SOCIOLOGY

Paper 0495/01
Paper 1

General comments

Generally, the overall standard of scripts seemed to have improved. The paper appeared to provide clear differentiation between candidates. Most candidates were able to respond successfully to **Question 1** appearing well prepared for the compulsory question. Performance was more variable on others, particularly on questions set in *Section D* of the paper. Throughout all sections the problem for many candidates remains the disproportionate amount of time that is spent on **parts** (**a**) and (**b**) at the expense of the latter parts of the question. This is particularly a problem in **part (d)** where some candidates failed to produce a developed answer. In addition, many responses to this part lacked focus and development. However, there were a growing number of candidates who demonstrated an excellent conceptual understanding and were able to support their answers with relevant data and contemporary examples. It is important to note that in order to achieve high marks on **part (d)** candidates need to engage with the question and attempt to provide some form of assessment.

A pleasing trend is the declining number of candidates continuing to ignore the rubric and answer all the questions on the paper. As reiterated in previous reports, candidates are far more likely to succeed by answering the specified number of questions thoroughly.

Finally, candidates need to try to support their answers with specific examples in **part (c)** and attempt to answer the specific question set in **part (d)**. Candidates would benefit greatly from regular practice at these longer responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a)   Most candidates scored well on this question, though a significant number tended to comment on interviews in general, rather than unstructured ones in **part (i)**. However, candidates in general were able to define the other two terms effectively.

(b)   This question received a wide range of responses with some very good answers that addressed theoretical issues; however, there were a number of weaker answers that had a limited sociological understanding tending to focus on researcher bias.

(c)   This was generally well answered with candidates making relevant points with many highlighting the problem of the observer effect and commenting on the validity provided by observational studies.

(d)   There were many candidates who achieved full marks on this question, but relatively few discussed the importance of new research directions as strength.

(e)   Similarly, this question was generally well answered with candidates having a clear understanding of all four terms.

(f)   This question produced a wide range of responses. Many candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of covert observation citing the importance of the method providing highly valid data and focusing on the difficulties in recording such data accurately. However, a number focused on observations in general rather than commenting on covert observation. It is important for candidates to focus on the specific issues raised in the question.

Section B

Question 2

(a) The majority of candidates gained two marks, though some discussed 'values' in their answer.

(b) Most candidates were able to outline two ways children interact with other members of society and developed their ideas to obtain full marks.

(c) This question was poorly answered. A significant number of responses provided a description of childhood, rather than explain how childhood was a social construction. However, there were some excellent responses that discussed the legal status of children and drew on material such as Aries to make the comparison between childhood in modern industrial society and pre-industrial society.

(d) A wide range of responses were produced. The majority of answers tended to provide descriptions of the agents of socialisation with varying degrees of detail. Relatively few developed a discussion of the effects of hereditary on human behaviour. Those that did generally achieved high marks.

Question 3

(a) Most candidates scored two marks providing an example to illustrate their definition.

(b) This question was well answered with candidates giving a wide range of features.

(c) There were a range of responses to this question. Many answers provided a simplistic account of how the elderly were mistreated in modern industrial societies. Better responses tended to contrast the experiences of the elderly in traditional and modern societies. The best answers showed an awareness that there is a range of experiences for the elderly in modern societies.

(d) Answers were generally limited to a description of how societies were consensual with relevant examples of norms and values given. However, few tackled the issue of conflict in society. Some of the better answers referred to examples of sub-cultures, but relatively few discussed sociological theories such as functionalism and Marxism.

Question 4

(a) This question was well answered with most candidates achieving both marks and defining 'social class' clearly and concisely.

(b) A significant number of responses seemed to misunderstand the nature of the middle class, discussing the disadvantages they had compared to the upper class. Some candidates appeared to be unclear about who the middle classes were. Many though, were able to gain full marks outlining social contacts and education as being important factors in career advancement.

(c) This question was generally well answered with many candidates identifying a range of factors that led to higher salaries for professional groups. Answers highlighted training and education and the perceived status of professions, but few discussed the relative scarcity of the skills of such professional groups highlighted in the question.

(d) This question was less well done. Answers tended to be narrow in scope focusing on education and employment opportunities. However, few candidates discussed other factors such as gender and ethnicity. Relatively few attempted to challenge the questions by discussing opportunities for social mobility in modern industrial societies.

Question 5

(a) Many candidates were able to explain the term successfully and achieved two marks.

(b) A well answered question with many candidates able to identify factors such as lack of promotion opportunities and pay differentials.

(c) This question attracted a wide range of responses. Weaker candidates tended to fo... narrow range of issues, saying that more opportunities were available now for ethnic n... modern industrial societies. More effective answers discussed the introduction of legisl... broader factors such as multi-culturalism and greater tolerance in many societies as providing... opportunities for ethnic minorities.

(d) This was generally well answered with some candidates presenting a wide range of issues which discussed education, work opportunities, and scape-goating by the police. Relatively few answers discussed the increased opportunities that may be available to ethnic minorities in some societies. A number of candidates provided examples from their own societies which were welcomed.

Question 6

(a) This was well answered with many candidates achieving full marks, though some candidates seem to confuse elite groups with pressure groups.

(b) Most candidates gained marks and showed a clear understanding of the methods used by authoritarian regimes.

(c) This question was generally well answers with many candidates able to discuss a range of ways an individual can participate in decision-making. The range and level of detail given provided the discriminating factor.

(d) This question provided a wide range of responses. More effective answers tended to provide a list of ways of elites had influence and were able to engage with the question and explain how these groups had influence. The best answers were able to provide theoretical explanations which focused on pluralist and Marxist views of power. Weaker responses tended to have a very limited understanding of the features of elite groups and their influence.

Question 7

(a) Most candidates were able to achieve one mark, but relatively few commented on competing parties being an important feature of a democratic election.

(b) This question was well answered with the majority of candidates able to identify two influences on the result of an election**.**

(c) This question was generally well done with most answers focusing on the role of the press as providing propaganda and having a long term effect on voting intentions. A significant number of candidates discussed the effects of opinion polls in terms of the 'bandwagon effect' which was a pleasing trend.

(d) There was a wide range of responses with the most able candidates showing an understanding of class dealignment and the changing nature of the class structure. Weaker responses showed a limited understanding of the factors that influenced voting behaviour with some providing anecdotal evidence, providing simplistic accounts of the influence of social class.

SOCIOLOGY

| Paper 0495/02 |
| Paper 2 |

General comments

The overall performance of candidates this year ranged from the top of the mark scheme, with some candidates gaining almost full marks, to the other end of the range were candidates picked up just one or two marks.

Many candidates had considerable in depth knowledge and understanding of topic areas and were able to offer assessment, and occasionally appropriate theory and evaluation. However, some candidates offered largely descriptive answers based purely on commonsense rather than any real sociological knowledge.

Most candidates understood the rubric and answered the required 3 questions, however a few candidates are still attempting to answer more than 3 questions and in 1 or 2 cases answered 8 questions. Most candidates gave appropriate length answers based on the number of marks allocated to each question, whilst some offered overly long answers that left them short of time for the remainder of the paper. A few candidates failed to identify the question answered leaving the Examiner to 'guess' which one they had attempted. Occasionally candidates had asked the Examiner to, for example 'refer to Q3' rather than repeat something they had already written. This practice is not acceptable as each answer is marked on its own individual merits.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a)   This question was on the whole well answered, the better candidates included the idea of 'status' and expected behaviour patterns of that status.

(b)   Candidates were generally able to identify two appropriate examples of changes in marital roles within the family. Some failed to distinguish clearly between examples which lost them marks.

(c)   There were some very comprehensive answers given to this, showing a good Knowledge and understanding of the topic area. A few talked about roles in the family e.g. marital roles rather than the roles of children. The stronger candidates offered explanations such as, laws forbidding child labour, children's protection laws and compulsory education.

(d)   Some of the stronger candidates were able to demonstrate in depth understanding of sociological theory, citing Young and Wilmott and feminist approaches to the notion of the symmetrical family.

Question 2

(a)   Many candidates offered an appropriate definition of the extended family but some omitted any reference to 'living together under one roof.'

(b)   Candidates found this question difficult and only a few identified the economic necessity of living in extended families, traditional roles or the passing down of norms and values through the generations.

(c)   This was often answered in a generalised way relating to the belief that everyone in the west lives in nuclear families, not wanting to share their wealth with extended kin. The better candidates talked about the need for geographical mobility and the desire for economic independence from wider kin.

(d) A reasonably well answered question which included reference to the continuing [ ] of family and the diversity of family types. Some concentrated on the decline of the exte[ ] rather than evaluation and assessment.

Question 3

(a) Most candidates were able to correctly define the term 'formal education'.

(b) Answers varied in quality, and many candidates were only able to offer one way in which the formal education system could provide poor families with the opportunity to achieve upward mobility. The most popular answers were providing free education and abolishing discrimination.

(c) Well answered by many candidates who referred to a range of factors including low expectations, needing to leave school to find work, having to pay for education, few role models and the middle class nature of schooling. Some however gave judgemental and moralistic responses.

(d) Many candidates offered reasons why 'poor' children tend to underachieve at school rather than ways in which schools can help them improve. Few candidates mentioned the idea of compensatory education.

Question 4

(a) Many candidates were unable to offer a clear definition of the 'hidden curriculum' whereas some offered a partial definition which showed some understanding gaining them 1 mark out of a possible 2.

(b) This was well answered by most candidates who demonstrated appropriate sociological knowledge of gender roles and how the hidden curriculum may influence them.

(c) Some of the stronger candidates developed their answers to include some theoretical perspectives and offered both positive and negative influences of the peer group. At the other end of the scale candidates gave generalised and commonsensical answers.

(d) Some good answers here, citing theory and debate about 'labelling' and 'the self fulfilling prophecy'. Many candidates referred to their own experiences, which is welcomed when relating to the issues in the question.

Question 5

(a) Most candidates were able to offer a correct definition of the term 'social control' with only a few demonstrating limited understanding.

(b) Well answered on the whole with many full explanations using appropriate examples.

(c) Some reasonable answers were offered here which talked about religion, intermarriage and ostracism, some however, talked about tradition extended families rather than small-scale tribal societies.

(d) A number of candidates offered a well balanced response using Marxist and pluralist theory of the ways in which social control serves the interests of the most powerful groups in society. The power of the mass media and religion were also mentioned. Some candidates, however, appeared confused by the question and offered little sociological insight or understanding.

Question 6

(a) Most candidates were able to offer an appropriate definition of 'juvenile delinquency', although the ages cited varied.

(b) A well answered question citing poverty and unemployment, increased opportunity and police presence as possible reasons why juvenile delinquency rates are higher in inner city areas.

(c)   There was a lot of repetition of answers to **part (b)** here and few candidates made d~~~~~~ to class or gender. Some of the better answers included sociological terms such frustration and criminal subcultures.

(d)   Some candidates provided comprehensive critiques of the positivist approach with outlines of role of self-report and victim studies in the collection and evaluation of criminal statistics. Som candidates offered little balance, answering in a one sided way.

Question 7

(a)   Many candidates appeared confused by the terms 'bias' and 'distortion' defining one term and not the other. Where both terms were understood some excellent definitions were given.

(b)   This question was misunderstood by many candidates and few were able to offer 2 reasons why important information may be left out of a news report. The better candidates offered good definitions and explanations using sociological concepts such as, agenda setting and gate keeping.

(c)   The differing roles of owners, editors and journalists in the process of gathering and editing news were not well understood by many candidates. Some candidates expanded their answers by the use of examples taken from media related political issues in their own society which, when appropriate, were refreshing to see.

(d)   This was a challenging question for most candidates, with limited theory cited. Many gave one sided accounts of the corruption of newspaper owners with little sociological insight. Those who answered well offered some attempt at assessment and demonstrated appropriate sociological knowledge, offering samples taken from their own societies.

Question 8

(a)   Reasonably well answered with most candidates providing an adequate definition of the term 'lifestyles'.

(b)   A tendency toward commonsense answers was evident here with only a few candidates demonstrating sociological knowledge of concepts such as aspirational advertising, subliminal advertising and those that target emotionally vulnerable groups.

(c)   Many candidates interpreted this question as an opportunity to describe a range of different 'methods' of advertising, rather than 'purposes'. Some purposes that could have been cited are competition, brand identities and loyalties and the creation of demand through persuasion.

(d)   There was some confusion and misunderstanding of this question. Many candidates talked about how advertising can influence lifestyles rather than describing other factors which may influence lifestyles, such as income and status, peer group pressure, individual values, green issues, health and fitness consciousness and media influences, e.g. music, fashion, and films.

To gain high marks in this answer a range of relevant factors should be discussed in reasonable detail.