or relied on a general discussion of the role of religion with only limited links to the interests of the rich and powerful.

SOCIOLOGY

<p>Paper 9699/33 33 Social Inequality and Opportunity</p>

General comments

Most of the candidates demonstrated some relevant sociological knowledge and understanding. There were several high quality answers that combined depth of knowledge with good analytical and assessment skills. A few candidates continue to rely on general knowledge rather than sociological theories and evidence in answering the questions. Candidates should be discouraged from adopting this approach as it inevitably results in low marks. Combining theories and concepts with good use of relevant sociological evidence and study findings would be one way in which candidates could achieve higher marks. Performance could also be improved by maintaining a tight focus on the wording of the question throughout the answer.

Most of the candidates appeared to have no difficulty in answering three questions in the time available. A few failed to write the question numbers clearly and there were a few instances of almost illegible handwriting. Candidates should be encouraged to number each question clearly and also to include the question number on any continuation sheets.

Key features

- High scoring answers made good use of relevant concepts and theories.
- Candidates could gain higher marks by using more references to studies and sociological evidence.
- Some candidates are relying on personal observation rather than sociological knowledge to answer the questions.
- Knowledge of post-modernist contributions to sociology was lacking in some answers.
- Answers often lacked sufficient assessment to gain high marks for the part **(b)** questions.

Questions

Question 1

- (a) Good answers often drew on both the functionalist and the Marxist accounts of the relationship between Schools and the economy. There were some lower scoring answers that relied on general knowledge rather than sociological evidence and theories.
- (b) Most of the answers demonstrated a sound understanding of the concept of cultural capital. Some answers discussed the influence of cultural capital in general rather than linking the concept to the achievement of middle class candidates. Good answers included references to relevant thinkers, such as Bourdieu, and provided an assessment of how far cultural capital explains why educational achievement is high among middle class candidates.

Question 2

- (a) Good answers were often based around the ideas of Bernstein. Some high quality responses also referred to other thinkers who have contributed to the debate about the influence of language on educational achievement. There were some low scoring answers that lacked references to relevant sociological concepts and theories.
- (b) Some answers lacked references to the influence of peer groups on candidate attitudes. Better responses often used the examples of candidate sub-cultures as a way of exploring the influence of peer groups. Good answers included an assessment of the relative influence of peer groups and teachers on candidate attitudes. High scoring responses often used references to relevant concept and studies to support key arguments.

Question 3

- (a) Most of the answers showed some understanding of the culture of poverty thesis. Good answers often distinguished between cultural and structural explanations of poverty as a way of contextualising the culture of poverty thesis. Knowledge of Lewis' contribution to the topic was evident in higher scoring responses.
- (b) Some of the answers discussed theories of development without linking the material well to the processes of economic globalisation. Better responses often began by explaining the idea of economic globalisation and then assessing the extent to which all countries benefit from this aspect of globalisation. High quality responses often included references to examples of the impact of economic globalisation on developing societies.

Question 4

- (a) There were some low scoring answers that described aid programmes without explaining the difficulties in assessing their effectiveness. Good responses used a mix of concepts, theories and evidence to illustrate why it might be difficult to determine the extent to which particular aid programmes have been successful.
- (b) This question provided an opportunity to discuss convergence theory. Good answers often made relevant links to Rostow's work on modernisation theory, though some candidates also noted the elements of convergence theory in the historical materialism of Marxist thinkers. Some answers demonstrated only limited awareness of convergence theory and instead often discussed theories of development in general.

Question 5

- (a) There were some low scoring answers that discussed the influence of the media on audiences generally. Better answers focused on particular social groups, such as young people, the elderly, different social classes and genders. High scoring responses often used relevant research evidence and studies to support key points about why the media may have more influence over some social groups than others.
- (b) Good answers demonstrated a clear understanding of several ways in which the media may contribute to a democratic society. Opinion polls and election campaign reporting often featured as discussion topics in high scoring responses. Good use was also made of relevant concepts, such as agenda setting, propaganda, hegemony, media manipulation, and citizen journalism. There were some low scoring answers that to draw relevant links between the media and the processes of democracy in modern societies.

Question 6

- (a) There were some lower scoring answers that discussed the power of media owners without making strong links to the impact of globalisation. Better answers identified several ways in which media ownership has been affected by the processes of globalisation. High scoring responses often included references to the growth of the new media and its role in globalisation. The emergence of multi-media organisations and the creation of global audiences were also discussed in the better answers.
- (b) There were some good answers that considered various ways in which news presentation may reflect the interests of the rich and powerful. High quality responses also provided a sustained assessment of the extent to which the interests of the rich and powerful are reflected in the presentation of news. There were a few low scoring answers that discussed the factors shaping news presentation without linking the material well to the interests of the ruling class.

Question 7

- (a) Most candidates recognised that this question provided an opportunity to discuss Weber's contribution to debates about the rise of capitalism. Some candidates also referred to other relevant contributions, including those by Tawney, Tillich, and Durkheim. There were some low scoring answers that identified only vague links between religion and the rise of capitalism.

- (b) This question provided an opportunity to discuss the secularisation thesis. There were a lot of answers that triggered the middle of the mark range by offering a general account of the secularisation thesis with some limited assessment of its main claims. Higher scoring answers were better at linking material from the secularisation debate to the idea that religion has become disengaged from society. Examples of where religion still has an important institutional role in society were often used to assess the view on which the question was based.

Question 8

- (a) Low scoring answers were often confined to a few comments about the role of religion in general. Better answers demonstrated some ways in which religion helps to reinforce social values. High scoring responses often drew on relevant contributions from functionalist and interactionist theories of religion, with Durkheim's work in particular featuring prominently.
- (b) There were a lot of answers that triggered the middle of the mark range by explaining the Marxist theory of religion as a way of illustrating the idea that religion may protect the interests of privileged groups. Higher scoring answers often considered other theories of religion (functionalist, feminist, interactionist) alongside the Marxist perspective and offered an assessment of the view on which the question was based. Good responses often made effective use of relevant concepts such as hegemony, ideological control, collective conscience, patriarchy, and cultural defence.