SOCIOLOGY

> **Paper 9699/11**
> **11 The Family**

Key messages

1. Candidates should plan their time carefully.
2. Candidates should be instructed on the meaning of command words such as explain and assess.
3. Candidates should include relevant sociological material, such as theories, theorists, studies and concepts in their responses.
4. Candidates should answer the question as set rather provide a generalised answer on the topic.

General comments

Most candidates displayed good sociological knowledge in their answers and there was an improvement in the use of concepts. Higher order responses used a variety of theories as well as studies and concepts and this should be encouraged in all answers. There was, however, evidence of poor time management with many candidates giving unnecessary background information for **Questions 1(a)** and **1(b)** and then producing very short essays. Some candidates would benefit from more practise in interpreting questions and planning well-focused answers.

In the essay questions, candidates should avoid over-lengthy descriptions and remember to evaluate the points raised. They also need to ensure that the conclusion of the essay is not merely repetition or summary of the points made in the essay.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a)   Generally a well-understood concept with few candidates failing to define the term and the majority scoring 1 or 2 marks. The former would have benefited by the inclusion of the relationship being 'at the same time' but most referred to multiple husbands/wives/sexual partners. Some answers were very long lists of examples of polygamous relationships or definitions of monogamy, which was not a part of the question. A common error was to define polygyny not polygamy or to confuse it with patriarchy.

(b)   Candidates had a firm grasp of the alternative family types to the nuclear family and the question was generally answered very well. Many candidates gained full marks, quoting extended, single/lone parent, reconstituted and beanpole families. An uncommon error was to identify the single parent and lone parent as two examples but these are two different terms for the same structure. Some answers were so detailed that they were as long as the answer to **Question 1(d)** frequently including long descriptions of the reasons why a particular family type such as the single parent family existed. In order to improve performance on this question candidates need to 'identify and then briefly describe' and not include unnecessary details. Another error was to identify a structure but not describe it. Other uncommon errors were to incorrectly define the family structure identified (this seemed to be the beanpole family most frequently), identify households rather than families or referred to relationships rather than structures.

(c)   Candidates had a sound understanding of why the industrial revolution had encouraged the development of nuclear families, frequently quoting both Murdock and Parsons. The use of Parsons and the two 'irreducible functions' was well applied by a number of candidates but

descriptions of Murdock's four functions were often less focused. Many responses simply stated functions of the nuclear family, without applying these to the specific needs or the economy. Marxist theories in relation to the family and capitalism were frequently quoted with credit. Some of the very best responses applied the 'fit' thesis. Higher level responses also included nepotism and the need for specialised labour. Some less successful responses spent time unnecessarily outlining how the extended family had previously been a functional fit for pre-industrial society, adding a few comments about nuclear families in modern industrial societies almost as an afterthought. Some responses were characterised by assertion or description of members of the nuclear family working or spending money and would have benefitted by the use of sociological references to support their answer. In order to improve performance candidates need to include more sociological studies.

(d) Candidates were able to show their understanding of the position of the nuclear family in a range of different societies. Most responses referred to an increase in family diversity as evidence that the nuclear family is not universal or showed how the nuclear family can be seen as the core of all family types. These answers were also able to cite examples of family diversity, though rarely provided supporting evidence such as the work of the Rapoports. Beyond this, there was little attempt to address the question directly in terms of clarifying what 'universal' actually meant, with many responses conflating it uncritically with 'dominant' using them as if they were interchangeable concepts. The most successful answers outlined the dominance theory as a way to question universality. Another error was to confuse the work of Murdock with that of Parsons. In order to improve performance, candidates need a clear understanding of which theory is associated with which theorist. A common error was to rely overly on the data; it is there to prompt ideas, but candidates should avoid copying long sections in their answers. Overall, there was a lack of focus on the question, with many including irrelevant material on the functions of the family/roles in the family or evaluating the 'fit' thesis. Many other answers also described the functions of the family, or various perspectives on the family such as the feminist and Marxist without relating these explicitly to the issue of universality. Many candidates showed that they had good sociological knowledge but misapplied it, for example, some candidates outlined the fit thesis in more detail than they had in **Question 1(c)**. In order to improve performance, candidates need to read all questions before they start and be sure they are applying the correct knowledge to the specific question.

Section B

Both optional questions were answered by about the same number of candidates. A number of the candidates who selected **Question 3** failed to include adequate sociological knowledge in their answers, relying instead on common sense and assertion.

Question 2

Many candidates showed a sound understanding of feminist theories and included concepts such as patriarchy. The very best responses also distinguished between the various different types of feminism. Higher-level responses outlined liberal, Marxist, radical and postmodern feminism with a focus on the family referring to dual burden, triple shift, decision making, power relationships, Edgell, Pahl, Ainsley, Oakley, Greer, new man, joint conjugal roles, symmetrical families, legal changes and female empowerment with credit. A number argued that radical and Marxist feminists exaggerate but liberal feminists do not. Most candidates who described the different feminist theories contrasted them to other theories. Candidate performance would have benefitted from considering the proposition that feminist theories are exaggerated but a number of candidates failed to focus on the question and strayed into wider societal issues such as gender inequality in society or work. Some responses described gender roles but relied on common sense and assertion. In order to improve performance, points need to be supported sociologically. Many candidates provided a list-like account of the various types of feminism without explicitly engaging with the proposition that they exaggerate. Most answers confined themselves to conjugal roles and the domestic labour debate. A number of candidates used the opportunity to express their personal views about feminism; they would have used their time to better advantage if they had limited their answer to that of sociological debate.

Question 3

There were some sophisticated answers looking at a range of theorists including Postman, Aries, Fionda and others. These considered the roles and responsibilities of children in the past as well as the present. Answers tended to focus most on roles and show how changing social attitudes to children had resulted in the removal of children from the workplace through the development of labour laws as well as the

development of education, consumerism and child-centred families. The very best responses also considered similarities between today and the past and perhaps the return of the blurring between adult and child behaviours as was prominent in the past. Other answers used cross-cultural studies and used the work of Hecht with credit. A common error was to offer an answer based on common sense, which dealt with the removal from work and the introduction of education with no sociological support. Some candidates made comparisons between 'western' childhood and other parts of the world but showed little understanding, with frequent references to 'Asia' or 'Africa' as homogeneous blocks. One of the most striking aspects of responses to this question was the wide range of interpretations of 'today' and 'the past'. Very few candidates specified which periods of history they were comparing. Often this led to vague assertive references to 'nowadays' or 'the modern world' contrasted with 'back then'. Some looked back to children's lives before or during the industrial revolution, others to a golden age of nuclear families in the 1950s and others a mere couple of decades (before the advent of social media). As a result, sociological references were often confused, vague, or entirely absent. Parental roles were rarely considered, except in the context of single-parent families.

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Paper 9699/12
The Family
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Key messages

- Candidates should read the questions carefully and ensure the respond to the specific question set rather than the general topic.
- Candidates should include specific sociological material such as concepts, theories and studies.

General Comments

Many candidates produced excellent responses, showing a sound grasp of sociological theories and concepts. This was particularly noticeable in relation to conjugal roles within the family. In order to improve performance candidates need to apply their knowledge to the question that has been set. Frequently candidates have responded with knowledge generally related to the topic rather than specifically focused on the question. This was particularly evident in **Question 2** when many students did not take into account the focus on modern industrial societies and included lots of accurate but irrelevant detail on pre-industrial and extinct societies.

All candidates should be encouraged to read the paper fully before starting in order to identify what the questions require before they begin to answer them. It may help to underline key concepts and key instructions before answering. In *Section B*, some excellent responses demonstrated clear and thorough knowledge of appropriate sociological theories, concepts and studies. However, many responses were less successful in demonstrating evaluation.

Candidates generally used their examination time wisely, with the exception of over lengthy answers to **Question 1(b)**, and there was little evidence of rushed final answers. There were few rubric errors.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) Most candidates had some understanding of the meaning of dysfunctional family in terms of a family failing to function properly, with the best answers also recognising that dysfunctional families also cause harm to society or the individuals within them. Common errors were to give examples of supposedly dysfunctional families, such as single parent families, or to describe how some family members may be dysfunctional, without directly defining the term.

(b) Most candidates were able to show a good understanding of the expressive role but many included unnecessary and lengthy descriptions of the reasons why single/lone parent families exist. The most successful answers identified two specific features, such as care of children and domestic responsibilities, and then described these features. The concept of emotional work was often identified but development of this aspect varied. Housework/domestic chores were also commonly identified but not always developed fully. Childcare was rarely developed successfully. However, many candidates structured their answers well, clearly identifying and then developing each point and the length of many responses was suitable for 4 marks with few including unnecessary theory. There were some successful responses which used the 'warm bath theory' and explored the role in light of partner/grandparents. Some less successful answers identified two similar features such as carer-giver or emotion work without making it clear how each point was different and in some cases repeating the same explanation for each point. Others made generalised references to primary

socialisation that could have applied to either the expressive or the instrumental role, thereby scoring no marks.

(c)   Many responses to this question successfully identified social policies but were less successful in explaining how these policies influence family life. Many candidates offered a good list of policies but many lacked depth. For example, many candidates named divorce reform or China's one child policy as an influence on family life with only a few pointing out that these result in single parent families or smaller families. Very few candidates developed this further to describe a more sociologically informed influence on family life such as the development of beanpole families, gender imbalance or 'little emperors'. In order to improve performance candidates need to support their answers with relevant sociological concepts. Some candidates seemed better prepared to write about the impact of state policies on society, rather than on family life; the latter was often restricted to impacts on family forms, e.g. divorce legislation or welfare benefits leading to a rise in single parent families. At the top end, there were some impressive examples of government policies with detailed examples of how they affect families, especially using recent examples such as recent legislation in India to permit gay marriage. Only a small proportion of students developed three or more reasons with enough development and focus to attain the top marks. In addition, some wrote about the managerial state and not precise policies. A common misunderstanding of the question was to describe New Right views about what governments **should** do in terms of laws or policies to encourage nuclear families and discourage single parent families, which was not what the question asked.

(d)   Most candidates demonstrated a firm understanding of the negative views held by the New Right in terms of single parent families and many candidates understood that a two-sided response was required. Responses often focused on poor socialisation, mental health issues, high levels of crime and delinquency, levels of poverty and welfare dependency. Some sophisticated answers related this to the tax burden imposed on those in other family structures. Many candidates made good use of the work of Murray. Fewer responses were able to show good evaluation and relied upon the information about Swenson given in the supplied data. Candidates who were less sure how to assess New Right views simply produced generalised or anecdotal 'defences' of single parent families. Others took a more sociological approach, but struggled to find relevant material. The most popular line was to argue that nuclear families were just as bad, drawing on studies about the 'dark side' of nuclear families. The most successful evaluations often explored diversity and used appropriate postmodern sociologists. Although many who addressed postmodern defences of diversity still found it difficult to relate these directly to the New Right criticisms they had identified, e.g. there was a tendency for these students to write about the single parent family as an 'escape' for abused wives/children, focusing only on the issue of harm to individuals, rather than society. Some less successful responses simply described New Right views on nuclear families or the supposed effects of lone-parent families on individuals (rather than society). Common errors were to assert that single parent families are harmful with no development, or to assess the success of the nuclear family which was not what the question asked. Some candidates over-relied on the information in the supplied data; it is there to be developed but should not be copied extensively.

Section B

Question 2

This was a popular question with many candidates producing well-constructed and planned two-sided essays discussing the dominance of nuclear families in modern industrial societies. The most successful answers evaluated effectively by exploring the emergence and growth of family diversity and the most sophisticated responses addressed the issue of whether this now means the nuclear family is no longer the dominant family form. The majority of candidates were able to explore the reasons why diversity in society may have eroded the dominance of the nuclear family and link this to a broad range of examples. Even less successful responses used some concepts such as Parsons' 'fit thesis'. There was some vague use of Marxist theory but functionalism and postmodernism were applied well. Some responses also discussed neo-functionalism. Those using feminist theory varied in success, with some not linking theory to the question, and instead exploring gender roles in the family. Some answers focussed on the 'fit thesis' and spent a long time assessing whether the nuclear family had caused industrialisation or resulted from it and in doing so lost focus on the question. Others examined various perspectives on whether the nuclear family is a 'good thing', without explicitly addressing how this related to its dominance or decline. A common error was to confuse dominance with universal or to use them as interchangeable concepts. Another common error was to ignore the question's focus on 'modern industrial societies' and include irrelevant historical detail (e.g. from Gough, Laslett or Anderson). The most successful responses dealt with the historical aspects briefly

before moving on to compare continued numerical superiority and idealisation of the nuclear family with the rise in alternative structures, drawing on a range of appropriate studies and perspectives. Some also considered cross-cultural variations or the persistence of extended family structures.

Question 3

There were some excellent responses exploring roles relating to gender, age and ethnicity, explaining how they were fixed in the past and how this has changed in modern societies. The best of these then went on to discuss how these roles may not have changed that much, frequently quoting different societies. The most popular way to do this was by an exploration of the continuing influence of traditional conjugal roles. A very small number then went to assess the ways in which the roles of different age groups may also be more similar to those patterns seen in the past. All candidates made some use of conjugal roles but there was some misunderstanding of key terms such as the symmetrical family and many tangential answers went on to discuss whether or not there is equality or not in conjugal roles today, rather than comparing roles today to the past. Answers which maintained focus on 'roles' were often unbalanced, with some discussing fixed roles to a greater extent or some presenting aspects of change and choice in conjugal roles. Those taking the latter approach used feminism or postmodernist theory as support. There were fewer attempts to evaluate the whole of the question and consider whether roles are still fixed today. However better responses considered cultural differences in gender roles, dual burden/triple shift in nuclear families and also considered the changes in the roles of a children and grandparents in families. A number of answers relied on common sense with little if any sociological material. In order to improve performance candidates need to use sociological theory, concepts and studies in their answers.

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> **Paper 9699/13**
> **13 The Family**

Key messages

1. The most important action for candidates to take is to read questions carefully making sure they fully understand what the question is asking.
2. Candidates need to have a sound understanding of command words and concepts.
3. Answers would benefit from the use of sociological rather than general knowledge.

General comments

The performance of many candidates was excellent, showing a sound grasp of sociological theories and concepts. A majority of candidates have a great deal of sociological knowledge but some needed to use the time more effectively as answers to **1(a)** and **1(b)** were frequently too long. In order to improve performance, candidates need to be able to apply their sociological knowledge to the specific question that has been set. Too frequently, candidates have responded by using a wide range of knowledge from the topic generally rather than selecting knowledge most relevant to the particular question. Practice in interpreting questions may help to focus answers on the questions as set. This was particularly evident in **Question 2** as many candidates seemed to be unsure of the meaning of globalisation and included lots of accurate unfocused and frequently irrelevant information on industrialisation. There were few rubric errors.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) Many candidates gained full marks for this question but there was some misconception as to the meaning of family diversity. An uncommon error was to just give examples of different types of families with no attempt to define the term. In order to improve performance candidates need to follow the command words in the question.

(b) Some answers only named one feature of the nuclear family and a common error was to identify features that could apply to any type of family structure. A less common error was to identify and describe the features of a single parent family. A very small number of candidates offered no response to this question. In order to improve performance candidates need to describe two different features and avoid repeating points.

(c) Many answers displayed a very good understanding of functionalism, mostly relying on the work of Parsons and Murdock. A number of these answers could have been improved by relating the information explicitly to the economic needs of society. A technique applied in a number of answers was to put 'to meet the economic needs of society' at the end of a paragraph but this was just an assertion and did not explicitly relate to material in the paragraph. In order to improve performance, such comments should be linked to sociological evidence. Many answers also employed accurate knowledge of Marxist views but these were not relevant as the question specifically named 'functionalist view'. A less common error was to include over lengthy descriptions of functionalist views of the family in general with little focus on the question. A small number of answers evaluated the validity of functionalist arguments, which was not required for this question. The question also identified 'the nuclear family' and a number of answers outlined whether the extended family met the economic needs of society, which was not what the question asked.

(d) The majority of candidates seemed to have a firm grasp of the requirements of the question and gave a clear outline of the functionalist view that the family serves the interests of all the members therefore they all benefit. This was often contrasted with feminist views that women suffer exploitation in the family, supported by a wealth of evidence such as Duncombe and Marsden. Performance could have been improved by the inclusion of other family members as very few answers included references to children or the different treatment offered to boys and girls within the family. Some more successful answers used the theories of the New Right to explain how children in some families failed to benefit. A few included references to the elderly but none explored the different treatment of elderly males or females in the family or the ways in which levels of wealth can influence the experience of family life in relation to benefits. Many responses outlined Marxist theories about capitalistic exploitation. Most of these explained how this benefits the ruling class, losing focus on the specific question, but the best of these did relate this to the family and how they were all equally exploited and so none benefitted or women ended up as the 'slaves of slaves'. A common error was to concentrate on equality in female employment, which was not relevant to this question on the family.

Section B

Question 3 was a more popular question and generally answered to a higher standard than **Question 2**.

Question 2

A small number of answers made a sound start to their essay by showing a clear understanding of the meaning of globalisation as both a cultural and geographic phenomenon but others displayed some confusion. Many good answers rated industrialisation as more significant than globalisation and candidates who asserted that diversity was a result of globalisation could have improved their performance by explaining how globalisation caused to this change to happen. A number of candidates used the term globalisation in their answers but displayed no understanding of it. Others used globalisation as if it was interchangeable with industrialisation or urbanisation. Many candidates did refer to migration as an aspect of globalisation, but some responses talked about globalisation and migration as if they were completely separate factors. Common errors were to confuse globalisation with secularisation and to discuss the Nayer, asserting that they are evidence of diversity resulting from globalisation.

Question 3

There were many excellent answers to this popular question which looked at a range of factors, but some lacked specific focus on childhood. Others overlooked 'concept' in the question and described the experience of childhood instead. Some candidates spent a lot of time comparing different childhoods in modern societies with no reference to the past, again just describing the experience of childhood. The most successful responses tended to evaluate through recognition of the differences between the past and the present and then coming full circle to see the similarities between the past and now, frequently looking at the blurring between the adult and the child world or by making cross-cultural comparisons. An uncommon error was to concentrate almost exclusively on the role of the internet and not consider other changes that may have affected childhood.

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Key messages

- Good responses showed sound knowledge and understanding of sociological concepts and theories.
- Some methods were less well understood than others; for example, many candidates seemed unfamiliar with longitudinal surveys and mixed methods.
- A number of responses are over reliant on the stem material in *Section A*.
- A number of responses tend toward description rather than analysis and evaluation.
- Many essay responses contained sound knowledge of theoretical perspectives but these were often not applied well to the question. Assessment was largely by juxtaposition.
- Greater use of supporting studies would enhance essay responses in *Section B*.

General comments

Very few candidates that made rubric errors and most candidates produced answers commensurate with the requirements of the questions, i.e. in demonstrating appropriate skills and usage of time. The exception to this was **1(c)** where the question asked candidates to outline strengths of longitudinal surveys yet a number of responses also outlined limitations. There are no evaluation marks available for this question so this approach was not rewarded. The stem material is intended to prompt candidates in their answers to questions in *Section A*, however, number of candidates simply repeated material from the stem rather than used it as a starting point for an answer. Whilst there was some sound knowledge of sociological methods, it was evident that a number of candidates had little or no knowledge of either longitudinal surveys or mixed methods (**Questions 1(c)** and **1(d)**). In *Section B* the majority of candidates opted to answer **Question 2**. There were some good answers to both questions showing sound theoretical knowledge and understanding, some of which were analytical and evaluative. However, in a number of scripts knowledge and understanding was not applied clearly to the question. In addition to this, many responses to both essay questions were overly descriptive. Evaluation in many scripts was invariably by juxtaposition only. Greater use of supporting empirical studies to illustrate methodological issues could improve responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a)   Most candidates answered this question accurately and were able to explain that *qualitative data* is not numerical, uses words or is more descriptive. Some added examples of research methods, mentioned explanation, validity or links to interpretivism for the second mark.

(b)   Most candidates identified the amount of funding affecting the extent or quality of research, some referred to the goals of the funding source causing bias and some mentioned both. Often there was no development and where there was this was usually through superficial examples that just gained an extra mark rather than clearly explaining a process. Many responses stated two ways that were the same or very similar, typically relating to the amount of funding.

(c)   Candidates were generally able to explain some strengths of using a longitudinal study. The most successful answers made links to validity and reliability or commented on the advantages of longitudinal studies over snapshot surveys in discovering causal relationships. However, many candidates wrote about quantitative data in general rather than longitudinal studies in particular. A significant number of candidates included discussion of disadvantages in their responses for which

there were no marks available. A number of candidates had limited or no knowledge of longitudinal surveys.

(d) High scoring candidates were able to highlight the advantages of using a mixture of methods, making appropriate links to positivist and interpretivist perspectives, as well as mentioning disadvantages, usually loss of theoretical purity and cost considerations. Many responses merely described the advantages and disadvantages of various methods without exploring how they could be used together. A number of candidates had limited or no knowledge of mixed methods. Triangulation and methodological pluralism were often mentioned without much development.

Section B

Question 2

Most candidates were able to explain that a scientific viewpoint is linked to positivism and described the advantages/disadvantages of using this approach. Many were also able to link this argument to interpretivism and the advantages of using a more qualitative approach. The stronger candidates compared and contrasted these views and made links to relevant theorists or studies. These responses invariably made links to the key ideas of the positivist approach such as objectivity, value freedom and systematic research. There was evidence of good knowledge and understanding, and some effective assessment. Less successful responses were much more list like and just described the two approaches. In these responses, the key concepts of validity and reliability were often used inaccurately.

Question 3

This question was attempted by fewer candidates. Of these, most demonstrated a reasonable understanding of the modernist contribution, with good descriptions of Marxist and functionalist approaches. The strongest responses also included good assessment of the strengths and limitations of the modernist viewpoints explaining how these theories are still useful/not too useful. A few answers demonstrated a good understanding of postmodernist theory and explained its relevance in challenging previous theories in understanding the working of society. Less successful responses included a general description of how society works and how it has changed. Some candidates wrote essays focused more on the changing nature of the family that had few links to the question.

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> **Paper 9699/22**
> **22 Theory and Methods**

Key messages

- Good answers showed knowledge and understanding of a range of sociological concepts and theories.
- Many essay responses contained sound knowledge of theoretical perspectives but these were not always applied well to the question. Evaluation was invariably by juxtaposition.
- Many candidates are more comfortable with methodological questions than theoretical ones.
- Some methods were less well understood than others; for example, many candidates struggled to define content analysis.
- Most candidates allocated their time effectively to the questions.
- Some key concepts were not well understood or applied, e.g. reliability.

General comments

There were very few candidates that made rubric errors and most candidates produced answers commensurate with the requirements of the questions – the exception to this was **1(d)** and, to a lesser extent, **1(b)** in **Section A**. There is a tendency for some candidates to tackle **1(d)** as if it were an essay question. Many candidates spent too much time evaluating in this question when only three marks are available for this skill. In **1(b)** many candidates spent time defining what a structured interview is before identifying and explaining its strengths. This is not necessary to do and did not score marks. Whilst there was some sound knowledge of sociological methods, only partial understanding and weak application of some key concepts continues to undermine some responses (in particular, validity and reliability). This was most notable in **Question 1(c)** on questionnaires. In **Section B** the overwhelming majority of candidates opted to answer **Question 2**. Many responses to both questions contained sound theoretical knowledge and there were some very good scripts that showed analytical and evaluative skills. Other candidates showed theoretical understanding but this was not closely applied to the question. There is clear room for improvement in this area. Evaluation in many scripts was invariably by juxtaposition.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) The majority of candidates were able to demonstrate some understanding of content analysis as a research method used to analyse the meaning/content of qualitative material by measuring patterns in the data. However, while most identified a connection to the media, few responses provided definitions that fully captured the key elements of the method.

(b) Most candidates provided a sound account of two advantages of structured interviews, with many achieving full marks. The most common advantages recognised were reliability, cost and time efficiency, clarification by interviewer and researcher bias. Many candidates were able to develop these points to good effect but some found this element a challenge. A number of responses misapplied the key concepts of validity and reliability in their descriptions.

(c) Many responses to this question suggested that candidates lacked in-depth knowledge of reliability as a concept, with many confusing it with validity and representativeness. Whilst a number of candidates were able to produce reasonable responses from their general knowledge of questionnaires, few were able to go on to explain why questionnaires are considered to be high in reliability with assurance.

(d) Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of what is meant by 'interpretivist arguments' and 'unstructured interviews' and how these two are linked. This led to a number of good responses that were well-supported with references to key thinkers and empirical studies. Most responses were balanced and included sound evaluative points, often referring to positivist critiques and utilising concepts such as representativeness and reliability. A significant number of candidates produced answers that were structured like an essay, spending too much time assessing interpretivist arguments when only three marks are available for this.

Section B

Question 2

The majority of candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of what is meant by 'social order' but were less precise in relation to the 'rich and powerful.' The key themes of Marxist theory were often covered well, notably Althusser's description of state apparatuses. In most cases, the Marxist analysis of social order was linked to functionalist arguments with Durkheim's concepts of organic and mechanical solidarity, and Parsons' AGIL model of the social system often used to provide alternative explanations. Good responses were also able to apply an interactionist perspective. The most sophisticated responses addressed the issue of who the 'rich and powerful' are and how they are defined. This led to the inclusion of perspectives other than Marxists and these answers were often analytical and evaluative. Less successful answers gave an overview of Marxist/neo-Marxist, feminist, functionalist and postmodernist views but with few direct links to the question.

Question 3

This was a less popular question. There were some excellent responses that showed accurate knowledge and understanding of structuralist and interactionist theories. Often these responses were supported by the appropriate use of studies and key concepts. Invariably, these answers also discussed structuration and postmodernist views. In the best responses, theoretical points were applied carefully to the question and a reasoned conclusion was reached. Often such answers were evaluative throughout. Less successful answers drifted into accounts of all that the candidate knew about the two approaches, including links to research methods that were unrelated to the question. There remains a tendency for some candidates to see interactionism as a perspective simply supporting the view that individuals are able to exercise freedom of choice in decision-making.

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Key messages

- Good answers showed knowledge and understanding of a range of sociological concepts and theories. Often these were supported by empirical studies.
- Theoretical perspectives were applied more effectively in the essay questions than in *Section A*.
- In *Section B* there was evidence of focused evaluation thoughtfully applied in **Question 3**, whilst in **Question 2** it was largely by juxtaposition.
- Candidates continue to be more comfortable with methodological questions than theoretical ones.
- Some concepts were less well understood than others; for example, many candidates struggled to define globalisation and to explain high and popular culture.
- Most candidates allocated their time effectively to the questions.

General comments

There were very few candidates that made rubric errors and most candidates produced answers commensurate with the requirements of the questions – the exception to this was **1(d)** in *Section A*. There is a tendency for some candidates to tackle **1(d)** as if it were an essay question. Many candidates spent too much time evaluating in this question when only three marks are available for this skill. In *Section A* it was evident that a number of candidates had little knowledge of some of the key concepts being addressed. This was especially notable in respect of globalisation **1(a)** and high and popular culture **1(c)**. In *Section B* most candidates opted to answer **Question 2**. Many responses to both questions contained sound theoretical and conceptual knowledge and there were some very good responses that showed analytical and evaluative skills. Other candidates showed theoretical understanding but this was not closely applied to the question. There is clear room for improvement in this area. Evaluation in most scripts was often by juxtaposition most notably in **Question 2** on methods but less so in **Question 3** on socialisation. The least successful responses were highly descriptive and lacked a theoretical dimension.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) The majority of responses were able to demonstrate some understanding of the term globalisation, with most making reference to the idea of growing cultural similarity. While most candidates identified an element of the concept, few responses were able to develop answers that fully captured the meaning of the term. A number of candidates confused globalisation with concepts such as modernisation, post-modernity or industrialisation.

(b) Only the very best responses achieved full marks in this question, with many responses citing characteristics that did not specifically relate to identity, e.g. income or housing. A common approach was to include long descriptions of a Marxist approach to the social position of the working class but often these responses were not focused on the question. Some responses were able to link their points to identity characteristics such as 'powerlessness', 'subservience', or 'deference' and these were rewarded. The best answers clearly separated each working class identity characteristic and developed it succinctly. Overall, this was not a question that candidates performed well in.

(c)   A number of candidates were able to demonstrate a basic knowledge and understanding of high and popular culture, typically making links to class categories, but most were not able to develop their points in a convincing way. Many responses to this question suggested that candidates lacked in-depth knowledge of both of these concepts, especially popular culture. There were some very good top band answers that were able to apply a Marxist analysis in showing differences, but these were very much in the minority.

(d)   Many of the responses to this question suggested that candidates were not confident tackling the issues raised, often adopting approaches that were not squarely focused on the question. For example, a common feature of a number of answers was to adopt a 'socialisation' approach discussing a combination of functionalist/Marxist/feminist/interactionist descriptions of the socialisation process. Such an approach was only moderately successful. These types of answer often eschewed discussion of the postmodernist view altogether, opting to outline interactionist views instead. Other responses described issues surrounding gender, age, ethnicity or class but often with few or no links to social identities. The strongest responses clearly discussed the postmodernist view that identity was no longer fixed and then provided some arguments that refuted this position. This was achieved either from a theoretical standpoint (e.g. making use of different approaches to socialisation) or via empirical evidence to suggest that the postmodern view may be overstated, such as evidence of traditional identities persisting.

Section B

Question 2

There were many good answers to this popular question, showing in-depth knowledge of participant observation and of questionnaires and the main strengths and limitations of each. Many candidates linked each method to positivism and interpretivism effectively. A number of responses also made good use of empirical research studies to support their points. Most candidates were able to critically appraise each one separately although this lead to assessment that was typically by juxtaposition only. Even the best scripts tended to uncritically accept the proposition in the question and only a few candidates went beyond general evaluation of each of the methods to address the 'how useful' element of the question.

Question 3

Many candidates were able to focus effectively on the theoretical explanations surrounding socialisation and produced informed and balanced answers. The most successful responses made reference to a range of key thinkers and assessed the view via biological/socio-biological arguments. Other good responses also highlighted the over-deterministic nature of some of the major theoretical explanations, often making use of the postmodernist perspective. Less successful responses were largely descriptive, focusing on lengthy accounts of feral children with some functionalist input, though usually not well applied to the question. Some candidates inaccurately stated that interactionist approaches regarded socialisation as a process of little importance.

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Key messages

- There were some excellent answers, combining detailed sociological knowledge and mature analysis.
- References to relevant sociological concepts and theories were often absent in lower scoring answers.
- Further marks could be gained by using evidence from sociological studies to support key points.
- Some answers lacked focus on the key terms in the question.
- Low scoring answers often relied on assertion and general knowledge rather than relevant sociological material.

General comments

There were some excellent answers that combined detailed sociological knowledge with thoughtful and well-informed analysis and evaluation. The best responses were tightly constructed in a way that demonstrated maturity of thought and careful attention to the wording of the question. Answers that triggered the middle of the mark range were often characterised by sound knowledge and understanding, but a lack of relevant evaluation in addressing the **(b)** questions. More practice in formulating evaluative answers for the **(b)** questions would be helpful for these candidates. A few candidates appeared unprepared for the exam, relying on assertion and general knowledge to answer the questions rather than drawing on relevant sociological evidence and theories. Examples of rubric error were rare. Some candidates answered more than the three questions required.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a)   Good answers provided an accurate account of several respects in which education can be seen as an agency of social control. Some candidates made appropriate links to Marxist theory, often referring to Althusser's ideas about the ideological state apparatus. Bowles and Gintis' correspondence theory also featured in many good responses. There were some lower scoring answers that offered a few limited comments about the role of education in the socialisation process.

(b)   There were some high scoring answers that provided a sustained assessment of the view that low parental income is the main reason why pupils from working-class families underachieve at school. Good responses detailed several ways in which student performance may be affected by factors relating to low parental income. Some candidates achieved high marks for evaluation by considering whether cultural factors, rather than low parental income, are more important in explaining why pupils from working class families underachieve at school. Evaluation was also delivered in some responses by considering the role of school factors as an influence on the educational performance of working-class pupils. Low scoring answers lacked examples of how low parental income might influence educational achievement and often relied on assertion rather than using relevant sociological material.

Question 2

(a)   Good answers offered several reasons why IQ tests may be a poor measure of educational ability. High scoring responses were often supported with references to relevant studies, such as those by Eysenck, Burt, Labov, Pavelsky, and Drew. Lower scoring answers were confined to one or two

limited points about the difficulty of measuring intelligence. A few responses demonstrated little understanding of what is meant by IQ tests.

(b) High scoring answers demonstrated a good understanding of the view that modern education systems are meritocratic. In discussing this view, appropriate links were made to functionalist theory and to the ideas of Michael Young. Other sociological perspectives were used to provide an assessment of how far modern education systems are meritocratic. Effective use of concepts such as social control, ideological state apparatus, social engineering, social deprivation, streaming, labelling, and the hidden curriculum was often a feature of answers that triggered the top mark band. Lower scoring answers were often unbalanced; for example, discussing the meaning of meritocracy in relation to education, but lacking an assessment of the view on which the question was based. A few responses lacked references to relevant sociological studies and arguments.

Section B

Question 3

(a) Answers that merited high marks offered a well-informed account of the modernisation theory of development. Thinkers such as Parsons and Rostow were cited in explaining the theory. There were some low scoring answers that demonstrated little understanding of the specific features of modernisation theory.

(b) High scoring answers used relevant examples and sociological arguments to assess the view that international aid agencies make a positive contribution to development. Good responses often distinguished between different types of international aid agencies and used particular examples to illustrate key points. Both positive and negative factors were considered when assessing the contribution of international aid agencies to development. Lower scoring answers often relied on a few assertions about the impact of international aid agencies in general.

Question 4

(a) There were a few good answers that identified several limitations in defining development in economic terms only. High scoring answers often identified specific economic measures and explained why they may be deemed inadequate in terms of defining development. Some answers lower in the mark range lacked detail and gave just one or two relevant points.

(b) High scoring answers offered a sustained analysis of the impact of government corruption as a potential hindrance to economic growth in developing countries. Some candidates made good use of case studies to support their assessment. Answers that gained marks in the middle of the range often relied on a few basic points about the adverse impact of government corruption. Higher scoring responses were more nuanced and considered arguments both for and against the view that government corruption is the main obstacle to economic growth in developing countries. There were a few low scoring answers that showed little understanding of the relevant sociological debates about economic development.

Section C

Question 5

(a) Good answers demonstrated a clear understanding of how the growth of the new media has affected how news is reported. Examples of particular news stories and/or presentational techniques were often considered in high scoring answers. Some low-scoring responses were confined to a few basic points about how news is presented across the media in general.

(b)   High scoring answers provided a sustained analysis of the role of editors and journalists in controlling the media. Evaluation was provided by considering other social actors and agencies that might exercise a controlling influence over the media, including media owners, media pressure groups, and governments. Some good responses also included references to sociological studies that help to illustrate where power lies within the media. Lower in the mark range, less use was made of relevant concepts/theories and knowledge about how editors and journalists might control or influence media content was limited.

Question 6

(a)   Higher in the mark range, answers provided several well-developed points about the difficulties in measuring the impact of the media on people's behaviour. Examples from relevant studies were often used to support key points. Some good answers also included references to relevant theories of media effects, such as the hypodermic-syringe model. Low scoring answers lacked detail and often covered only one or two difficulties in measuring the impact of the media on people's behaviour.

(b)   High quality answers demonstrated a good understanding of the uses and gratifications model of media effects. Some candidates made good use of references to studies of media influence to illustrate key points about the uses and gratifications model. Other models of media effects (hypodermic-syringe, two-step flow, cultural effects) were used to develop the assessment and some answers made good use of the conceptual distinction between direct and indirect models of media influence. There were some low scoring answers that discussed the influence of the media without reference to the relevant sociological models.

Section D

Question 7

(a)   Good answers identified several ways in which religion may reflect patriarchal influences. References to the work of relevant feminist theorists, such as, Woodhead, Daly, and Steggerda often featured in high scoring responses. There were some low scoring answers that lacked understanding of what is meant by the term 'patriarchy'.

(b)   High scoring answers examined a range of explanations for the growth of new religious movements, including the idea that disenchantment with established religious institutions is a key factor. Some candidates made good use of references to relevant studies to support their analysis. Good answers often distinguished between different types of new religious movements and recognised that reasons for joining such movements may vary between different social groups. Answers that merited the middle of the mark range often relied on a largely uncritical summary of why disenchantment with established religious organisations might lead to the growth of new religious movements. There were a few low scoring answers that identified a few features of new religious movements, but failed to link this to an analysis of the reasons for the growth in this form of religion.

Question 8

(a)   High scoring answers provided several well-developed points about why it may be difficult to measure the extent of religious belief in a society. Some candidates noted the difficulty in defining religiosity, the lack of reliable historical evidence for comparative purposes, the reluctance of people to reveal their true religious beliefs, and the question of whether valid observations about religious belief can be drawn from statistical data such as church attendance records. Lower scoring responses were limited to one or two simple points about the process of measuring religious beliefs.

(b)   Good answers demonstrated a clear understanding of the arguments supporting the view that modern industrial societies are experiencing a religious revival. High scoring responses also included a sustained evaluation of how far a religious revival has occurred. The evaluation was often developed through a discussion of the arguments for and against the secularisation thesis. Some candidates made good use of examples from particular countries to examine how far a religious revival has occurred. Answers in the middle of the mark range were often confined to explaining the idea of religious revival and providing examples of what this might mean. There were a few low scoring answers that discussed contemporary attitudes to religion without reference to the concept of religious revival.

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Key messages

* There were some excellent answers, combining detailed sociological knowledge and mature analysis.
* References to relevant sociological concepts and theories were often absent in lower scoring answers.
* Good answers to the part (b) questions included a sustained evaluation of the view expressed in the question.
* Further marks could be gained by using evidence from sociological studies to support key points.
* Some low scoring answers relied on assertion and general knowledge rather than relevant sociological material.

General comments

The overall standard of the scripts was high, with many answers combining detailed sociological knowledge with thoughtful and well-informed analysis. The best responses were tightly constructed in a way that demonstrated depth of thought and skilful application of relevant sociological concepts and theories. Lower scoring answers would have benefitted from a more analytical and evaluative approach to the (b) questions. Higher marks for the (a) questions could have been gained by making more use of examples to support key points. There were a few low scoring answers that lacked focus on the key terms in the question. For example, some candidates attempted to answer **2(a)** without referring to gender stereotyping, even though the latter term was central to the question. Some candidates answered more than the three questions required.

Section A

Question 1

(a) Good answers provided an accurate account of several ways in which language codes may influence educational achievement. Many candidates made appropriate links to Bernstein's distinction between restricted and elaborated language codes. Some responses included examples of how language may influence educational achievement for particular social groups, including ethnic minorities and girls. There were some lower scoring answers that were limited to a few assertions about the role of language in the education process.

(b) There were some high scoring answers that provided a sustained evaluation of the view that the education system is a barrier to social mobility. Good responses examined claims that the education system reproduces social inequality, helping to keep people in their class origin rather than promoting social movement. Some candidates achieved high marks for evaluation by considering different types of education system and whether some are more conducive to social mobility than others. Evaluation was also delivered in some responses by comparing opportunities for short-range mobility with opportunities for long-range mobility. Low scoring answers often lacked clear references to social mobility, focusing instead on a range of general points about the role of education.

Question 2

(a)   Good answers highlighted several ways in which gender stereotyping may influence the educational performance of female pupils. High scoring responses were often supported with references to relevant studies, such as those by Stanworth, Sharpe, Grafton, and Kelly. Lower scoring answers were confined to one or two limited points about the influence of gender in general on the educational performance of girls.

(b)   High scoring answers demonstrated a good understanding of the functionalist approach to explaining educational achievement. Other sociological perspectives, including Marxist and feminist theories, were used to provide an evaluation of the functionalist approach. Effective use of concepts such as meritocracy, functional imperatives, social control, cultural capital, and social deprivation was often a feature of answers that triggered the top mark band. Lower scoring answers were often unbalanced; for example, discussing the functionalist approach, but lacking an evaluation of the view on which the question was based. A few responses lacked references to relevant sociological studies and arguments.

Section B

Question 3

(a)   Answers that merited high marks offered a well-informed account of how poverty may lead to high mortality rates in developing countries. Some candidates also considered how high rates of mortality might be part of the cycle of poverty. There were some low scoring answers that discussed the reasons for high mortality rates without reference to poverty.

(b)   High scoring answers used relevant sociological arguments and concepts to assess the view that government policy is the main factor determining whether a country can achieve economic growth. Good responses often distinguished between different types of government policy and used particular examples to illustrate key points. Neo-liberal views supporting the role of government policy in promoting economic growth were often contrasted with dependency theory in strong, evaluative responses. Lower scoring answers often relied on a few assertions about the determinants of economic growth in general.

Question 4

(a)   There were a few good answers that identified a range of both push and pull factors leading to migration from rural to urban areas. Some less successful responses lacked detail and were confined to making just one or two relevant points.

(b)   High scoring answers demonstrated a good understanding of the differences between cultural and structural explanations of development. Some candidates made good use of case studies to illustrate why some countries have developed more rapidly than others. Answers that gained marks in the middle of the range often relied on a few basic points about how cultural factors may influence rates of development. Higher scoring responses were more nuanced and considered arguments both for and against the view that cultural factors explain why some countries have developed more rapidly than others. There were a few low scoring answers that showed little understanding of the relevant sociological debates about factors influencing economic development.

Section C

Question 5

(a)   Good answers demonstrated a clear understanding of the concept of agenda setting in relation to the media. Examples of how media organisations contribute to agenda setting often featured in high scoring answers. Some low-scoring responses demonstrated little understanding of what is meant by agenda setting.

(b)   High scoring answers provided a sustained analysis of the role of owners in controlling the media. Evaluation was provided by considering other social actors and agencies that might exercise a controlling influence over the media, including journalists, editors, media pressure groups, and governments. Some good responses also included references to sociological studies that help to

illustrate where power lies within the media. Lower in the mark range, less use was made of relevant concepts/theories and knowledge about how owners might control or influence media content was limited.

Question 6

(a) There were a few good answers that demonstrated a sound understanding of the cultural effects model of media influence. Examples from relevant studies were often used to support key points in high quality responses. There were many low scoring answers that demonstrated little or no understanding of the cultural effects model.

(b) High quality answers demonstrated a good understanding of the arguments and evidence about the impact of the media in influencing violent behaviour. Some candidates made good use of references to models of media effects, such as the hypodermic syringe model, as a way of illustrating the issues surrounding the relationship between the media and violence. Good use of the conceptual distinction between direct and indirect models of media influence were deployed in some answers. There were a few low scoring answers that discussed the impact of the media in general, with no direct links to violent behaviour specifically.

Section D

Question 7

(a) Good answers used relevant concepts to explain the key features of the functionalist theory of religion. Durkheim's contribution to the functionalist theory of religion was frequently cited in high scoring answers. Lower scoring answers demonstrated only a partial understanding the functionalist theory.

(b) Good answers correctly linked the view expressed in the question to the Marxist theory of religion. High scoring answers made use of relevant concepts, such as false consciousness and economic determinism, in explaining the possible links between religion and the interests of the ruling class. Some candidates made good use of references to relevant studies to support their analysis. Answers that merited the middle of the mark range often relied on a largely uncritical summary of the Marxist viewpoint. Higher scoring answers included a sustain evaluation of the idea that religion serves ruling class interests. There were a few low scoring answers that attempted to answer the question without reference to relevant sociological theories.

Question 8

(a) High scoring answers provided several well-developed points about how sects differ from other religious organisations. Some candidates used examples of particular sects to illustrate key points. Lower scoring responses were limited to one or two vague points about sects, with no contrasts drawn with other types of religious organisation.

(b) Good answers demonstrated a clear understanding of the arguments supporting the view that religious influence is still strong in modern industrial societies. High scoring responses also included a sustained evaluation of this view. The evaluation was often developed through a discussion of the arguments for and against the secularisation thesis. Some candidates made good use of examples from particular countries to examine how far religion remains an important influence in modern industrial societies. There were a few low scoring answers that discussed contemporary attitudes to religion without reference to relevant sociological concepts and theories.

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Key messages

- There were some outstanding answers, full of sociological insight and mature analysis.
- Good answers to the **(b)** questions combined detailed sociological understanding with sustained analysis and evaluation.
- A few answers lacked references to relevant sociological evidence.
- Further marks could be gained by using appropriate sociological concepts and theories to support key points.
- Low scoring answers often relied on assertion and general knowledge rather than relevant sociological material.

General comments

There were some very good answers, combining detailed sociological knowledge with thoughtful and well-informed analysis and evaluation. The best answers were tightly constructed in a way that demonstrated clarity of thought and careful attention to the wording of the question. Answers to the **(a)** questions sometimes lacked reference to appropriate sociological evidence and research studies. Higher marks could be gained by supporting explanations with relevant examples and evidence. Some responses to the **(b)** questions were too descriptive, relying on a summary of relevant knowledge without providing any related analysis and evaluation. More practice in formulating evaluative answers for the **(b)** questions would be helpful for these candidates. Some less successful candidates rely on assertion and general knowledge to answer the questions. The marks awarded to answers that lack references to appropriate sociological material are inevitably low. It is important therefore that candidates have the opportunity to study the recommended textbooks and are encouraged to use references to sociological sources in their answers. Some candidates answered more than the three questions required.

Section A

Question 1

(a)   Good answers provided an accurate account of several difficulties in measuring intelligence. The limitations of IQ tests provided the main focus in some well-informed answers. Other candidates successfully explored the problems in defining intelligence. There were some lower scoring answers that offered a few limited comments about the nature of intelligence.

(b)   There were some high scoring answers that provided a sustained assessment of the view that material deprivation is the main cause of educational underachievement. Good responses identified several material factors that may influence educational performance, including low income, lack of study resources, and poor housing. Some candidates achieved high marks for evaluation by considering whether material factors really are more important than other factors, such as cultural capital and peer group influence, in explaining educational underachievement. Evaluation was also delivered in some responses by considering the role of school factors as an influence on educational performance. Low scoring answers lacked examples of how material factors might influence educational achievement and often relied on assertion rather than using relevant sociological material.

Question 2

(a)   Good answers identified several ways in which cultural capital may influence educational achievement. High scoring responses were often supported with references to relevant studies,

such as those by Bourdieu, Ball, Smith, and Hargreaves. Lower scoring answers were confined to one or two limited points about factors influencing educational achievement.

(b)   High scoring answers demonstrated a good understanding of the factors that influence the school curriculum. Powerful groups who might influence the curriculum were identified and the extent to which they exercise power in this domain was analysed and evaluated. Effective use of concepts such as social control, ideological state apparatus, social engineering, the social construction of knowledge, and cultural capital was often a feature of answers that triggered the top mark band. Lower scoring answers were often unbalanced; for example, discussing the role of powerful groups in determining the curriculum, but lacking an evaluation of the view on which the question was based. A few responses lacked references to relevant sociological studies and arguments.

Section B

Question 3

(a)   Answers that merited high marks demonstrated a good understanding of colonialism and its impact on developing countries. Some high scoring responses made good use of examples of the colonial legacy for particular developing countries. There were some low scoring answers that demonstrated little understanding of the specific features of colonialism.

(b)   High scoring answers offered a sustained analysis of the strengths and limitations of dependency theory. Good responses often included a summary of the work of the Marxist theorist, Andre Gunder Frank. Critics of Frank's work, such as Hoogvelt and Goldthorpe, were cited in developing an evaluation of dependency theory. Lower scoring answers often relied on a few assertions about the reasons for global inequality, with only vague links to dependency theory.

Question 4

(a)   There were a few good answers that identified several difficulties in defining development. High scoring answers often distinguished between different approaches (economic, ecological, cultural, social) to defining development and the difficulty of integrating each approach. Some answers lower in the mark range lacked detail and were confined to articulating just one or two relevant points.

(b)   High scoring answers used relevant examples and sociological arguments to assess the view that controlling population growth is the most effective way of improving living standards in developing countries. Some candidates made good use of case studies to support their analysis. Answers that gained marks in the middle of the range often relied on a few basic points about the impact of population growth on living standards in developing countries. Higher scoring responses were more nuanced and considered arguments both for and against the view that controlling population growth is the most effective way of improving living standards in developing countries. There were a few low scoring answers that showed little understanding of the relevant sociological debates about the impact of population growth.

Section C

Question 5

(a)   Good answers demonstrated a clear understanding of how a government might seek to control media content. Examples of particular forms of censorship and other government intervention in the media domain often featured in high scoring responses. Some low-scoring answers were confined to a few basic points about how governments might seek to control media content.

(b)   High scoring answers provided a sustained analysis of the impact of the new media in terms of opportunities for users to challenge authority. Some candidates made good use of examples to illustrate how the new media has been used by individuals and groups seeking to challenge authority. Evaluation was provided by considering obstacles to people using the new media to challenge authority, such as the power for governments to control access to the internet and censorship by media operators. Lower in the mark range, knowledge about how the new media might be used to challenge authority was limited and answers often relied on assertion rather than informed sociological analysis.

Question 6

(a) Higher in the mark range, answers demonstrated a good understanding of the hypodermic-syringe model. Examples from relevant studies, such as Bandura and Shannon, were often used to support key points. There were some low scoring answers that showed little understanding of the hypodermic-syringe model and how it differs from other models of media effects.

(b) High quality answers recognised that the question offered an opportunity to discuss theories that focus on the ideological role of the media. Marxist accounts of the media featured heavily in many answers, but references to postmodernist theories were also deployed in some well-formulated answers. Examples of how the media might create a false view of reality were often used to support key points in the analysis. There were some low scoring answers that discussed the impact of the media without reference to relevant sociological concepts and theories.

Section D

Question 7

(a) Good answers examined a range of evidence for religious decline. That evidence included falling attendance at religious services/meetings, decline in membership figures for religious organisations, attitude studies indicating a decline in religiosity, and statistics showing people switching from established religions to alternative expressions of spirituality. There were some low scoring answers that gave reasons for religious decline rather than evidence of that decline.

(b) High scoring answers provided a sustained analysis of the view that religion is a conservative force that helps to maintain social order. Some candidates made good use of references to relevant studies to support their analysis. Good answers often distinguished between different religions and recognised that some are more likely to act as a conservative force than others. High scoring responses often developed the evaluation by considering theories that identify a role for religion in promoting social change, as opposed to acting as a conservative force. Answers that merited the middle of the mark range often relied on a largely uncritical account of sociological theories (functionalist and Marxist) that view religion as a conservative force that helps to maintain social order. There were a few low scoring answers that discussed the role of religion in general without referring to appropriate sociological concepts and theories.

Question 8

(a) There were some good answers that made several well-developed points about why some social groups are more likely to be involved in religious practice than others. High scoring responses often distinguished between the religious participation of particular social groups, using categories such as age, class, ethnicity and gender. Lower scoring responses were limited to one or two simple points about differences in levels of religious participation.

(b) There were a few high scoring answers that provided a sustained evaluation of the view on which the question was based. Good answers explained why the growth of new religious movements might be seen as evidence that religion remains a powerful force in modern industrial societies. Evaluation was often developed through a wider discussion of the arguments for and against the secularisation thesis, with some candidates developing the argument that new religious movements can be seen as an illustration of the declining influence of established religions. Some candidates made good use of examples from particular countries to examine how far religion remains a powerful force today. There were a few low scoring answers that demonstrated little understanding of new religious movements and their significance within the wider secularisation debate.