



GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**SOCIOLOGY
AS**

SUMMER 2022

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SOCIOLOGY

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COMPONENT 1 - SOCIALISATION AND CULTURE

General Comments

The examining team was, on the whole, satisfied with the standards achieved in this series of examinations. Indeed, standards achieved by some candidates were exceptional and teachers and centres should be congratulated on the quality achieved.

The majority of candidates were able to demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of the topics covered. The very best answers demonstrated the higher order skills of analysis and evaluation most effectively.

There were however some very brief responses to essay questions and where this was the case it had a significant impact on the total mark for the paper. When constructing discussions, the best candidates made good use of empirical evidence and contemporary debates. Many essays were well structured, logical and focussed.

Centres are advised to remind candidates to take careful note of command words so that they respond appropriately in their answers. Where an assessment is required the answer should not be descriptive in tone.

This is a very demanding examination paper comprising three sections. **One of the problems observed this year was candidates offending the rubric. Many candidates answered every question on the paper. This obviously meant that the answers were, at best brief.** Centres should be advised about the importance of candidates understanding the examination instructions.

The most popular option choices were: Family and Households in section B, Education in section C.

Because of a low entry there were few examples of some options and many candidates who answered questions on Media had offended the rubric. This means that item level data for these questions should be viewed with this in mind.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Compulsory section A

- Q.1 (a)** Most candidates were able to demonstrate some knowledge of the meaning of identity. However, a significant number were unsure and offered very generalised definitions with many relying heavily on the item for their answer. As a result, a significant number of candidates failed to score full marks for this question. Similarly, some candidates failed to address both components of the term -primary and socialisation.

- (b) Centres are advised to take careful note of this report and of previous reports to ensure that candidates understand the requirements of this question.

There were many very accomplished responses to this question that demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding of the process of socialisation and the ways that people learn adult roles. However, examiners reported that a number of candidates wrote in very general terms about what socialisation is rather than how it happens. Examiners reported that a number of candidates were unclear about the process of socialisation and this, unsurprisingly, had a negative impact on their answers. Candidates did not always talk about role models, sanctions and so on and relied on generic descriptions of what socialisation is. Candidates did not always use the item effectively to illustrate their answer and some made no reference to it at all.

Section B

Option 1 Families and Households

- Q.2 (a) (i) There were some excellent answers to this question. The best answers showed a sound knowledge and understanding of the ways that technology has changed family life. However, a significant number of candidates failed to offer evidence to support their reasons and neither did they explain what the evidence showed where evidence was used. Where candidates failed to access the higher mark bands it was often the result of their failure to explain the reasons offered. The best answers offered three or more reasons which were explained with some supporting sociological evidence and/ or examples.

A significant number of weaker candidates offered largely anecdotal reasons rather than sociological ones. Some had no idea how to answer the question.

- (b) This question was answered well by some candidates. However, there was a significant number of weak answers where it was evident that candidates did not understand the focus of the debate. The best answers accurately identified the view in the question and focussed on outlining, analysing and evaluating it. Answers that merely wrote descriptive accounts of theories of family did not score highly in AO2. Centres should be advised that a significant number of candidates were unable to construct effective discussions. There was often a distinct lack of evidence to support or reject an idea and as a result candidates failed to secure high level marks for either AO2 or AO3. A number of candidates seemed to struggle with high level analysis and evaluation and centres should be aware of the importance of these skills. Descriptive accounts of opposing theories do not allow candidates to achieve high marks for AO3. A significant number of candidates presented essays that were almost entirely one sided, arguing for the view in the question rather than debating it as the command words required.
- (c) This was essentially an evidence-based essay though many candidates offered descriptive accounts of theoretical ideas. Whilst it was entirely acceptable for candidates to present these ideas success was measured by the effectiveness of their evaluation of these ideas and this required empirical evidence. Candidates who did examine whether conjugal roles in families are equal almost always fell short on the use of supporting evidence.

Most responses to this question failed to utilise contemporary research evidence, instead they relied on rather dated rehearsed material which was not as appropriate as it could have been. Many failed to discuss the view and instead, presented one sided arguments, either for or against. Most supported the view, assuming that because females have more freedom conjugal roles are more equal. Few examined same sex relationships.

Option 2 Youth Culture

- Q.3 (a) (i)** This question seemed to confuse many candidates. They did not appear to understand the word **characteristics** which is surprising at this level. Many offered knowledge points linked to neo tribes but not to characteristics.
- (ii)** This was reasonably well done by many candidates although there was an over reliance on unsupported, anecdotal reasons and this prevented the answer from accessing the highest mark bands.
- (b)** Generally, this section was reasonably well attempted and there were some very good answers. The question allowed students to utilise a wide range of knowledge and on the whole the quality of answers was good. Where students failed to score highly was, unsurprisingly the result of weak higher order skills. As with option 1, there was often a distinct lack of evidence to support or reject an idea and as a result candidates failed to secure high level marks for either AO2 or AO3. A number of candidates seemed to struggle with high level analysis and evaluation and centres should be aware of the importance of these skills. Descriptive accounts of opposing theories do not allow candidates to achieve high marks for AO3. Teachers are advised to focus on essay writing skills and in particular, the ability to demonstrate high level analysis and evaluation as this will enable students to access the highest marks.
- (c)** There were some very good responses to this question and many candidates were very highly rewarded for their precise and detailed knowledge and understanding of the relationship between ethnicity and membership of youth cultures. However, there was also a significant number of candidates who demonstrated very tentative knowledge and even less understanding and as a result failed to access the higher mark bands. Neither did they consider other reasons for the formation of youth subcultures and of course, where this was the case, the marks in all skill domains were affected. As with the Family option, some candidates cited reasons for the relationship but failed to explain them and this was reflected in their AO2 mark.

Section C Education

Compulsory question

- Q.4 (a) (i)** Most candidates were able to offer some interpretation of the table and identify highest/lowest and change.
- (ii)** Answers to this question were, in many cases, rather weak. These answers offered common sense non sociological suggestions about why some students choose not to apply to university straight from school. However, there were some very competent answers which were suitably rewarded.

- (b) (i) This was answered quite well by many candidates. The best answers presented different theoretical ideas about the role of education as an agent of socialisation which were supported by examples and/or references to writers or studies. The best answers focused on the impact of the hidden curriculum as required in the question. Some candidates had not been appropriately prepared for the examination because they were clearly confused about the success criteria. It was not necessary to have a debate though this was not penalised. AO1 and AO2 marks were at stake here so there was no requirement to evaluate the ideas presented. Most candidates did not address the influence of the hidden curriculum in the process of socialisation in education but instead concentrated on describing what it is and because of this they were not able to access the higher mark bands. Candidates are advised to read the question/command very carefully.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to offer accurate descriptions of Marist ideas, both relating to the role of education and to reasons for differential attainment. The best answers examined Marxist ideas against opposing ones, not in a descriptive way but in an evaluative way. This was a popular question and many candidates answered it well. The best answers did not list a range of different explanations for differential attainment but examined them in relation to factors inside the school. This enabled them to make a judgement on the view. Weaker answers merely listed alternative explanations and added a “bolted on” evaluative comment in relation to the view in their conclusion. The weakest answers were confused about what factors inside the school might be. In most answers there was a distinct lack of research evidence which could have been utilised to enable evaluative commentary on the view.
- (c) (i) Most answers to this question were good although many lacked evidence.
- (ii) This was a slightly less popular question. It was answered well by some candidates but many candidates failed to focus on a range of factors in their essay. Very few candidates utilised empirical evidence and this meant that they were not able to access the highest mark bands. The best answers examined a range of possible explanations for the differences in educational outcomes; assessing the value of each as the question demanded. Weaker answers listed different explanations but failed to assess them which meant that they might be able to access a reasonable mark for AO1 but AO2 and AO3 skills marks were lower.

Media

- Q.5 (a) (i) Most candidates were able to interpret information from the table and score at least half marks. Referencing data from the table enabled them to score higher marks.
- (ii) This question generated anecdotal answers which were rarely sociological.

- (b) (i) Answers demonstrated some confusion over the term. Those who understood the term answered the question quite well.
- (ii) This was a less popular choice in this option and once again, answers were mixed. Some took the opportunity to examine in detail, Marxist and pluralist ideas about ownership and control. However, few interrogated them, instead offered a descriptive account of what they say.
- (c) (i) Answers demonstrated some confusion over the term. Those who understood the term answered the question quite well. However, a significant number of those who chose this question were unsure of the meaning of this key term.
- (ii) Many answers to this question failed to discuss the view and instead argued for the view. This meant that the answers failed to match descriptors for high band marks.

Option 3 Religion

There were no answers to questions in this option.

Summary of key points

The Examination Team would like to thank centres for their efforts and hard work in preparing candidates for this examination. Exemplar material will be made available **in the Autumn term.**

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COMPONENT 2 - METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY

General Comments

For the most part candidates followed the rubric. Those who followed the rubric were able to use their time appropriately and many had been well prepared for the demands of the paper. The paper was generally accessible and nearly all candidates were able to answer all questions. As with previous years, candidates need to be reminded of the demands of each question as in too many instances the commands in the question such as referring to the item or sociological studies were ignored. Rather than there being weaker candidates in general, it was noticeable that whole centres were weak in terms of knowledge and/or being prepared for the demands of the paper.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Question (a)** Candidates, overall, had good knowledge of the term 'official statistics'. However, there were marked differences between centres when it came to exam technique. Most candidates could define the term, but answers varied in terms of knowledge and application of methodological language. The best answers were able to link official statistics to the theoretical perspective of positivism and use terminology such as objectivity, reliability and representative correctly. Some candidates spent too long evaluating the weaknesses and need reminding to stay focussed on the question. Despite the question asking candidates to refer to the item, weaker answers didn't and some in fact provided examples of other sociological studies but not the item. Weaker answers that used the item, simply quoted a line directly from it without linking to official statistics and using the item as an opportunity to apply additional knowledge.
- Question (b)** For this question, candidates need to be reminded of the demands of the question as some candidates would give more than one reason or give generic answers rather than contextualise to the item and the researchers in the study. A significant minority of candidates assumed face-to-face meant unstructured when the interview was in fact structured and this prevented marks from the top bands as the answers had the wrong focus. Also, candidates would focus on the interview aspect rather than the fact they were face-to-face. The best answers were able to contextualise to the item rather than give general definitions of face-to-face interviews.
- Question (c)** Most candidates understood the question and were able to give a strength and weakness of using random sampling. The best answers were able to show understanding of random sampling while contextualising to the people in the item. Some candidates gave more than one weakness or strength and therefore their best response was awarded. In light of this, candidates should be reminded of exam technique as this varied from centre to centre. Best answers would use phrase such as 'more likely' to be representative because of the large sample rather than saying they are 'definitely more' representative.

Question (d) Most candidates were able to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative methods. However, some candidates failed to mention methods and talked about data in general. The best answers had a balance of strengths and weaknesses and were able to make them explicit throughout their answer using link words such as 'another strength...' they were also able to illustrate their answers with research/writers as evidence while still staying focussed on the question (weaker answers became more anecdotal in style and lacked focus). The best answers were able to use key terms correctly such as validity, reliability, representative etc. Weaker candidates would use key terms without showing understanding such as saying, 'valid and reliable'. Since candidates are under time pressure it is advisable not to waste time repeating their response in their conclusion as many candidates did this.

Overall, while many candidates were prepared for the demands of each question and were well prepared in terms of exam technique and applying their knowledge, there were many less well prepared and this was particularly noticeable in their somewhat random use of the key concepts. This random use of the key concepts demonstrated a lack of knowledge and understanding of the very basics of sociological enquiry.

Parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question require candidates to use material in the item. Those who failed to do this, even if they provided an excellent response, were unable to access the top mark bands. Candidates must provide answers which meet the demands of the question.



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